

# **“CUBA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, PUERTO RICO”**

Portland State University, Black Studies 326U CRN#44186, Winter 2011

## **SYLLABUS**

Instructor: Pedro Ferbel-Azcárate, Ph.D,

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Class Meeting Time & Place: Tues and Thurs 10AM- 11.50AM: FAB 40-07

Office/ Hours: Black Studies Department, 245 XSB (Extended Studies Building on Park Blocks), TTH Noon-1PM and by appointment.

### **Course Description**

This class surveys the archaeology, history, culture, geography, gender relations, race, ethnicity, and religion of the people of the Spanish speaking Caribbean—Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. We focus on the Indigenous people of the Caribbean, the impact of European colonization on the region-- systems of slavery, racism, sexism, resource extraction and other forms of oppression-- and stories of human struggle, political resistance, nation building and creative identity-making. We highlight the transculturative “creolization” emblematic of the region, and take on an “archaeology of the present” to investigate contemporary social processes including immigration, globalization, regional politics and, ultimately, the expression of the diversity of the human experience in the Spanish speaking Caribbean.

We approach this course from an anthropological perspective within a generalized framework of Black Studies. We situate multidisciplinary interpretations of history and culture within their socio-historic context, and assess these interpretations, especially from less privileged and less represented perspectives. In the case of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, this means reading between the lines of European and Euro-American history, and finding the voices of the people of Indigenous, African, and Afro-Mestizo ancestry and culture. This inquiry demands **critical thinking** and the **clear expression of ideas**; students will be expected to demonstrate engagement in these modes of inquiry.

### **Black Studies Learning Outcomes Related to this Class**

1. Students will understand the history and contemporary cultures of peoples of African ancestry in the African Diaspora (Latin American Caribbean). Within this focus will be an attention paid to the social and environmental sustainability of different societies during different times in history.
2. Students will acquire and demonstrate proficient use of research skills that enable them to critically analyze, conduct research, and provide explanations for the complex relationships in Black experiences domestically and internationally.

3. Students will understand concepts of “race,” racism, culture, ethnicity, class, and gender. Students will be able to describe how these concepts manifest various forms of oppression that have arisen historically.
4. Students will understand that there are multiple perspectives on our collective understanding of history, culture, politics, psychology, etc. and that these fields of study themselves are socially constructed and often highly politicized.
5. Students will understand and be able to critically examine Black Identities in their various forms and contexts such as African American, Afro Caribbean, and Africans in Central and South America.

## Student Responsibilities

Please note that this syllabus is a close approximation of what we will be doing in class, and students are responsible for understanding its contents. The instructor reserves the right to make changes as appropriate. It is the student’s responsibility to come to class to be aware of any changes in assignments, fieldtrips and deadlines.

It is the student’s responsibility to contact instructor in case of emergencies or any questions related to class work, tardiness or absences.

## Disability Resources

If you have a disability and are in need of academic accommodations, please notify the instructor immediately to arrange needed support. For more information about the Disability Resource Center, see <http://www.pdx.edu/iasc/drc.html>.

## Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend class regularly and are strongly advised that they bear the sole responsibility for keeping current on readings, lectures, and notes.

Attendance will be noted and students may get a lower grade with any more than two unexcused (2) absences.

Tardiness is defined as arriving to class after the scheduled start time. If students have a conflict, which prevents them from attending class or arriving on time, they are advised to speak directly with the instructor so they do not suffer grade reductions for tardiness.

Portland State University policy for religious holy days: "Any student who, because of religious beliefs, is unable to attend classes on a particular day shall be excused from attendance requirements and from any examination or other assignment on that day. The student shall make up the examination or other assignment missed because of the absence. Students should make arrangements with their instructors prior to the holy day."

## Student Conduct and Participation in Class

We must all work together to make this class the best learning environment for you and your fellow students. Coming to class on time and being prepared will assist in making our class a dynamic place of learning. Being prepared includes such behaviors as completing assignments on time, taking notes on assigned readings and bringing in pertinent questions for class discussion. Participation also means listening and encouraging others to speak—especially if you are a student who has no fears of speaking, or taking risks to speak up if you consider yourself a shy student in class discussion. Participation involves active listening—supporting opinions or challenging them in thoughtful non-confrontational ways. Class participation is as much about sharing your voice and ideas as it is about learning to listen and cooperate with others—your grade will reflect both these skills.

All students should be familiar with PSU's Code of Student Conduct and Responsibility available at [www.ess.pdx.edu/osa/osa](http://www.ess.pdx.edu/osa/osa) or at the Office of Student Affairs Smith Center room 433. This code spells out the legal parameters, which all students must respect, in order to ensure that our classroom is a safe place for all.

Students are expected to be critically engaged and respectful of varying opinions in the classroom. We will follow seminar guidelines to keep our classroom a safe place, including no interrupting when someone is talking, no name-calling or insulting commentaries, and asking clarifying questions as opposed to arguing. Students will be mindful that our different backgrounds, experiences, understandings, and positions in regards to various class topics make it imperative that we listen to each other. In the interest of openness, and in accordance with the constitutional right to free speech, students are encouraged to write and speak freely. However the value of judgments and analysis in this class is based on merit and not on any prejudicial practice. Ultimately, the safety of our learning environment is more important than any student's perceived right to free speech—we will caution on the side of no student ever feeling insulted in their place of learning. "*Strive to understand first, then to be understood.*"

All students are encouraged to speak with the instructor during office hours to ask questions, clarify or seek ways to more effectively communicate their point of view if they do not feel comfortable asking such questions in class.

Any form of sexual harassment in our classroom is prohibited. Please see the student code for details on the policy. Know that sexual harassment is defined as "*Any unwelcome and unwanted advance or request for sexual favor or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when... such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.*" This means that every student has the right to be in a classroom that is completely safe from harassment. If you feel your classroom is not a safe place for you to be, speak to the instructor immediately.

No cell phones in disruptive ring mode allowed in class. Our educational environment is respectful: no text messaging or other personal distractions allowed.

## Assignments

Note that late assignments, except in the case of legitimate emergencies, will be penalized by a grade reduction of 25% per day.

Further note that the State Board of Higher Education and PSU prohibits all forms of academic cheating, fraud, and dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, buying and stealing of

course assignments and research papers, performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) by other person, unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information, and such other practices commonly understood to be academically dishonest. The instructor reserves the right to assign a grade of F to any student who is academically dishonest. The Writing Center at PSU has a prepared document, which describes plagiarism in greater detail, available at [www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/resources/resources.html](http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/resources/resources.html).

All written assignments in this class, including midterms and finals, are expected to use academic style and provide detailed examples and references from assigned and researched readings.

The Final research project will be an opportunity to delve deeper in a topic related to this class. Students may choose to work in groups; final projects include short 3-5 minute presentations to the class.

## Writing Resources

The Writing Center - 188F Cramer Hall, 5-3570. The Writing Center is available for PSU students needing relatively minor or specific help with a piece of writing. The Writing Center can also give students advice on citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, etc.

Writing for International Students or Non-Native English Speakers - Classes are available for students with language and/or cultural issues, and need major help with writing. The classes are LING 115, Writing for Non-Native Residents, from the Linguistics Department, or WR 121, College Writing for International Students, from the English Department. The linguistics course emphasizes language and cultural skills and the English course emphasizes the writing process. For additional advice in the Linguistics Department contact Ruth Chapin (5-4147) or Judy Reed (5-8793).

## Approximate Assignment of Grades

20 % Attendance, check-offs\* and active participation in class sessions

15 % Individual research assignments

20 % The MFQ (Mid Final Quiz)

25 % The BFQ (Big Final Quiz)

20% Final Project

\* Students are required to visit with professor for a short conference to check-in after the MFQ.

## Required Readings and Texts

Dominican Republic in Focus: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture by David Howard. Latin American Bureau, London, 1999. PSU Bookstore.

Cuba For Beginners by Rius. Mexican publishers 1969. (on reserve CD)

Culture Shock! Cuba: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette by Mark Cramer. Times Media Private Limited, Singapore, 1999. (NOT AVAILABLE)

Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century by Maria de los Reyes Castillo Bueno. Duke University Press, 2000. PSU Bookstore.

Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writings-- an Anthology edited by Roberto Santiago. Balantine Books, 1995. PSU Bookstore.

Other readings will be made available on a reserve CD in the Black Studies department.

## Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico—Winter 2011 Calendar

Date	Topic	Activity	Assignments Due
Tues, Jan 4	Intros, overview of class; Anthropology; Basic terms of history and culture; Caribbean Geography	Defining the dynamics of our human selves; Caribbean geography; small groups.	
Thurs, Jan 6	Begin human migrations into the Caribbean	Seminar discussions.	Read over syllabus carefully—bring questions; Read on line “AAA Statement on Race”; and search: “Caribbean, Caribbean History and Culture, Cuba, D.R. P.R. Etc.”
Tues, Jan 11	The Indigenous People of the Caribbean—pre-Columbus to Contact period. Colonization: from Village to City.	Topical images. Hand out Assignment 1	Read assigned selections at <a href="http://www.centrelink.org">www.centrelink.org</a> including: <a href="http://www.kwabs.com/king_ferdinand_letter.html">www.kwabs.com/king_ferdinand_letter.html</a>
Thurs, Jan 13	Spanish colonization and Taino survival in the Spanish speaking Caribbean	Topical images; Columbus memory resistance; Indigenous Caribbean survival; Casabe bread! Tainos in New York	Read: “Not Everyone who Speaks Spanish is from Spain” at <a href="http://www.kacike.org">www.kacike.org</a> and “Ocama Daca Taino” in coursepack CD
Tues, Jan 18	Afro-Caribbean culture, Maroons	Images from El Cobre, Cuba Discuss evidence for Taino survival	Assignment 1
Thurs, Jan 20	Dominican Republic—Intro and overview	Video—Race and Culture, D.R. and Haiti; Trujillo the Goat and Oscar Wao Hand out Assignment 2	Read: <u>Dominican Republic In Focus</u> Chs. 1-2; “Race, Color, and Class in the Caribbean” by A. Maingot in coursepack CD and pages 79-95 in <u>Boricuas</u>
Tues, Jan 25	D.R.	Movie—“Nueba Yol”	Keep reading <u>Dominican Republic In Focus</u> Chs 3-4
Thurs, Jan 27	D.R.	Movie—“Our American Girls”	Finish <u>Dominican Republic In Focus</u>
Tues, Feb 1	End D.R. and begin Cuba—Intro and Overview	Connections, loose ends, launchings	Assignment 2 Read: <u>Reyita</u> Intro and chs. 1-2; Article about Cuba from CD Coursepack
Thurs, Feb 3	Cuba—the revolution	Movie excerpts—“Yo Soy Cuba” Hand out MFQ study guide	Keep up with readings!
Tues, Feb 8	Cuba	Documentary—“Che” MFQ questions	Read: <u>Cuba for Beginners</u> in CD Coursepack; Finish <u>Reyita</u>
Thurs, Feb 10	Midterm	The <b>Midterm</b> MFQ! Hand out Assignment 3	Study for MFQ
Tues, Feb 15	Midterm check-in; Final Projects	Hand out Final Project info	Schedule individual Mid term check ins

Thurs, Feb 17	Cuba—contemporary society	Movie—“Fresa Y Chocolate”	
Tues, Feb 22	Cuba and Puerto Rico Intro	Documentary—“A Day in Havana”	(Finish all Cuba readings) <u>Boricuas</u> : Intro, History and Politics pp.19-29
Thurs, Feb 24	Puerto Rico—Intro and Overview	Movie: “Mi Puerto Rico”	
Tues, Mar 1	Puerto Rico; Summary and Conclusions		<u>Boricuas</u> : History and Politics pp.30-76 Assignment 3 due
Thurs, Mar 3	Creolization in <i>Comida Criolla</i> Cuban cooking	Fieldtrip to Pambiche Restaurant 2811 NE Glisan 10.30AM-11.30AM	
Tues, Mar 8	Topics	Presentations of research; Hand out Study guide for final	Final research papers/ products due
Thurs, Mar 10	Final Class	Presentations of research	Final research papers/ products
Tues, Mar 15	The BFQ	Final Exam	Study!