

Not One but Many: Latinidad and Anglophone Caribbean Literatures

English 321: Literatures of Diversity of North America



Professors M. S. Caballero and A. Lockridge

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Office Hours:

Caballero: M/W 4:45- 6, Tuesdays 1- 4:30

Lockridge: M 1- 3pm, T/Th 1- 2:30pm, W 4:45- 5:45pm

Joint: Tuesdays 1- 2pm

Required texts:

Alvarez, Julia. *In the Time of the Butterflies*

Cliff, Michelle. *No Telephone to Heaven*

Danticat, Edwige. *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

Ferre, Rosario. *Sweet Diamond Dust*

Hodge, Merle. *Crick Crack Monkey*

Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*

Obejas, Achy. *Memory Mambo*

course readings (available on Sakai)

Objectives:

This course will focus on Afro-Caribbean and Latino/a-Caribbean literary texts, with a particular focus on the intersections of racial and linguistic identities. The Caribbean is a site of the literary histories of “the New World” yet historically literature courses center either on Afro-Caribbean literatures or Latino/a Caribbean literatures. In this class we will engage them together in order to highlight the complex literary history of what is often monolithically called “Caribbean literature.” We will have the opportunity to study the ways race, language, and identity converge and diverge in these literary texts and the complicated ways in which authors contend with histories of Spanish, British, and American imperialisms. Questions we may focus on include: what are the legacies of colonialisms in the Caribbeans we encounter textually? How and to what extent do race and language intersect in the authors’ conceptions of “the island” and of the emigration from it? Does gender and sexuality matter when considering linguistic and/or racial topographies? What is the role of family and nation in the dynamics of racial and linguistic identities as our authors and texts conceive of them?

Course Policies:

1. *Attendance:* You are permitted two absences without question. Your final grade will be reduced by three points for each subsequent absence and after four, students will receive an automatic failure for the class.

2. *Reading and Quizzes:* The reading of literary and critical texts is a requirement of this course. As a student in an upper division literature course, you are expected to be able to complete an aggressive reading schedule. If you do not have the time to devote to the course readings, we would welcome to you register for the class when your schedule permits. All reading assignments are to be completed in advance of their scheduled appearance on the syllabus. There will be a reading quiz posted to Sakai every Sunday afternoon which will be due Monday at 2:30pm. You will have a set amount of time to complete the quiz and will not be allowed to return to past questions or resubmit your quiz for any reason. Think carefully about your answers. Always complete course readings before taking the quiz. Also, please note that while you are being given the privilege of taking quizzes at your leisure, on an honor system, dishonesty of any sort will be dealt with harshly. Under no circumstances will make-up quizzes be granted; failure to complete your quiz, for any reason, will result in a grade of zero. Your two lowest grades will be dropped as compensation.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you do not bring your books, handouts, materials to class, you will be asked to leave and get them and then return to class. Too many of these incidents will detrimentally affect your final grade.

3. *Class Participation:* Class participation is a necessary component of any literature course and is required in order to earn a competitive grade in this course. This portion of your grade is often the difference between receiving the “A-“you hoped for and the “B+”. But more than that, participating in class discussion allows you to engage your own ideas and presents you with more opportunities for intellectual growth and stimulation. In order that everyone is able to mutually benefit from participation in class discussion, please observe the following guidelines and grading criteria for class participation.

A participation is marked by its active nature, its consistency, and its quality. An **A** participant doesn't wait to respond to questions that the instructor poses but initiates discussion by coming prepared with questions, ideas, observations about the reading assigned that day. This participant will also be consistently engaged in class discussion, always letting me know that she/he has engaged the reading thoroughly and thoughtfully. Finally an **A** participant will not try to substitute quantity of participation for quality (being consistent is not the same thing as dominating a discussion). To earn the highest grade for your participation, you will want to make it possible for others to participate productively too (this is not a competition); thus, habits such as interrupting others and taking up too much conversational space will not enhance your grade. It will also do you no good to participate if you haven't done the reading. I expect participation to be firmly grounded in careful and thoughtful reading. As the **A** reader reads, she or he prepares to participate in a class discussion with other readers.

A **B** discussant is less consistent than an **A** in initiating discussion but is active in responding to questions or problems posed by the professor and other students. To get a **B** in participation, you will need to be in class and talk regularly-- more, certainly, than once during a class session once a week or so. Regular means regular. This level of class participation will also communicate clearly to me that you have done all the reading for the day and that you have done it thoughtfully. This level will also include productive discussion habits, such as engaging the ideas of others, not dominating, listening carefully, etc.

A **C** grade for participation means that you have contributed in an average way to the discussion. Your contributions have been less frequent than those of the **B** participant or have let me know that you are not always keeping up with the reading or have, in some way, interfered with good discussion--for instance, a “dominator” would get credit for participating often but would get knocked down to a **C** for taking over and not engaging others in discussion. In short, you have not been silent or absent or altogether uninvolved, but your involvement did not work consistently to make the class a productive learning experience.

A **D** grade means that you were there physically most of the time and maybe even piped up three or four times during the semester but that's it. It's just the grade it should be--a minimal passing grade.

An **F** grade should need no explanation.

4. *Plagiarism and the Honor Code:* Plagiarism is another word for stealing. When you plagiarize you directly or indirectly use the ideas and/or language of another person or persons without acknowledgement and claim these words and ideas as your own. Not only is it a serious offense and grounds for academic expulsion, it is also against the law. You are plagiarizing if you do any or all of the following, though please keep in mind that these are not the only ways to plagiarize: 1) Use others' words directly without proper citation and quotations, 2) Use others' ideas and wording so closely (paraphrasing) that you are essentially quoting them without proper acknowledgement, 3) re-use assignments not written for this class and pretend that they are written for this class, 4) Borrow, buy, steal, download (you get the idea) others' essays, ideas, words, language, etc. and pass them off as your own. Please see either of us at any time if you have citation and documentation questions. Should either of us suspect any act of plagiarism, we will immediately report it to the Honor Committee and recommend that the student receive a zero for the assignment and an F for

the course.

Writing Requirements:

- 2 short responses papers (2 pages each)*
- 1 essay proposal
- 1 annotated bibliography
- 1 critical/analytical research essay (10 – 12 pages)

Please be aware that all writing must be submitted to the appropriate Sakai link at 2:30pm on the days outlined in the syllabus. All submitted work must be typed, double-spaced with 1” inch margins and in an appropriate font (Times New Roman in 12 point is usually standard), paginated, dated, and with your name at top of the first page. Use MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation format when necessary. In addition, late assignments will be accepted will receive a penalty of a letter grade reduction for *each* day the essay is late. After one week, the essay will no longer be accepted and a grade of “F” and a score of zero will be recorded for the assignment.

Students are encouraged to avail themselves of the tutors in the Learning Commons as they begin and work through assignments. Neither professor is available to read drafts.

**Response papers: (some hints)*

Response papers are formal, but decisively precise, short, and well-conceived documents. Generally two pages, they have a very defined argument, and focus on the text and its language almost exclusively. Think of them as potential building blocks for your longer critical essay or as useful moments of writing to work out a very particularized thing in a text, which can be useful for your facilitation. These pieces have one very narrow, but very clear idea and they are “finished” pieces. You may, for example, do a close-reading of a particularly knotty passage, paying attention to tone, to diction and syntax, etc. You may focus on a turn of phrase you think is worth teasing out more carefully in the context of the text as a whole. The point is that you have 2 pages to work something out that requires this length to do it effectively and compellingly. This is harder than it seems, so take your time and work diligently.

6. *Grading Structure:* Your grade will be assessed based on the following coursework:

Sakai Quizzes:	15%
Proposal & Annotated bibliography:	15%
Response Papers (2):	30%
Interpretative Research Essay:	30%
Class Participation:	15%

Grading Scale	
93- 100	A
90- 92	A-
89- 87	B+
86- 84	B
83- 80	B-
79- 77	C+
76-74	C
73- 70	C-
69- 65	D
64 & below	F

7. *Other Information:*

- Students should schedule appointments during office hours.
- Students may contact Professors Caballero and Lockridge via email. Please allow 2 business days for email responses.
- Please turn off cell phones for class. If a cell phone rings, Professor Lockridge or Caballero will answer it.
- The calendar is subject to change as the semester progresses.

Please Note: If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning challenge that may impact your ability to carry out assigned course work, I strongly urge you to contact John Mangine, the Director of Student Support Services, in the Pelletier Library at (814) 332-2898 or john.mangine@allegheny.edu. John Mangine and the staff at the Learning Commons will review your concerns and determine, with you, what

accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

Reading Schedule (subject to change)

Thursday, Jan. 19 Introductory theory

Tilling the Ground: Some Foundational Concepts

Tuesday, Jan. 24 “Introduction” to *The Other America: Caribbean in a New World*
Context by J. Michael Dash (Sakai)

Thursday, Jan. 26 “If I Could Write this in Fire I Would Write this in Fire” by Michelle
Cliff (Sakai) & “On First Seeing England” by Jamaica Kincaid (Sakai)

Allegories of Nationalism

Tuesday, Jan. 31 *Sweet Diamond Dust*, pp. vii- 85

Thursday, Feb 2 *Sweet Diamond Dust*, pp. 89- 118

Tuesday, Feb. 7 *Sweet Diamond Dust*, pp. 121- 197

Thursday, Feb. 9 “Latin, Latino, American: Split States and Global Imaginaries” by
Professor Roman de la Campa (Sakai)

People Like Us: Making the Colonial Subject

Tuesday, Feb. 14 “Girl” and Education essay

Thursday, Feb. 16 *Crick Crack Monkey*, p vii- 76

Tuesday, Feb. 21 *Crick Crack Monkey*, p 76- end
(**Response paper #1 due on *Sweet Diamond Dust***)

Resistance on the Island

Thursday, Feb. 23 *In the Time of the Butterflies*, pp 3- 59

Tuesday, Feb. 24 *In the Time of the Butterflies*, pp 63- 168

Thursday, Feb. 26 *In the Time of the Butterflies*, pp 171- 226

Tuesday, March 3 *In the Time of the Butterflies*, pp 227- end

Family Pasts: The Violences and Vicissitudes of Love

Thursday, March 5 *Breath, Eyes, Memory* pg 3-111

Tuesday, March 10 *Breath, Eyes, Memory* pg 102-236

Thursday, March 12 *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (con’t)

Tuesday, March 17 Spring break

Thursday, March 20 Spring break

Tuesday, March 24 *Memory Mambo* pg 9-99
(**Response Paper #2 due on *Breath Eyes Memory***)

Thursday, March 26 *Memory Mambo* pg 100-186

Tuesday, March 31 *Memory Mambo* pg 187-237
Thursday, April 2 “We Came All the Way from Cuba so You Could Dress Like That?”
 (Sakai)

Tuesday, April 7 *No Telephone to Heaven* pg 1-84
Thursday, April 9 *No Telephone to Heaven* pg 87-140
(Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due)

Tuesday, April 14 *No Telephone to Heaven* pg 143-208
Thursday, April 16 *No Telephone to Heaven* (con’t)

Allegories of Nationalism, Take II

Tuesday, April 21 *A Small Place*
Thursday, April 23 *A Small Place*

Tuesday, April 28 Muddying the Waters

Final essay due Saturday, May 5, 2012 @ noon to Sakai link