2014

277-01 History of the Caribbean

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Overview

This course is an introduction to the history of the Caribbean—a geographically small yet diverse region that has played a key role in world history—from the 1400s through the mid-nineteenth century. Major themes and topics include: European expansion and imperial rivalry, colonization and colonialism, piracy and war, the rise of slavery and the plantation complex, slave rebellion and resistance, and emancipation and its aftermath.

Additional information: I have set up a website for this course on Blackboard (www.blackboard.xavier.edu). The site contains the syllabus, information about assignments, links to useful resources, your grades, and up-to-the minute announcements. Please check the course Blackboard page regularly.

Goals

This course has two basic goals. The first is to help develop your knowledge about important developments in the history of the Caribbean, from the fifteenth century through the middle of the nineteenth century. By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- identify and describe the significance of important events, individuals, and ideas from readings, discussions, and lectures;
- explain how and why colonies and countries of the Caribbean basin developed differently, with reference to modes of colonization, labor regimes, culture, and social relations; AND
- reflect on the differences—and similarities—in the experiences and points of view of different social, economic, and ethnic groups (such as men and women, or Africans and Europeans) across time and place.

The second major goal is to practice and refine the basic skills of historical analysis by (a) engaging directly with primary sources and (b) evaluating historical interpretations. You will have regular opportunities to explore how scholars have interpreted and debated different issues in Caribbean history, and you will regularly be asked to analyze the relationship between historical interpretations and primary sources. By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- analyze primary sources and competing perspectives of the same event;
- reflect on what a specific document can—and cannot—tell us;
- identify an historian's argument;
- critically evaluate an historian's reasoning, interpretive method, and use of evidence; AND
- develop your own interpretation of historical events and change over time.
Student Responsibilities and Course Policies

I am glad you are in this course and I will do everything I can to help you do well. To succeed, you will also have to do your part and accept certain responsibilities. First, you need to show up to all class meetings on time, prepared to participate (this means you need to have the assigned reading completed before coming to class, bring a copy of the day’s reading with you, and come prepared to ask and answer questions, take notes, and contribute your thoughts). Attendance and active participation are expected and required (see below for details), particularly given the interactive format of this class. Second, you need to keep up with readings, take careful notes, and submit all assignments on time. Finally, don’t hesitate to speak up in class or come talk to me when you are confused or have questions or concerns. Feel free to send me an email or visit me in my office at any point in the semester. If you cannot commit to meeting these expectations and are not looking for a rigorous course, I suggest you register for a different class.

Attendance
Attending class is crucial. You can’t participate if you don’t show up, and lectures, discussions, and other in-class activities are designed to be interactive. Moreover, your voice and your contributions are important (please note, however, that attending class is not the same as participating). At the same time, I understand that you have busy lives and that there may be the occasional emergency, scheduling conflict, or illness that prevents you from attending class. So, you can miss up to four class meetings with no direct adverse effect on your grade, though you are still responsible for turning in any assignments due in class before the due date and for any material that you miss while absent (if you miss class on a quiz day, however, you will not be able to make up the quiz and you will earn a zero for that quiz). If you miss more than four classes for whatever reason, I will reduce your final grade by one full letter (e.g., if your final grade is a “B,” but you missed class five times or more, you will instead earn a “C” for the course). Period. I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, and I don’t need to know why you missed a particular class. I suggest you carefully keep track of your absences and avoid missing class unless absolutely necessary. Please also note that repeatedly arriving late—which is disruptive—will cause me to mark you as absent.

Deadlines
I will not accept any late Reading Response Questions (RRQs)—short written assignments due in class at various points throughout the semester and indicated by “RRQ” on the schedule below—under any circumstances. If you do not have a printed copy of your RRQ at the beginning of class, I will not accept it. All other assignments submitted late will generally be marked down one letter grade per day late (e.g., an “A” essay due in class on Wednesday but submitted on Thursday morning will be marked as a “B” essay; a “C” essay submitted a day late will be marked as a “D” essay, etc.). However, if you run into a scheduling problem, you may request an extension (except for RRQs). I will consider requests for extensions on a case by case basis and only if you contact me at least 48 hours before the due date to discuss your situation. Don’t wait until the last minute.

Email Policy
If you have questions that cannot be answered by consulting the syllabus or addressed in class, please feel free to email me. Note, however, that you should observe professional email etiquette and especially the following guidelines. During the week (M-F), it may take me up to 48 hours to respond to emails, though I will do my best to reply sooner. I will not respond to emails over the weekend, however. To be sure that I answer your question(s), please make sure that your email includes a specific subject line, a proper salutation, and a signature that indicates who you are and which class you are in. I will not respond to emails with blank subject lines or those that lack
salutations or signatures. For more advice about properly communicating with your professors, see Wellesley College’s “How to Email Your Professor” at http://web.wellesley.edu/SocialComputing/Netiquette/netiquetteprofessor.html or talk to me.

Classroom Etiquette
Please be courteous to your fellow students and to me and help us avoid disruptions. If you must arrive late (which I discourage), please try to be unobtrusive. Also, turn off your cell phone and put it somewhere you won’t be tempted to look at it and do not open your laptop during class. The same goes for iPads and other gadgets. It’s impossible for your classmates—not to mention you—to pay attention and participate while people are texting, tweeting, checking out Facebook or Instagram, etc. If I see you using your cell phone or other device during class, I will ask you to put it away. If I have to ask you a second time, I will ask you to leave the classroom for the day. Finally, please be respectful when discussing and disagreeing with the ideas and opinions of others. Argument is an important part of intellectual discussion and the practice of history, so I expect and encourage lively debates that will give you opportunities to work through problems, ask questions, and evaluate answers and interpretations together. I also expect you to show respect toward others and their views, even if they are very different than your own.

Academic Integrity
I take plagiarism—presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own—very seriously, even when done unintentionally. Please carefully study Xavier’s policy on academic honesty (http://www.xavier.edu/library/help/academic_honesty.cfm) and note that penalties generally begin with failure of the course. I will refer all instances of plagiarism to the appropriate dean, who will document the infraction in your student file. So, the best defense is prevention: learn to recognize what plagiarism is and how to properly cite the documents or sources you use, whether you are directly quoting someone else’s words or paraphrasing their thoughts or ideas. For advice on recognizing and avoiding plagiarism, see www.xavier.edu/library/xututor/plagiarism/definition.cfm. For information about how to cite and footnote your sources, consult the Chicago Manual of Style—the most commonly used style guide for historians and the format you will use in your written assignments this semester. For the basics of Chicago Style, see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/. Finally, if you have any questions about plagiarism or proper citation, just ASK! I am happy to answer your questions and it’s better to prevent problems ahead of time.

Academic Support Services
If you think you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (745-3280), located on the fifth floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Room 514, to discuss your situation. Please also schedule a time to talk with me about your needs and sign any necessary paperwork as soon as possible. I also encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center (745-2875), located on the fourth floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Room 400, for help with written assignments. For more information or to schedule an appointment with a writing tutor, see www.xavier.edu/writing_center/.

Readings
There are two required books for this course, both available at the campus bookstore:


We will also read a wide variety of other documents, which will be available on the course Blackboard site or elsewhere online.

**Note:** You must bring the appropriate reading(s) to every class meeting.

**Assignments and Evaluation**

Your final grade will be based on several factors, including in-class participation, reading comprehension quizzes, writing assignments, and in-class examinations. The breakdown is as follows:

- **Participation** = 10% of your grade. Your participation grade will be based on the quality and frequency of your contributions to class. To receive an excellent participation grade you should: attend all class meetings; make regular, thoughtful contributions to class discussions; ask and answer questions during lectures and discussions; and contribute to small group discussions and team quizzes.

- **Discussion Facilitation** = 5% of your grade. You will share responsibility with me for facilitating one in-class discussion. As co-facilitator, you will help the class focus on the most important aspects of the day's reading. You will choose which discussion day you would like to co-facilitate, and you and I will meet before the day you are responsible for to strategize.

- **Map Assignment** = 5% of your grade. Due Wed., Jan. 22. Find the instructions on Blackboard.

- **Ten reading quizzes** = 20% of your grade. There will be ten unannounced reading comprehension quizzes throughout the semester. You will first complete the quiz individually, then work together in teams on the same quiz. Your personal grade for each quiz will be an average of your individual and your team scores (unless you score lower than 60% on the individual quiz, in which case that will be your personal grade). I will drop your two lowest quiz scores at the end of the semester. Note, however, that if you miss a quiz, that will count as one of your two “drops.” I will not schedule any make up quizzes for any reason.

- **Five short (2-3 pages, double spaced) answers to the Reading Response Questions (RRQs) due at various points in the semester (see the schedule below)** = 25% of your grade (5% for each RRQ). Provide a thoughtful, coherent narrative answer to the question(s), based on the reading for that day as well as your own analysis. Printed RRQ responses are due in class—not via email, not after class. Your answer should be in the form of paragraphs, typed, and submitted by the start of the relevant class. Your responses will be graded on a scale of 1-10. Please note that there will be at least eight possible RRQs, so you may choose which five you would like to answer. Your responses will be graded on a scale of 1-10. Please note that there are eleven possible RRQs, so you may choose which five you would like to answer.

- **Mid-term exam** = 10% of the course grade. Your exam grade will be based on your ability to identify key events, individuals, and ideas from readings, discussions, and lectures AND on your ability to use sources to make a thoughtful interpretation or analysis of major historical ideas, change or events. I will provide more information—including a study guide—before the exam and we will review together.
• **Research Paper** = 15% of your grade. You will write a 6-8 page research paper on a topic of your choice (approved by me). Instructions and suggested topics will be posted on Blackboard. A rough draft, due Fri., Apr. 11 is mandatory; the paper is due Mon., April 28. Note that you will need to submit your final paper electronically to www.turnitin.com via Blackboard in addition to the hard copy due in class. (Turnitin.com checks all essays for possible plagiarism. All submitted essays become a permanent part of the database and will be used to check future submissions by other students.)

• **Final exam** = 10% of the course grade. Your exam grade will be based on your ability to identify key events, individuals, and ideas from readings, discussions, and lectures AND on your ability to use sources to make a thoughtful interpretation or analysis of major historical ideas, change or events. I will provide more information—including a study guide—before the exam and we will review together. The exam will be Wed., May 7, from 2-3:50pm.

**Course Schedule**

*Please note that I reserve the right to change the following schedule as necessary. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and on Blackboard as far in advance as possible.*

**Week 1**

**Introduction: Caribbean representations and realities**

Mon., Jan. 13  
Orientation

Wed., Jan. 15  
Introduction to Caribbean History  
—Higman, pp. xi-xii, 1-8  
—**RRQ:** What evidence does Mintz present to support his argument that the Caribbean should not be considered a cultural area? How, then, should we approach the Caribbean?

Fri., Jan. 17  
Discussion: Representing the Caribbean  
—Kincaid, pp. 3-37  
—Choose ONE of the official tourism websites from the list on BB to explore  
—**RRQ:** Compare and contrast the ways that Kincaid and the website of your choice depict tourism in the Caribbean. How might tourists’ experience of the Caribbean compare to those of Caribbean residents or expats?

**Week 2**

**The Caribbean and its people before 1492**

Mon., Jan. 20  
NO CLASS (MLK, JR. Day)

Wed., Jan. 22  
Caribbean Societies before Columbus  
—**Map Assignment** due in class  
—Higman, pp. 9-10, 33-51

Fri., Jan. 24  
Discussion: Indigenous People of the Caribbean  
—**RRQ:** Given the lack of conventional (written) sources for the pre-Columbian Caribbean, how have scholars studied these societies? How confident should we be in our knowledge of Caribbean societies before European colonization?
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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>European “discovery” and first contacts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Jan. 27</td>
<td>Columbus and Contact</td>
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<td>—Higman, pp. 52-60</td>
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<td>Wed., Jan. 29</td>
<td>Discussion: European “Discovery”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>—Excerpts from Christopher Columbus’s log (1492) and letters (1493)</td>
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<td>—<strong>RRQ:</strong> Why did Columbus believe that some indigenous people in the Caribbean were cannibals? What impact do you think this had on European colonization of the Caribbean?</td>
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<td>Fri., Jan. 31</td>
<td>Early Spanish Colonization</td>
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<td>—Higman, pp. 60-89</td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Early Colonies</th>
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<td>Mon., Feb. 3</td>
<td>Library Field trip</td>
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<td>—Before today’s class, look at the list of suggested topics on Blackboard for your research paper and come prepared to search for relevant resources</td>
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<td>Wed., Feb. 5</td>
<td>European Rivalries</td>
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<td>—Higman, pp. 89-96</td>
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<td>Fri., Feb. 7</td>
<td>Early Dutch and English forays</td>
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<td>—Reading TBA</td>
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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Colonization and competition in the seventeenth century</th>
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<td>Mon., Feb. 10</td>
<td>Indentured Servants in the English West Indies</td>
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<td>Wed., Feb. 12</td>
<td>Discussion: Pirates of the Caribbean</td>
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<td>—Kris Lane, <em>Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750</em> (1998) [excerpt]</td>
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<td>—<strong>RRQ:</strong> Lane writes that “no other group of pirates in history has been more celebrated, hated, romanticized, demonized, or otherwise misrepresented than the late-seventeenth century buccaneers.” In what ways have contemporary writers and filmmakers misrepresented Caribbean piracy? Why have pirates attracted popular attention?</td>
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<td>Fri., Feb. 14</td>
<td>NO CLASS (I will be at a conference)</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>The plantation revolution and the rise of slavery</td>
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| Mon., Feb. 17 | Sugar Revolutions  
—Higman, pp. 97-109 |
| Wed., Feb. 19 | From Servants to Slaves in Barbados  
—Higman, pp. 122-130 |
| Fri., Feb. 21 | Discussion: Richard Ligon’s Barbados  
—Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (1657) [excerpt] (BB)  
—**RRQ:** What can Ligon’s history of Barbados tell us about relationships between white indentured servants, enslaved Africans, and free European colonists? |
| Week 7 | Sugar, and the midterm |
| Mon., Feb. 24 | Sugar Production and Consumption  
| Wed., Feb. 26 | Midterm exam review |
| Fri., Feb. 28 | Midterm exam |
| Week 8 |  |
| Mon., Mar. 3 | NO CLASS (Spring Break) |
| Wed., Mar. 5 | NO CLASS (Spring Break) |
| Fri., Mar. 7 | NO CLASS (Spring Break) |
| Week 9 | The Work of Slavery |
| Mon., Mar. 10 | Plantation Labor  
| Wed., Mar. 12 | Discussion: The Slaves’ Economy  
—Selected cases from the fiscals and protectors of slaves records, Berbice (BB)  
—**RRQ:** What kinds of property were most important to enslaved people and why? How did they try to establish and secure their claims to various types of property? |
| Fri., Mar. 14 | Writing Workshop  
—Bring your bibliography and an outline of your research paper to class |
Week 10

**Gender and Slavery**

Mon., Mar. 17
Reproduction and Race  

Wed., Mar. 19
Thomas Thistlewood’s Enslaved Women  

Fri., Mar. 21  
Discussion: Thomas Thistlewood’s Enslaved Women  

Week 11

**Resisting Slavery**

Mon., Mar. 24
NO CLASS (I will be at conference)  
—Continue working on your research paper—the rough draft is due in about two weeks

Wed., Mar. 26
NO CLASS (I will be at conference)  
—Continue working on your research paper—the rough draft is due in about two weeks

Fri., Mar. 28
Varieties of Slave Resistance  
—Higman, pp. 141-145

Week 12

**Resisting Slavery (continued)**

Mon., Mar. 31
Maroons and *Marronage*  
—The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica, in Regard to the Maroon Negroes (1796) [excerpt] (BB)  
—**RRQ**: What threat did maroons pose to Caribbean plantation societies? How did colonial powers deal with maroons?

Wed., Apr. 2
Discussion: Mapping “Tacky’s War”  
—Explore Vincent Brown’s “Slave Revolt in Jamaica, 1760-1761 A Cartographic Narrative,” at [http://revolt.axismaps.com](http://revolt.axismaps.com), before class and read the Project Description. Please bring your computer to class.

Fri., Apr. 4
Saint Domingue & the Haitian Revolution, Part I  
—Higman, pp. 145-53  
**Week 13**

**The Haitian Revolution**

**Mon., Apr. 7**  
Saint Domingue & the Haitian Revolution, Part II

**Wed., Apr. 9**  
Discussion: Assessing the Haitian Revolution  
—**RRQ:** Why, according to Trouillot, was the Haitian Revolution “unthinkable”?  

**Fri., Apr. 11**  
Writing Workshop  
—**Rough Draft of Research Paper due**

**Week 14**

**Abolitionism and Emancipation**

**Mon., Apr. 14**  
Abolishing Slavery  
—Higman, pp. 153-158  

**Wed., Apr. 16**  
Discussion: Apprenticeship  
—James Williams, *A Narrative of Events, since the First of August, 1834, by James Williams, an Apprenticed Labourer in Jamaica* (1837), at http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/williamsjames/williams.html/  
—**RRQ:** What features of life under apprenticeship does Williams emphasize? What, based on your reading of Williams’s account and what you already know about slavery, were the major similarities and differences for Caribbean laborers under slavery and apprenticeship?

**Fri., Apr. 18**  
NO CLASS (Easter Break)

**Week 15**

**After Slavery**

**Mon., Apr. 21**  
NO CLASS (Easter Break)

**Wed., Apr. 23**  
The Problem of Freedom  
—Reading TBA

**Fri., Apr. 25**  
Discussion: Colonial Legacies  
—Kincaid, pp. 41-81  
—**RRQ:** Based on your reading of Kincaid, to what extent do you think the contemporary Caribbean is a product of its colonial past? In what ways are the past and present connected?
Week 16  Conclusions

Mon., Apr. 28  Research Paper Presentations
—Final Research Paper Due

Wed., Apr. 30  Research Paper Presentations (continued)

Fri., May 2  Final Exam Review
(Final Exam: May 7, 2-3:50pm)