

CARIBBEAN RELIGIONS
840:333
Monday/Wednesday 5:35-6:55PM
Waller 210
Spring 2010

Instructor: Hilit Surowitz

Office Hours: Loree Building (Douglass Campus), Room 114,
Monday 3:45-5pm or by appointment

E-mail: hilit@rci.rutgers.edu

Course Description:

This course will examine the history and role of the diverse religious components of the Caribbean basin from Indigenous practices to Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism and the emergence and development of African belief systems and practices such as Vodou, Santeria and Rastafarianism from the 18th century to the present.

Objectives: By the conclusion of the course participants should be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with major themes, and figures in Caribbean Religion,
- Demonstrate familiarity with questions regarding the intersection of race and religion in the Caribbean,
- Demonstrate familiarity with the various methodologies and approaches in the study of Caribbean religions, and
- Demonstrate familiarity with major trends and themes in the development and intersection of Caribbean Christianities and Afro-Caribbean religions.

The **Required Texts** for the course:

Textbooks are available at the Rutgers Bookstore, a Barnes & Noble College Bookstore—One Ferren Mall.

❖ Fernandez-Olmos, Margarite & Paravisini-Gebert, Lizabeth. *Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santeria to Obeah and Espiritismo*. New York University Press, 2003. **(CRC)**
ISBN-10: 0814727204, ISBN-13: 978-0814727201

❖ Sensbach, Jon. *Rebecca's Revival*. Harvard University Press, 2005. **(RR)**
ISBN-10: 0674022572, ISBN-13: 978-0674022577

❖ Articles and primary sources will be available on SAKAI.

❖ Other readings or media may be assigned during the course of the semester.

Attendance & Participation

Students are expected to attend each class on time. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. You are permitted three unexcused absences. Following the third unexcused

absence 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each unexcused absence. Students who encounter any extended problem with absences, for example, for medical or family emergencies, or religious reasons, must inform me in writing about the reason and duration of the absence. Decisions on excused absences will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Short quizzes will be given on a regular basis. There will be no make-ups for in-class quizzes or exams.

Student participation is an integral component for the success of this class. Course participants will be expected to arrive to class on time, and prepared to discuss the assigned readings. **Please bring assigned readings to class as we will frequently consult the text, particularly the primary sources.** Participation not only means asking questions and involving oneself in the classroom discussion, it also means actively listening to others.

Requirements:

- ❖ Participation, in-class assignments, pop quizzes (15%)
- ❖ In-class midterm exam (25%)
- ❖ Final exam (35%)
- ❖ Paper (25%)
- ❖ All students must come to office hours at least once during the semester.

Written work will be graded on the basis of content, clarity of argument, quality of writing, and how well it analyzes the material and answers the questions. Written work, except for that which is a classroom assignment, must be typed (double-spaced, 12 pt. font), and spell-checked. One letter grade per day will be deducted for late papers unless you have a written medical excuse.

Classroom Policies:

- ❖ Plagiarism and cheating will be penalized according to the full extent of University policy. Please consult Rutgers University's *Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students*:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism>

- ❖ Students with disabilities who require accommodations should provide me with their "accommodation letter" from the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please consult the website of the Office of Disability Services for further information:

http://sas.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=135&Itemid=1

❖ Note that I do not accept assignments submitted by email. All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy on the day that they are due.

❖ Evaluations will cover all course material, even if it is not specifically covered in class.

•Schedule•

Wednesday 1/20

- Syllabus and Introduction

Monday 1/25

- Olmos, CRC, 1-11
- “Caribbean Religions: History of Study.” Encyclopedia of Religion. 2nd ed. 2005. 10023-10029. (SAKAI)

Wednesday 1/27

- Olmos, CRC, 13-23

Monday 2/1 - Santeria

- Joseph M. Murphy. “Santeria.” Encyclopedia of Religion. 2nd ed. 2005. 8107-8109. (SAKAI)
- Olmos, CRC, 24-50

Wednesday 2/3 - Santeria

- Olmos, CRC, 50-77

Monday 2/8 – Regla de Palo & the Abakua Secret Society

- Olmos, 78-101

Wednesday 2/10 -- Vodou

- Olmos, 101-131

Monday 2/15 – Obeah, Myal, and Quimbois

- Olmos, 131-154

Wednesday 2/17 -- Rastafarianism

- Olmos, 154-170

Monday 2/22 – Rastafarianism & Material Culture

- Benard, Akeia. “The Material Roots of Rastafarian Marijuana Symbolism.” History and Anthropology, 2007 18:1, 89-99.
- Rommen, T. “Protestant Vibrations? Reggae, Rastafari, and Conscious Evangelicals.” Popular Music 2006 25: 235-263.

Wednesday 2/24 -- Espiritismo

- Olmos, CRC, 171-185
- primary source, TBA

Monday 3/1 -- Espiritismo

- Olmos, CRC, 185-210

Wednesday 3/3

- Summary Written Activity of Afro-Caribbean religions (in groups)

Monday 3/8

Midterm (covers all course material through and including March 3rd)

Wednesday 3/10 Jews in the Caribbean

- Jews in the Caribbean (material forthcoming)

Spring Break (March 13-21)

Monday 3/22

- “Christianity: Christianity in Caribbean Religion.” Encyclopedia of Religion. 2nd ed. 2005. 1706-1708. (SAKAI)
- “Catholicism in the Caribbean” from Bisnauth, Dale. History of Religions in the Caribbean. LMH Publishing Company, 2006. 11-30. (SAKAI)

Wednesday 3/24

- “Evangelicalism in the Caribbean to 1838” from Bisnauth, Dale. History of Religions in the Caribbean. LMH Publishing Company, 2006. 101-139. (SAKAI)

Monday 3/29

- Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*

Wednesday 3/31 NO CLASS

- Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*

Monday 4/5

- Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*

Wednesday 4/7

- Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*

Monday 4/12

- Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*

Wednesday 4/14

- “Africanisation of Christianity” from Bisnauth, Dale. History of Religions in the Caribbean. LMH Publishing Company, 2006. 165-194. (SAKAI)

Monday 4/19

- “Introducing Rara” & “Rara and ‘the Jew’: Premodern Anti-Judaism in Postmodern Haiti” from McAlister, Elizabeth. Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora. University of California Press, 2002. pp. 1-24 & 113-134. (SAKAI)

Monday 4/26 – Caribbean Religions in Diaspora

- Hepner, Randal. “The House the Rasta Built.” Gatherings in Diaspora—Religious Communities and the New Immigration. ed. R. Stephen Warner & Judith G. Wittner. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1998.197-234. (SAKAI)

Wednesday 4/28– Caribbean Religions in Diaspora

- Thomas A. Tweed, “Diasporic Nationalism and Urban Landscape—Cuban Immigrants at a Catholic Shrine in Miami,” pgs. 497-513 (SAKAI)
- McAlister, Elizabeth. “The Madonna of 115th Street Revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the Age of Transnationalism.” Gatherings in Diaspora—Religious Communities and the New Immigration. ed. R. Stephen Warner & Judith G. Wittner. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1998.123-160. (SAKAI)

Monday 5/3

- Concluding class/review