Senior Seminar:
Constructing Gender, Race and Nation in the Caribbean
Gender Studies 187

Spring 2017

Instructor: Aisha Finch
Course times: Wednesdays 2:00pm-4:50pm, Rolfe Hall 3116
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-1:30
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Course Description

This seminar will utilize the Caribbean as a point of entry into feminist research and methodologies. The Caribbean region was one of the earliest laboratories of western modernity and one of the earliest testing grounds for American empire. As such, it constitutes an ideal site through which to explore the emergence of racialized forms of gender subordination, systematic extractions of labor (manual, sexual, affective, etc), the rise of postcolonial national cultures, and the growth of a particularly seductive brand of neoliberalism. Over the course of the quarter, students will explore questions such as the following: How do slavery, indenture, colonialism and neocolonialism shape the formation of gender identities? How do race, gender, class, and sexuality converge in the production of a national and cultural citizenship? In what way does the Caribbean allow unique insight to the logic and organization of empire? The responses that students develop to these and other questions will provide the foundation for an original research paper. Through a series of individual and collective exercises, students will produce a rigorous final research project on some aspect of the Caribbean that relates to the themes of the course.

Structure of the Class

A critical part of your experience in this class will be how closely and carefully you engage with the readings. You are expected to complete each night’s readings thoroughly, and come to class prepared to discuss their primary arguments, critiques and insights. As you read, you should make a careful note of each author’s central arguments, the aspects of these arguments you find useful or compelling, and the kinds of questions they provoke. You will be expected to participate in class discussions in a way that shows careful reflection on the readings, not in a way that merely voices an individual opinion. Each week, you should bring at least two discussion questions or points of interest from the readings, and explain why you found them to be provocative or useful. In other words, this is not about speaking up just for the sake of saying something. Since everyone will have put rigorous thought into the week’s arguments, everyone will be expected to share their insights and analyses.
You will be responsible for attending each and every class in its entirety. Because the class only meets once a week and because each person is expected to actively contribute, two or more absences without prior approval by the instructor will automatically result in a lowering of the student’s final grade. If you anticipate that you will be absent for any reason, it is your responsibility to let me know ahead of time and obtain approval.

Final Research Paper

Throughout the quarter, students will be working on a research paper of 13-15 pages that is related to the themes of the course. Each component of the paper will be discussed in greater detail over the course of the quarter. Note however, that you will need to start researching your topic right away. You will be expected to consult with the instructor about your topic at least once during the first five weeks of class – the earlier the better – and with relevant library staff members, as needed. You will also be required to submit a two-page abstract, a working bibliography and a rough draft of your research paper as per the dates below.

Course Grading:

- Class participation which includes: weekly attendance; individual points of discussion and inquiry; critical engagement with other students; and active participation in all other course activities. 30%
- Abstract of Research Paper & Working Bibliography 15%
- Rough Draft of Research Paper 25%
- Final Research Paper 30%

Course Readings

Books available for purchase at the UCLA Bookstore: Jamaica Kincaid, A Small Place

All other readings for the class will be available on the course website: https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/17S-GENDER187-2. You will be asked to respect our classroom community and not use the internet at any point during class, unless requested by the instructor. Please refrain as well from using phones, i-pods, or any other superfluous electronic items during class.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1: Conceptualizing the Caribbean
Apr 5:

❖ Course Introduction

Week 2: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slavery Systems
Apr 12:

❖ Hilary Beckles, *Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society*, chap 1 (ch 2 will be recommended reading)

Recommended:

❖ Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*

❖ Visit from Diana King, Gender Studies Librarian
❖ Begin preliminary research on paper topic

Week 3: Black Women’s Bodies, Black Women’s Resistance: Slave Emancipation in the British Caribbean
Apr 19:

❖ Pamela Scully and Diana Paton, eds. *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World*, introduction
❖ Lightfoot, “Sinful Conexions: Christianity, Social Surveillance, and Black Women’s Bodies,” in *Troubling Freedom*
Recommended:

-Ileana Rodriguez, *Silencing Race: Disentangling Blackness, Colonialism, and National Identities in Puerto Rico*

Submit 1-2 Paragraphs Describing Paper Topic

**Week 4: Indian Indentured Servitude and the Politics of Gender**

**Apr 26:**


Recommended:

-Patricia Mohammed, *Gender Negotiations Among Indians in Trinidad*


-Begin work on Paper Abstract & Bibliography

**Week 5: Sexuality, Femininity, and the Politics of Representation in Jamaica and Trinidad**

**May 3:**

-Carolyn Cooper, *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large*, chapter 3: “Lady Saw Cuts Loose”

-Tejaswini Niranjana, “Take a Little Chutney, Add a Touch of Kaiso: The Body in the Voice,” in *Mobilizing India: Women, Music, and Migration Between India and Trinidad*

Recommended:

Natasha Barnes, *Cultural Conundrums: Race, Gender, Nation and the Making of Caribbean Cultural Politics*

Carolyn Cooper, *Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender and the "Vulgar" Body of Jamaican Popular Culture*

Begin work on Paper Abstract & Bibliography

**Week 6:** U.S Empire in the Caribbean

**May 10:**

Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*, intro and ch. 1

Turn in Paper Abstract & Working Bibliography

**Week 7:** Paradise and its Discontents: Tourism and the Post-Plantation Caribbean Culture

**May 17:**

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Simone Schwarz-Bart, *Between Two Worlds*, excerpt


Begin Working on Rough Drafts of Research Papers

**Week 8:** The Gender and Racial Politics of the Cuban Revolution

**May 24:**


Devyn Spence Benson, *Antiracism in Cuba: The Unfinished Revolution*, intro

Continue Working on Rough Drafts
Week 9: “Neoliberalism after Dark”: Sex Work in the Caribbean

May 31:

 Amalia Cabezas, Economies of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, chapters 1 and 4

Recommended:

Kamala Kempadoo, Sexing the Caribbean: Gender, Race, and Sexual Labor

 قادر : Turn in Rough Drafts on Friday, May 26th!
 قادر : Prepare brief presentation of your research for class next week

Week 10: Course conclusion

Jun 7:

☆ Individual presentations of student research
☆ Film viewings:
  ○ Life and Debt (2001), Directed by Stephanie Black
    Directed by Honor Ford-Smith and Harclyde Walcott
☆ Final Discussion of Papers & Course Conclusion

Recommended:


***FINAL PAPER DUE DATE TBD***