

**Carleton University
Winter 2015
Department of English**

**ENGL 3940A: *Studies in Diaspora Literature:
Introduction to Caribbean Literature***

Tuesdays 2:35-5:25

Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

Instructor: Professor Sarah Phillips Casteel

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Office: 1801 Dunton

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00-11:30

Course Description:

The Caribbean is often imagined as a carefree zone of sun, sand and sea. Behind the tourist's fantasy, however, lies the far more complex and tragic history of colonialism, plantation agriculture, slavery and indentureship that produced the modern Caribbean. In this course, we will examine this difficult history through the lens of the rich literary tradition of the Caribbean and its diasporas. We will begin by reading pioneering novels, poetry and essays by the Windrush generation of Caribbean writers that was based in London in the early postwar period. We will then discuss a series of more recent works of poetry and prose that reframe the colonial past, foreground alternative ethnic and gender perspectives, and chart new directions for Caribbean poetics.

In approaching this material, we will consider the following: What kinds of questions do Caribbean literary texts ask about the historical past and how do they address gaps in the colonial archive? What aesthetic strategies do Caribbean writers employ to interrogate and decolonize views of race, gender, and sexuality; to articulate notions of creolization; and to remap the Caribbean landscape? How do anglophone Caribbean writers transform and democratize the "Queen's English," and what is their relationship to creole languages as well as to other language literatures of the region? Alongside the novels and poetry, we will also consider examples of performance (calypso, spoken word poetry, film) that will enrich our understanding of the close relationship between oral cultural forms and Caribbean written texts.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

10%	attendance and participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular attendance is essential to your success in this course • you are expected to come to class prepared, having completed the assigned reading and with the assigned text in hand • the class will combine lecture and discussion; the quality of the class experience will depend on your willingness to engage with the texts and to share your views with your fellow students 	
15%	in-class writing exercises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • several times over the course of the term you will be asked to complete in-class writing exercises • the exercises may ask you to apply a new term or idea to the assigned reading, to give a close reading of a passage, or to explore your own personal response to the reading or to an audiovisual work • they will be unannounced and there will be no make-up exercises except in cases of serious illness (with doctor's note), bereavement, or religious observance • you may miss 1 in-class writing exercise without penalty; if you complete all 4 of the exercises, I will drop your lowest grade 	
5%	research essay proposal and annotated bibliography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a 1-paragraph description of your proposed topic and approach • bibliographic entries should be in MLA format; each entry should summarize the central argument of the source and its relevance to the proposed essay topic 	due in mid-March
40%	research essay (10-12 pages) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essays must address at least one of the assigned novels or long poems • suggested topics will be distributed in class but I encourage you to develop your own topic if you wish 	due in last class
30%	final exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one scheduled examination consisting of identifications and essay questions 	during exam period

List of required texts:

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*
 V.S. Naipaul, *The Mystic Masseur*
 Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*
 Caryl Phillips, *Cambridge*
 Shani Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night*
 Patricia Powell, *The Pagoda*
 Michelle Cliff, *Abeng*

All texts will be available at Haven Books (43 Seneca St. at Sunnyside, (613) 730-9888). In addition, readings marked * will be available in electronic format via CULearn and the Ares Course Reserves system (<http://libares01.carleton.ca/>) or the library catalogue. *If you find that a required reading is not available for a given week, please notify me immediately by email.*

Course Policies

Email:

- Please use your cmail email account so that I can communicate with you and so that you will receive class emails.

Etiquette:

- Turn off all cell phones in class, as well as any other electronic devices.
- Refrain from talking during class or any other behaviour that is distracting to the instructor and your fellow students.
- Be respectful of each other's perspectives and strive to make sure that every student feels comfortable expressing his or her views.

Completion of Assignments:

- In order to pass the course, **you must complete all** of the course requirements. This includes keeping up with the assigned reading and coming to class prepared and with the assigned text in hand.

Plagiarism:

- Plagiarism is a serious offence, and I am required to report *all* cases to the Dean of the Faculty. Plagiarism includes copying from a book, article, or another student, downloading ideas or material from the internet, or otherwise submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own. See section 14 of the Undergraduate Calendar for further information and come see me if you have any questions or concerns regarding the appropriate use of secondary or internet sources.

Exam:

- The exam will be held during the exam period. Make sure that you do not schedule any holidays until the exam schedule becomes available.

Essay Format:

- Use **MLA format** for all citations, bibliographies etc. (consult the *MLA Handbook* or the Purdue Online Writing Lab at owl.english.purdue.edu for details).
- Staple your essay, double space the text, and type it in 12-point font.
- Include a title, word count, your name, my name, your student number, and the course number.

Essay Content:

- Offer fully developed arguments, employing the vocabulary and analytical frameworks introduced in class.
- Ground your arguments in close readings of the texts and organize them around a central thesis.
- I encourage you to consult me, the TA, and/or the Writing Tutorial Service (404 MacOdrum Library, wts@carleton.ca, 520-2600 x.1125, www.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service) when preparing your essays.

Grading of Essays:

- Essays are graded on logical coherence, grammar, spelling, adherence to MLA format and appropriate use of secondary sources.
- Keep your rough drafts and notes for each assignment. I reserve the right to examine such materials if I deem it necessary.
- Essays are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the syllabus. **I will deduct a third of a letter grade per day late including weekends** (ie. a B would become a B-) and

extensions will be granted only in cases of serious illness (with doctor's note), bereavement, or religious observance. Any essays not handed directly to me during class must be handed in to the English Department secretary, who will date-stamp them.

- Late papers may be graded without comments.

Academic Accommodations

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>

Schedule of Readings and Assignments (subject to revision)

date	theme	reading
Jan 6	Introduction	
Jan 13	the Tourist Gaze	Kincaid, <i>A Small Place</i> <u>screening</u> : <i>Life and Debt</i> , dir. Stephanie Black
Jan 20	Foundational Essays	Lamming, "The Occasion for Speaking"; Brathwaite, "Timehri"; Harris, "Tradition and the West Indian Novel"; Walcott, "The Muse of History"*
Jan 27	Caribbean Voices	Naipaul, <i>The Mystic Masseur</i> <u>screening</u> : <i>The Mystic Masseur</i> , dir. Ismael Merchant (clip) <u>audio recording</u> : <i>Caribbean Voices</i> (BBC documentary)
Feb 3	the Mother Country	Selvon, <i>The Lonely Londoners</i> Bennett, "Colonisation in Reverse"*
Feb 10	Return to Africa	Brathwaite, selected poems from <i>Masks</i> <u>audio recording</u> : <i>The Arrivants</i>
Feb 24	Slavery	Phillips, <i>Cambridge</i> <u>screening</u> : <i>12 Years a Slave</i> , dir. Steve McQueen (clip)
March 3	Indian Indentureship	Mootoo, <i>Cereus Blooms at Night</i> Das, "They Came in Ships"*
March 10	Chinese Indentureship	Powell, <i>The Pagoda</i> <u>screening</u> : Stacey Ann Chin, spoken word performance (clips)
March 17	Decolonizing the Mind	Cliff, <i>Abeng</i> <u>audio recording</u> : Mighty Sparrow, "Dan is the Man"
March 24	Caribbean Epic	Walcott, <i>Omeros</i> (excerpt)* <u>audio recording</u> : <i>Omeros</i>
March 31	Theorizing the Caribbean	Walcott, "The Antilles"; Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora"; Glissant, <i>Caribbean Discourse</i> (excerpt); Benitez-Rojo, <i>The Repeating Island</i> (excerpt)*
April 7	Conclusion	exam review