

Introduction to Caribbean Studies (LHCS 01:595:100)

Most North Americans view the Caribbean as a tropical paradise of palm trees and resorts for tourist consumption. Our goal in this introductory course is to understand the diverse histories, cultures, and forms of thinking of Caribbean societies beyond these stereotypes. The course typically begins with the geographical and sociocultural aspects of the Caribbean and an overview of its history. Contact between European powers and indigenous peoples, Africans, and Asians within the contexts of colonialism and slavery were largely responsible for producing the complex societies and political fragmentation of today. We then approach the modern Caribbean through different topics, such as globalization and inequality; migration and diaspora; the legacies of slavery and colonialism; race and racism; gender and sexuality; and tourism. We also explore various artistic, intellectual, and religious traditions, including the music styles of calypso, reggae, and salsa, as well as literature, film, critical thinking, social movements, and politics.

This course satisfies the following SAS Core Learning Goal in 21st Century Challenges:

[B] Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Course Learning Goals

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- identify major people, events, and ideas and connect them within a larger “story” of Caribbean history, society, and culture
- identify Caribbean cities and states on a map and differentiate according to colonial heritage and political status
- develop critical thinking skills through engagement with interdisciplinary scholarship in Caribbean studies and analysis of primary sources
- understand the basic elements of intellectual traditions, literature, music, and art from the Caribbean and the diaspora

A complete description of Department Learning Goals and Major/Minor requirements can be found on the LHCS website: <http://latcar.rutgers.edu/>

Required reading material:*

The course materials consist of journal articles, essays, text selections, and book chapters that are available from the Sakai site at sakai.rutgers.edu. In addition, students are typically required to purchase at least one monograph or novel, which could include any of the following:

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* [ISBN 9781594483295]

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. [ISBN: 978-0802143006]

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* [ISBN 0374527075]

Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969*. [ISBN: 978-0394715025]

*Consult Rutgers Barnes & Noble for **current** books for the course. Additional readings, primary sources, websites, and articles are available on Sakai.

Evaluation:*

Reading Journals/Blog Entries = 20%

Class Participation = 10%

Midterm Exam (in-class) = 25%

Focus Project/Short Oral Presentation = 20%

Final Essay Exam (take-home) = 25%

*The required readings and evaluation breakdown may vary slightly from semester to semester. This synopsis is intended for informative purposes only; it is provisional and subject to change before the beginning of the semester.