

EDUC 322: Caribbean Spaces: Discourses of resistance, love and hope

Course Description and Syllabus: Fall 2023

Instructor Information and Course Communications

Contact Information

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Course Information

Day & Time of Course:	Section 01: Tuesdays 3:10-6:10 p.m.
Location of Course:	Old Observatory, room 212

Office hours: Office hours are by appointment through email on Tuesdays 12:30-2:30 pm

Course Description:

Caribbean Spaces centers the English speaking West Indies and its diverse people, food and customs. I borrow the title from Carole Boyce Davies who says, “the claiming of Caribbean Space captures ontological ways of being in the world. It assumes movement as it makes and remakes the critical elements of Caribbean geography; landscape and escape, sky and sun, but also music, food and style.” Caribbean people are diverse, multifaceted and complex as a result of colonial histories, and modern struggles for self determination and governance. In this course, we will explore a people who introduced the world to maroonage, and anti-colonial insurrection. A people who resist subjugation, love themselves into freedom and governance and a people who use “every mickle to mek a muckle.” This course will explore themes of resistance, love and hope across the diaspora called the Caribbean through anti-slave narratives, independence and economic struggles, language and customs, education, tourism, sexuality etc.

Land Acknowledgement:

Indigenous land is life. The loss of ancestral lands is devastating for indigenous communities because losing land means losing life. We acknowledge that the U.S., settler, imperialist plan has been to disappear Native Americans for profit and real estate. We acknowledge that our occupation of indigenous lands (Munsee Lenape and Mohican in this region) has contributed to Indigenous loss. These lands have nourished us, and have provided shelter and safety. As a result, we pledge to learn more about the Indigenous peoples of this region and to continue to honor them while we do all in our power to work alongside them as they maintain their sovereignty.

Black Lives Matter Acknowledgement:

Black Lives have always mattered and we want to center them as part of our work toward a just society. Black feminists maintain that if we honor and value the most marginal among us, the better we do as a society. We believe this and commit to making sure that past, present and future Black lives are seen and honored as lives that matter.

Electronic Use

The use of cell phones is prohibited in class. Please put them away when you get to class. If you are expecting an important call or you have an emergency, let me know when you get to class. Otherwise, the continued use of your cell phone in class will negatively impact your participation grade.

Laptops and other assistive technologies may be used during class when we reference readings and to take notes. If I detect that you are using these technologies for purposes other than engaging with the course content and materials, your grade will be negatively impacted.

Email Communication

You are encouraged to check your email regularly. When emailing students in our course directly, please observe email etiquette (use only for business related to the class or when you have the permission of the receiver).

In emails to me, please always include the course title (EDUC 322) and section number in the subject line and a keyword of the nature of your query and allow 24 hours for me to respond to your message during the work week. Do not expect immediate replies on weekends, breaks, or public holidays. Please do not email with casual questions about assignments or course policies that are explained on the syllabus, can be asked in class, can be answered by your classmates, or are easily addressed in a conversation before/after class meetings. Also, I do not teach via email. If you miss a class, I will not teach you the material online. Because of the dialogic nature of the class, that is not possible. It is every student's responsibility to find out about missed material by coming to office hours.

Accommodations

I continually strive to implement accessibility features for all students and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a part of that journey. Using UDL is active and ongoing so please feel free to share how the course could be more accessible for you and share any suggestions for implementing change. This search for accessibility is a community project and we will all need to participate to realize this goal.

Academic accommodations are available for students registered with the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity (AEO). Students in need of disability (ADA/504) accommodations should schedule an appointment with us early in the semester to discuss any accommodations for this course that have been approved by the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, as indicated in your AEO accommodation letter.

Textbook Accessibility and Affordability

Vassar students often report challenges accessing and affording required course materials. The College is committed to ensuring that every student can participate fully in the curriculum, regardless of financial need. The [Movement for Affordable Textbooks \(MAT\)](#) website highlights a variety of resources – financial, library, departmental, and peer-to-peer – that can help [students](#) navigate the costs of textbooks and other materials.

1

PEDAGOGICAL STYLE

As a professor, I think it is my responsibility to practice what I preach as best as possible. While learning content is important, the process of making meaning of that content is equally as important. Thus, the guiding pedagogical principles of this class are based on praxis (critical reflection on how theory applies to practice), learner centered discussion (learning from each other as well as giving of ourselves the group), and the idea that all people bring expertise and knowledge based on their life experiences (often reflected when we do peer critique).

Throughout the course, we intend to employ and model a type of pedagogy that has proved over years to be very effective - Intergroup Dialogue. It is one that promotes equitable participation, allows for deep reflection on the texts and theories, and engages student experiences in the learning process.

¹ WilliamsBrown Spring 23

VASSAR GRADING POLICY²:

GRADE REPRESENTATIONS

A student's standing in college and the requirements for graduation are determined by a dual standard, one of quality and the other of quantity. The quality of the work is measured by the quality points and the grade average, the quantity is measured by the units completed. The semester and cumulative grade averages are based on the ratio of the total number of quality points received to the total number of grade units elected at Vassar.

A indicates achievement of distinction. It involves conspicuous excellence in several aspects of the work.

B indicates general achievement of a high order. It also involves excellence in some aspects of the work, such as the following: completeness and accuracy of knowledge, sustained and effective use of knowledge, independence of work and originality.

C indicates the acceptable standard for graduation from Vassar College. It involves in each course such work as may fairly be expected of any Vassar student of normal ability who gives to the course a reasonable amount of time, effort, and attention. Such acceptable attainment should include the following factors: familiarity with the content of the course; familiarity with the methods of student of the course; evidence of growth in actual use both of content and method; full participation in the work of the class; evidence of an open, active, and discriminating mind; and the ability to express oneself in intelligible English.

C-, D+, and D indicate degrees of unsatisfactory work, below standard grade. They signify work which in one or more important respects falls below the minimum acceptable standard for graduation, but which is of sufficient quality and quantity to be counted in the units required for graduation. (Work evaluated as F may not be counted toward degree.)

Total points for this course equal 100. The grading scale is noted below:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	68-69
D	65-67

Additional Resources:

Counseling Center (counseling.service.vassar.edu, 845-437-5700)

Health Service (healthservice.vassar.edu, 845-437-5800)

SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) advocate, available 24/7 by calling the CRC at 845-437-7333

Writing Center

² Directly quoted from: Evaluation of work, Vassar 2008-2009 Catalogue, p. 56.

Visit the writing center, located in the library at any point during your writing process and for all assignments. Getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. To make an appointment visit mywco.com/vassar.

Librarians

The librarian for Education is Melanie Maskin. She is fantastic! Please email her with any questions you have about research. I would suggest you access her especially as you prepare for your coalition project. Her email is mmaskin@vassar.edu

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Active participation in class meetings is the centerpiece of student experience and learning in the course. Consistent attendance and thoughtful preparation before class meetings is required – including completing assigned readings, out of class exercises, and/or writing. I recognize that active engagement and learning styles may differ across individuals. Quantity of talk is not in itself the basis for evaluating participation; the quality of input and depth of reflection together with demonstration of active listening are more important components of this class that will center dialogic engagement.

Autobiographical and Intellectual genealogy to a course on the Caribbean (15%)

Write a 2-4 page paper documenting your personal and intellectual interest in the Caribbean, it's people, language and customs. I am interested in reading your personal interest through stories of citizenship, family, migration, service (working with Caribbean nannies; working in the Caribbean or the Caribbean diaspora etc.) and general curiosity. If your interest is one of curiosity, how do you plan to address the voyeuristic nature of your curiosity? You should describe your intellectual interest in the course by describing and explaining courses you have taken that address the Caribbean, books, articles and other intellectual engagements that have shaped your interest in the Caribbean. If this is your first course, as you peruse the syllabus, what stands out to you as being significant for your learning? Why?

Weekly Reflections and Questions on Moodle (10%)

Every week, due at midnight on Monday nights (by midnight) you should write a reflection about the readings/viewings that are due for that week. The reflection should be no more than 500 words and no less than 250 words. You choose the direction of this reflection. I am also interested in learning about the questions that the readings/viewings raise for you as part of the reflection. We will use these reflections and questions as part of the dialogues that will take place in class.

Weekly Facilitation (10%)

Every week, for 30 minutes, one/two person(s) will sign up to lead us in a discussion of the reading (s). You can pose questions, engage us in activities, ask us to view clips etc. that continue to deepen our understanding of the assigned texts.

Response to Banana Bottom (10%)

Banana Bottom has many themes that are not explored in the class such as spirituality/religion. It also has themes that are explored later in the course so look ahead. You can build on these themes by reading supplemental materials (listed in the syllabus) or by accessing current research on the topic. In your response paper, please explore 2-4 themes that emerge for you. What about the themes are interesting?

What do you learn about the Caribbean through this text? This response paper should include at least two outside sources that help you make sense of a theme or expand on your understanding of that theme. This paper should be 2-4 pages in length, typed and double spaced.

This assignment may also be adapted into a creative project. You could create a blog, a podcast, poetry, music or a website with resources. If you choose to take a creative format, let us talk one-one-one about what you intend to do.

Response to the film Life and Debt (10%)

Life and Debt has many themes that are not explored in the class such as elections and party politics in Caribbean countries. It also has themes that are explored later in the course so look ahead. You can build on these themes by reading supplemental materials (listed in the syllabus) or by accessing current research on the topic. In your response paper, please explore 2-4 themes that emerge for you. What about the themes are interesting? What do you learn about the Caribbean through this text? This response paper should include at least two outside sources that help you make sense of a theme or expand on your understanding of that theme. This paper should be 2-4 pages in length, typed and double spaced.

This assignment may also be adapted into a creative project. You could create a blog, a podcast, poetry, music or a website with resources. If you choose to take a creative format, let us talk one-one-one about what you intend to do.

Response to Lucy (10%)

Lucy has many themes that are not explored in the class such as whiteness. It also has themes that are explored later in the course so look ahead. You can build on these themes by reading supplemental materials (listed in the syllabus) or by accessing current research on the topic. In your response paper, please explore 2-4 themes that emerge for you. What about the themes are interesting? What do you learn about the Caribbean through this text? This response paper should include at least two outside sources that help you make sense of a theme or expand on your understanding of that theme. This paper should be 2-4 pages in length, typed and double spaced.

This assignment may also be adapted into a creative project. You could create a blog, a podcast, poetry, music or a website with resources. If you choose to take a creative format, let us talk one-one-one about what you intend to do.

Final Group Research and Presentations (20%)

In groups of 2-3 students you will present research on a topic of interest to you. In the past, students have researched:

1. Sexuality in the Caribbean
2. Race in the Caribbean
3. Monogamy and Polyamory in the Caribbean
4. Religion in the Caribbean (Pick one: Vodou; Christianity; Islam)
5. Music in the Caribbean (Pick a genre)
6. Food in the Caribbean (Whose cuisine?)

7. The Caribbean as a Post Colonial State (Is it?)
8. Haiti
9. Revolutions and Resistance in the Caribbean
10. Contemporary Movements in the Caribbean (A resource to help:
<https://digitalcaribbean.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2014/02/01/caribbean-womens-movements-and-or-ganizations/>)

At mid-term, you will submit an abstract for your presentation and as a group will work to create a presentation that responds to these questions:

1. What is the issue you are addressing?
2. Why is it an issue?
3. What body of literature supports it being an issue?
4. What is your method of addressing the issue? (collecting data; literature review; group interview; podcast interview; photovoice etc.). While these data collection methods will not be addressed in class, if you have experience or are interested in exploring these methods, please do so.
5. What are you proposing as a solution or a way to think about/think differently about the issue?

Final Individual Reflective Paper

You will write a final individual reflective paper that will tell me:

1. How you navigated the process of working together as a group (Was there conflict? How did you resolve it? Was it difficult to settle on a topic? How did you do it?) *1 page*
2. Write a response to the genealogy paper you wrote at the beginning of the course. Has anything changed for you? What will you take with you beyond this class? Why? *1.5 pages*
3. Which reading(s) had the greatest impact on you? Why? *1 page*
4. Which activity(s) had the greatest impact on you? Why? *1 page*
5. What constructive* feedback do you have for me about the course? (.5 page)

* If you say you have nothing that is a cop out and is just as bad as going in about how much you hated the course. So, please dig deep and provide constructive feedback that will help you as you process and help future cohorts of students.

Presentations are no more than 30 minutes long. They can be organized however you wish - using powerpoint, podcasts, immersive exercises etc. Reflective papers are five pages long, 12 point font, double spaced with 1 inch margins.

Course Texts:

McKay C. (1986). *Banana Bottom*. Pluto Press Limited
 Kincaid, J. (2002). *Lucy: A Novel* (1st ed.). Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Date	Reading (s)	Assignment
Section I: Resistance and Marronage		

<p>August 29, 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Boyce Davies, C. (2013). Caribbean Spaces: Escapes from Twilight Zones. University of Illinois Press (Excerpt: Introduction, pg 1-14) ❖ Chat Patwa Into, 1, and 2 ❖ Garvey, M. (2004). Selected Writings and Speeches of Marcus Garvey. Dover Thrift Editions. (Excerpt iii - xii and 1-10) 	
<p>September 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2002. "North Atlantic Universals: Analytical Fictions, 1492-1945." The South Atlantic Quarterly 101 (4): 839–58. (Moodle) ❖ Khan, Aisha. 2001. "Journey to the Center of the Earth: The Caribbean as Master Symbol." Cultural Anthropology 16 (3): 271–302. (Moodle) ❖ Guillermo-Wilson, Carlos. 2004. "The Caribbean: Marvelous Cradle-Hammock and Painful Cornucopia." ❖ Hall, Stuart. 1993 "Negotiating Caribbean Identities" Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture, Center for Caribbean Studies, 	

	University of Warwick. (Moodle)	
September 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Susan Buck-Morss. 2000. "Hegel and Haiti." <i>Critical Inquiry</i>: 821-865. (Moodle) ❖ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The Odd and the Ordinary: Haiti, the Caribbean, and the World," <i>Cimarrón: New Perspectives on the Caribbean</i> 2, no. 3 (1990): 3–12. ❖ Cordis, S. (2019). <i>Forging Relational Difference: Racial Gendered Violence and Dispossession in Guyana</i>. <i>Small Axe</i>, Volume 23, pp. 18-33 	<p>Beg yuh likkle chocolate tea deh - Julie Mango</p> <p>Yah Man - October 5, 2022</p>
September 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Thomas, A. (2019). <i>An Inductive Metasynthesis of Qualitative Educational Research in the English Speaking Caribbean: 1990-2016 in Decolonizing Qualitative Approaches for and by the Caribbean</i> by Saran Stewart. 	<p>Genealogy of your journey to a course on the Caribbean</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lewis-Fokum Yewande (2019). Unpacking Educational Policy and Practice in Jamaica Through Critical Discourse Analysis: A Theoretical Framework and Methodology. In Decolonizing Qualitative Approaches For and By the Caribbean edited by Saran Stewart ❖ Wekker, G. (2016). White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race. Duke University Press. (Excerpt pg. 1-29) 	
September 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Excerpt: Roberts, Neil. 2015. “Freedom as Maronnage” page 3-111 ❖ Yendi Phillips Interview with Maroon Chief (In class viewing) 	Groups for Final Presentation
October 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Banana Bottom - first half of text pg. 1- 179 ❖ Bilby, Kenneth. 2008. “True-Born Maroons”. University of Florida Press. Pages 411-416 	

Section 2: Love, independence and governance		
October 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Banana Bottom - second half of text pg. 180-315 ❖ Cordis, Shanya. 2019. "Settler Unfreedoms." American Indian Culture and Research Journal (Special Issue) pg. 9-23. ❖ Kempadoo, K. 2017. Bound Coolies and Other Indentured Workers in the Caribbean: Implications for Debates about Human Trafficking, Anti-Trafficking Review ❖ Khan, Aliyah (2020). Far From Mecca: Globalizing the Muslim Caribbean. Excerpt pgs 1-34 	Proposals for presentations
October 17	FALL BREAK	View Life and Debt
October 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Stuart Hall ❖ Excerpts from "Black Skin, White Masks" by Franz Fanon ❖ Discourse on Colonialism," Aimé Césaire ❖ Garvey, M. (2004). Selected Writings and Speeches of Marcus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflection on Life and Debt - Reflection on Banana Bottom

	<p>Garvey. Dover Thrift Editions. (Excerpt pg 11- 48)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Anti-Blackness in Trinidad https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a36005537/i-grew-up-in-a-majority-minority-country-we-still-have-a-problem-with-anti-blackness/ 	
<p>October 31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Thomas, Deborah A. 2004. Excerpt (Introduction). Modern Blackness: Nationalism, Globalization and the Politics of Culture in Jamaica. Duke University Press. ❖ Robinson, Cedric. 2000. Excerpt (Introduction). Black Marxism: The Making of The Black Radical Tradition. University of North Carolina Press, Durham. ❖ Werner, Marion. 2015. Excerpt (Introduction). Global Displacements: The Making of Uneven Displacements in the Caribbean. Wiley-Blackwell ❖ Dejevsky, Mary. 2016. The Era of the Socialist Experiment is Over - But the Nostalgia Surrounding It is Growing. The Independent 	

<p>November 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Boyce Davies, C. (2013). Caribbean Spaces: Escapes from Twilight Zones. University of Illinois Press (Excerpt: ch. 6 Labor and the Transnational: From Work to Work pg 107-128) ❖ Brown, K. W., Beck, M., & Nganga, C. (2022). Transnational feminist understandings of the neoliberal recruitment of international women teachers of color. <i>Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers</i>, 115. 	
<p>Section 3: Hope, citizenship, migration, diaspora</p>		
<p>November 14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Alexander, Jacqui. 1994. Not just (Any) Body Can Be a Citizen: The politics of Law, sexuality and postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas. <i>Feminist Review</i>, 48, 5-23. ❖ Nixon, A. 2017. Troubling Queer Caribbeaness; Embodiment, Gender, and Sexuality in Nadia Nuggins’s Visual Art, Caribbean Queer Visualities ❖ Nixon, A. 2019. On Being a Black Sexual Intellectual, Black Sexual Economies 	<p>Reflections on Lucy</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Nixon, A. 2015. Resisting Paradise: Tourism, Diaspora and Sexuality in Caribbean Culture ❖ Garvey, M. (2004). Selected Writings and Speeches of Marcus Garvey. Dover Thrift Editions. (Excerpt 150-194). 	
November 21	Presentations	
November 28	Reflections/Closing	
December 5	Final Papers Due	