

CARIBBEAN RELIGIONS
840:333
Tuesday/Thursday 4:30-5:50pm
Campbell Hall A1
Spring 2014

Instructor: Hilit Surowitz-Israel

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30-12:30 or by appointment
Miller Hall #107 (behind the Bildner Center, 12 College Ave.)

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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 Santeria, Espiritismo, Vodou 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.

❖ 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, 2011. **(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 (10%)
- ❖ In-class midterm exam (25%)
- ❖ Essay 1 (15%)
- ❖ Essay 2 (15%)
- ❖ Final exam (35%)
- ❖ 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=117

❖ 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•

Week 1

Introduction & The Challenges and Marginalization of Caribbean Studies

Tuesday 1/21

- Syllabus and Introduction

Thursday 1/23

- CRC, 1-19
- “Caribbean Religions: History of Study.” Encyclopedia of Religion. 2nd ed. 2005. 10023-10029. (SAKAI)

Week 2

Tuesday 1/28

The Slave Trade and an overview of post-colonial studies

- CRC, “Historical Background,” pages 20-32
- Primary source TBA

Thursday 1/30

Santeria

- Joseph M. Murphy. “Santeria.” Encyclopedia of Religion. 2nd ed. 2005. 8107-8109. (SAKAI)
 - CRC, 33-51
- film: *Voices of the Orishas*

Week 3

Santeria

Tuesday 2/4

- CRC, 52-70

Thursday 2/6

- CRC, 70-88

Week 4

Tuesday 2/11

Vodou

- CRC, 116-131

Thursday 2/13

- CRC, 132-154
- Vodou fieldwork documentary (in-class)

Week 5

Tuesday 2/18

Rastafarianism

- CRC, 183-202

Thursday 2/20

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.

Week 6

Espiritismo

Tuesday 2/25

- CRC, 203-225
- primary source, TBA

Thursday 2/27 (Paper 1 due)

Espiritismo

- CRC, 225-249
- primary source TBA

Week 7

Tuesday 3/4

Exam 1

Thursday 3/6

Jews of the Caribbean

- Excerpts from: *The Jews in the Caribbean* (SAKAI)

Week 8

Tuesday 3/11

Jews of the Dominican Republic

- Excerpts from: Kaplan, Marion A. 2008. *Dominican haven: the Jewish refugee settlement in Sosúa, 1940-1945*. New York: Museum of Jewish Heritage.
- primary sources TBA

Thursday 3/13

Christianity

- “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)

SPRING BREAK 3/15-3/23

Weeks 9-11

Christianity/Evangelicalism

Tuesday 3/25

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

Thursday 3/27

- Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*, pages 1-44

Tuesday 4/1

- Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*, pages 45-100

Thursday 4/3

- Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*, pages 101-161

Tuesday 4/8

- Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*, pages 162-248

Thursday 4/10

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

Week 12

Tuesday 4/15

NO CLASS
ASSIGNMENT TBA.

Thursday 4/17

- “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)
- *Rara! CD from author in class*

Week 13-15
Caribbean Religions in Diaspora

Week 13

Tuesday 4/22

▪ 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)

Thursday 4/24

▪ Thomas A. Tweed, "Diasporic Nationalism and Urban Landscape—Cuban Immigrants at a Catholic Shrine in Miami," pgs. 497-513 (SAKAI)

Week 14

Tuesday 4/29

Film: *The Other Side of the Water: The Journey of a Haitian Rara Band in Brooklyn*

Thursday 5/1

▪ 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)

▪ Concluding class/review