

CLT 220: Literature Beyond European Traditions

Caribbean Contexts

T, W, Th, F 1:30 – 4:55
SB Manhattan * Winter 2010

Sarah Paruolo
sarah.paruolo@sunysb.edu

Beautiful beaches, palm trees and strawberry daiquiris may be the first things that come to mind when we think about the Caribbean, but what happens when we step outside the pristine resort properties? What does it mean to be Caribbean? Can these diverse island cultures, built from French, Spanish and Anglo colonial traditions, even be aggregated under this singular heading of Caribbean? And what causes the Caribbean to be classified as Non-Western when it is so geographically proximate to the West? In this course, we will engage with literature from the islands of Bermuda, Jamaica, Trinidad, Cuba, Antigua, Haiti, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic as we discuss the production of national identities, the never-ending battles for sovereignty and the shifting cultural conceptions of race, class and gender. We will supplement our readings with film, music and popular culture in order to gain a more complete understanding of these Caribbean Contexts.

This course fulfills a DEC J requirement.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave Narrative, Related by Herself
A Small Place, Jamaica Kincaid
Sweet Diamond Dust and Other Stories, Rosario Ferré
The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Junot Diaz
*additional readings posted on Blackboard (BB)

We will also be watching the following films in class:

Before Night Falls (Schnabel, 2000)
Road to the Big Leagues (Goodman, 2008)

GRADING

10% Attendance
20% Class Preparation & Participation
20% Presentation
20% Two (2) Response Papers
30% Final Exam

OFFICE HOURS

Since I do not have an office at SB Manhattan, I will be available 30 minutes before and after class. If you would like to meet at another time, please make an appointment in advance.

ATTENDANCE

This is a highly condensed Winter Session course and each class session is equivalent to roughly one week in a regular semester. Therefore, your attendance is critical. For each absence (without official

documentation), both attendance and participation grades will be docked. More than three absences result in an automatic F.

PREPARATION & PARTICIPATION

Not merely attendance (for you cannot participate if you do not attend), but rather coming to class with a copy of the reading, having done the reading and prepared to be an active participant in class discussion and group activities. At the discretion of the instructor, this can also include pop quizzes. Taking notes or highlighting while doing the reading is an excellent way to be sure you will be prepared for class. *Being more than 15 minutes late for class, leaving early, sleeping, surfing the internet and texting during class are all examples of behavior that do not demonstrate preparation or participation.*

PRESENTATION

Each student is to choose a text or an island at the beginning of the semester and prepare a presentation no shorter than 5, but no longer than 10 minutes in length. Fiction presentations should (1) discuss one or two main themes of the text and (2) relate topics or themes discussed in class to the text. Island presentation should (1) give an introduction to the island's geography, history & culture and (2) relate these aspects of the island to a text from that island—this can be a text we have read in class or an additional one you bring in (please see me in advance if you need suggestions). **Using Wikipedia as your sole source for these presentations is unacceptable.** *Don't be afraid to be creative!*

RESPONSE PAPERS

Each student will be responsible for writing TWO short response papers throughout the semester on any two texts of their choosing. Each response paper should be between 250 and 350 words (roughly one page). These papers are NOT to be summaries of the texts, but rather your response to the text that incorporates topics and themes discussed in class. The first paper is due by 1/13, the second by 1/21. Papers must be submitted through Blackboard BEFORE class begins that day. Shorter papers will be penalized. Late papers will receive a 10% deduction per day.

FINAL EXAM

There will be a final exam given the last day of class, Friday 1/22, during the last 90 minutes of class. The exam is cumulative, meaning you will be responsible for all material covered in the course, including the readings, the films and the lectures.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is simply the use of others' words and/or ideas without clearly acknowledging their source. As students, you are learning about other people's ideas in your course texts, your instructors' lectures, in-class discussions, and when doing your own research. When you incorporate those words and ideas into your own work, it is of the utmost importance that you give credit where it is due. Plagiarism, intentional or unintentional, is considered academic dishonesty and all instances will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. To avoid plagiarism, you must give the original author credit whenever you use another person's ideas, opinions, drawings, or theories as well as any facts or any other pieces of information that are not common knowledge. Additionally quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or a close paraphrasing of another person's spoken or written words must also be referenced. Accurately citing all sources and putting direct quotations – of even a few key words – in quotation marks are required. For further information on plagiarism and the policies regarding academic dishonesty go to the Academic Judiciary website at <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/CAS/ajc.nsf>.

ANY INSTANCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL BE REPORTED TO THE ACADEMIC JUDICIARY COMMITTEE AND WILL RESULT IN AN F FOR THE COURSE.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday 1/5 * What is (Non) Western?

Wednesday 1/6 * What is Caribbean?

A Tempest, Aimé Césaire (H)

“Repeating Island”, Antonio Benítez-Rojo (BB)

Thursday 1/7 * Histories of Colonization

The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave Narrative, Related by Herself

“The Black Man and Language”, Frantz Fanon (BB)

Friday 1/8 * Colonial Legacies

Michelle Cliff selection (BB)

V.S. Naipaul selection (BB)

Tuesday 1/12 * Revolution in the Caribbean

Our America, José Martí (BB)

Selected Poems, José Martí (BB)

Selected Poems, Nicolás Guillén (BB)

Wednesday 1/13 * Revolution in the Caribbean (cont.)

Short Story, Reinaldo Arenas (BB)

In-class screening: *Before Night Falls* (Schnabel, 2000)

Response Paper #1 due (submit via BB before class)

Thursday 1/14 * Is this Revolution?

Krik? Krak!, 1, 3 & 9, Edwidge Danticat (BB)

Friday 1/15 * Is this Revolution? (cont.)

A Small Place, Jamaica Kincaid

Tuesday 1/19 * Is Puerto Rico (Non) Western?

“Sweet Diamond Dust”, Rosario Ferré

Selected Poems, Julia de Burgos (BB)

Wednesday 1/20 * Is Puerto Rico (Non) Western? (cont.)/ Non-Western in the West

Selected Poems, Tato Laviera (BB)

Selected Poems, Shaggy Flores (BB)

“Pan-Latino/Trans-Latino: Puerto Ricans in ‘New Nueva York’”, Juan Flores (BB)

In-class screening: *Road to the Big Leagues* (Goodman, 2008)

Response Paper #2 due (submit via BB before class)

Thursday 1/21 * Non-Western in the West(cont.)

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Junot Díaz

Friday 1/22 * Conclusion

Final Exam

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT/DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact DSS at (631) 632-6748 or <http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/>. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities/asp>.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.