

Post-colonial Caribbean Theater and Performance (LCS 01:595:342)

Instructor: Camilla Stevens

The objective of this class is to become acquainted with the theater and performance traditions of the post-colonial Caribbean and its diaspora. Through the study of plays from the 1960s to the present, we will investigate how performance constitutes a special activity that serves to imagine national community as well as how theatre functions as a space for creating and preserving cultural memory. Some of the topics organizing our discussions will include:

- * Storytelling and the Oral Tradition
- * Re-visioning European Dramatic Traditions
- * Ritual and Carnival
- * Politics and the Performance of Race, Class, and Gender
- * Transnationalism, Diaspora, and Exile

Readings will include contemporary plays by authors from the English- (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago), French- (Guadeloupe and Martinique), and Spanish- (Cuba and Puerto Rico) speaking islands of the Caribbean, as well as texts on history and culture and some post-colonial and theater theory. All readings will be in English. Through class discussions of the plays, lectures, videos, and music, students will learn to analyze the texts and performances in relation to their specific historical and cultural contexts. A field trip to see a play is likely.

Course Learning Goals

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

- Analyze the social and cultural values and problems of individual and collective identity manifested in the texts;
- Analyze the elements of performance that construct the communication of meaning for readers and spectators; and
- Analyze the texts and performances in relation to their specific Caribbean historical and cultural contexts.

Required Reading*

Anna in the Tropics by Nilo Cruz, available at Rutgers bookstore (ASIN: B004R12DZI).

The rest of the reading selections vary from semester to semester and will be available by PDF on Sakai or on reserve at Alexander Library.

Evaluation*

Class Grade: 20%

Presentation: 10%

2 Papers: 35% (textual analysis paper: 10%, research paper: 25%)

2 Exams: 35% (mid-term: 25%, quiz: 10%)

*This synopsis is intended for informative purposes only; it is provisional and subject to change before the beginning of the semester.