The Caribbean embodies the very concept of a crossroads of cultures and subjectivities, shaped by global economic and social processes stemming from the beginnings of mercantile capitalism in the fifteenth century (including the establishment of the slave trade). Taking two modern events of signal importance as axiomatic—the Haitian Revolution (1791) and the Cuban Revolution (1959)—and keeping in mind the more recent Grenada Revolution (1979-83), the course examines revolutionary experiments in aesthetics. That is, the course will take revolution as its critical articulation: from historical events of revolution, to aesthetics of revolution, to what has transpired with revolution since the ascendancy and dominance of the global International Monetary Fund and World Bank, global policies regarding population control, border patrolling, and refugee status, and tourism and its attendant industries.

While focusing on the cultural production of the Hispanic insular Caribbean, we will also study dialogical exchanges with the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean and the Continental Caribbean, illuminating the key continuities and divergences of this corpus and addressing race, gender, coloniality, and aesthetics. We will examine documentaries, political writings, poetry, fiction, historical narratives and music. Authors and artists might include Emeric Bergeaud, Alejo Carpentier, César Andreu Iglesias, Juan Bosch, Suzanne Césaire, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, Haydée Santamaría, Jesús Díaz, Heberto Padilla, Pedro Albizu Campos, The Young Lords, Franz Fanon and CLR James. Taught in Spanish.