

## Caribbean Voices

English R1A, Section 7, Spring 08. Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30 – 2:00. 222 Wheeler.

This course offers an introductory overview of Caribbean literature while addressing the dual goal of Reading & Composition courses—to improve students’ written and oral expression.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the voices of writers and artists from British colonies in the Caribbean (collectively known as the British West Indies) contributed to the development of a national consciousness which would help these colonies to gain independence in the 1960s and 1970s. The course title alludes to a radio program which proved an important step in this process. “Caribbean Voices,” produced in London and broadcast over the BBC’s West Indian Service in the 1940s and 1950s,” gave writers involved with the show a forum for discussing how their voices were different from English voices, asking what new things they had to say, and in what new forms those things might be expressed.

Our readings begin long before the last century, though, to examine the Caribbean scene from the beginning of European presence there, on the eve of the sixteenth century. Geographically, the course materials span an area which includes islands – Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad, Martinique, etc. – as well as coastal areas in mainland Central and South America.

As students read and write about Caribbean literature, they will be developing voices of their own. “Voice” is a term for the personal qualities not only of one’s writing style but also of one’s speech. In this class, students will use that voice to participate in public debate by drafting articles to be posted on wikipedia and by recording some of their writing assignments as podcasts. Peer review may involve reading as well as listening to other students’ work.

### Principal texts

Donnell, Alison & Sarah Lawson Welsh, eds. *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. NY & London: Routledge, 1996. ISBN 0415120497 (paperback)

Hughes, Derek, ed. *Versions of Blackness: key texts on slavery from the 17<sup>th</sup> century*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2007. ISBN 9780521689564 (paperback)

James, C. L. R. *Minty Alley*. 1936. Oxford (Miss.): University Press of Mississippi, 1997. ISBN 9781578060276

Nunez, Elizabeth. *Prospero’s Daughter*. NY: Random House, 2006. ISBN 0345455363

Selvon, Samuel. *Moses Ascending*. 1975. London: Heinemann, 1991. ISBN 9780435989521

### Overview of course

This course is loosely divided into four units. In Weeks 1-4, the whole class will be reading, discussing and writing about the same thing. In Weeks 5-8, class time and homework assignments will be divided between the common syllabus (what everyone is reading) and preparation for your wikipedia article. Most class time in Weeks 8-16 will be spent on the common syllabus; some time will be devoted to making and listening to podcasts. The course thus combines individual work and group work with the goal of increasing the responsibility students take for their own education. The schedule for reading & paper deadlines will be distributed at the third class meeting.

### Requirements

- **Office Hours Conference** One visit is required of each student early in the term. I encourage you all to come often for other visits, even though they are not required!
- **Class Participation** This means coming to class, always and on time, having thoughtfully prepared the material for that day’s discussion, equipped with your reading notes, the right course materials, and your questions and ideas. It further means coming to class prepared to respectfully listen to and engage with your peers’ spoken and written thoughts. Your class participation grade includes overall preparedness for class meetings, your

contribution to discussion, in-class and short take-home writing assignments, peer-editing workshop and other group assignments. These things together make up **15%** of your grade.

- **Quizzes** Once per week, we will have a short answer quiz. I consider everything assigned to you and everything discussed in class fair game for quizzes. The quiz grades together count for **15%** of your grade.
- **Papers** You will write one 1-page paper (5%) and one 2-page paper (10%). You will also write, peer-workshop, and revise two 3-page papers (15% each). Lastly, your final 4-page paper counts for 25%. Thus, all told, the papers in this class constitute **70%** of your grade.

### **Attendance Policy & Guidelines for submitting your work**

Unless specified otherwise, all assignments are due as hard copies, at the start of class. Please submit work by email only if specifically requested to do so, or to show that you've met a deadline when you cannot physically deliver work on time.

If you ever anticipate missing a class, please notify me by email and make arrangements to submit missed assignments. It is your responsibility to find out about missed assignments and complete them. Some in-class exercises, such as quizzes, cannot be made up for unexcused absences. Unless I approve an alternative arrangement with you *in advance*, late work will be penalized a full letter grade! *Like a lab, this class is based on presence. More than three unexcused absences results in a failing grade.*

When submitting work by email, title your email "R1A" followed by the name of the assignment. The document attached to the email should be saved in Word 2003 or a prior version; *the document title should include your name.*

### **Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism**

As a student at Cal, you are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Student Code of Conduct (available online at <http://students.berkeley.edu/uga/conduct.asp>). All work submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own, original work. You may use others' words or ideas *only if you attribute them properly*. This means that you identify the original source and extent of your use of the words or ideas of others that you use.

This goal of this course is to improve your critical reading, thinking and writing skills. My accurate evaluation of these skills involves the assumption that your words and ideas are your own. Therefore, using other people's ideas as your own, in addition to being forbidden in the Student Code of Conduct, interferes with the aims of this course; **hence my zero-tolerance policy regarding plagiarism. The first time you use any words or ideas that are not your own without attributing them, whether in your papers or in-class writing assignments, you risk being failed for the course.** Reproducing ideas you encounter in online study guides without attributing them, whether through direct quotation or paraphrase, constitutes plagiarism and is thus grounds for failure. Not to mention that those who rely on others' ideas, rather than taking the intellectual risk and challenge to develop their own, will not improve as writers and thinkers and will thus probably fail even if they don't get caught. If you are unsure of the expectations for completing an assignment, just ask before you turn in your work! I am more than happy to discuss these matters with you.

### **Disability Accommodations**

If you need disability-related accommodations in this class, if you have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me as soon as possible by seeing me after class or making an appointment to visit office hours. If you are not currently listed with DSP (Disabled Students' Program) but believe that you could benefit from their support, you may apply online at <http://dsp.berkeley.edu>.

## Syllabus

### Week 1

Tues., Jan. 22

Thurs., Jan. 24

Course Overview; in-class survey

from Froude, *The English in the West Indies* (1888) and Thomas, *Froudacity* (1889)

**Paper 1 due (1-2 pg. diagnostic essay)**

### Week 2

Tues., Jan. 29

Thurs., Jan. 31

from Froude, *The English in the West Indies* (1888) and Thomas, *Froudacity* (1889)

Froude & Thomas; from Hughes, "Introduction" and A. Behn, *Oroonoko*

### Week 3

Tues., Feb. 5

Thurs., Feb. 7

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*Oroonoko*

*Oroonoko*; from Hughes, Part Two: de las Casas (281-84); Gage (295-299); Ligon (300-

### Week 4

Tues., Feb. 12

Thurs., Feb. 14

from Hughes, Part Two: Godwyn (344-8); Hobbes & Hyde (360; 361-2); Locke (363-7)

**Paper 2 due (2 pgs.)**

wrap up Hughes; wikipedia assignments

### Week 5

Tues., Feb. 19

Thurs., Feb. 21

from *Routledge Reader*: "General Introduction" (1-26); C. L. R. James, "Discovering Literature in Trinidad" (163-5); Brathwaite, "Jazz & the West Indian Novel" (336-343);

Walcott, "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory" (503-07); wikipedia  
wikipedia assignments

### Week 6

Tues., Feb. 26

Thurs., Feb. 28

from *Routledge Reader*, "1900-29: Introduction" (27-41); Walter Jekyll, Preface to McKay's *Songs of Jamaica* (1912; bspace). *RR*, McKay, poems on pps. 64-69; J. E. C. McFarlane, "Claude McKay" (97-99).

**Paper 3 due (3-4 pgs.)**

McKay; H. G. De Lisser, "Jane's Career" (72-77); C. L. R. James, "Triumph" (84-90);  
wikipedia

**Paper 3 peer-review workshop**

### Week 7

Tues., March 4

Thurs., March 6

*RR*, "1930-1949: Introduction" (107-27); Una Marson, poems on 128-29; "Quashie comes to London" (132-27); McFarlane on Marson (1956; bspace); wikipedia

**Paper 3 final due**

*RR*: Vic Reid, "The Cultural Revolution in Jamaica after 1938" (177-181); Roger Mais, "Where the Roots Lie" (182-4); U. Marson, "We Want Books – But Do We Encourage Our Writers?" (185-7)

### Week 8

Tues., March 11

Thurs., March 13

Louise Bennett: "Jamaica Oman" (*RR* 145); "Jamaica Language" (1993; bspace); Morris, "On Reading Louise Bennett, Seriously" (*RR* 194-97); in-class short film, "Talk and more talk"; wikipedia

Bennett; wikipedia

**Week 9**

Tues., March 18

C. L. R. James, *Minty Alley***Wikipedia draft article due (= Paper 4)**

Thurs., March 20

C. L. R. James, *Minty Alley*; wikipedia wrap-up**Wikipedia article peer-review workshop****Week 10***Spring Break; NO CLASSES.***Week 11**

Tues., April 1

C. L. R. James, *Minty Alley***Wikipedia article posting deadline (=Paper 4)**

Thurs., April 3

C. L. R. James, *Minty Alley***Week 12**

Tues., April 8

RR: "1950-65: Introduction" (206-21); Rhys, "The Day They Burnt the Books (237-42) &amp; "Let Them Call It Jazz" (bspace); O'Callaghan, "The Outsider's Voice" (RR 274-81); Welsh, "New Wine in New Bottles" (261-68)

Thurs., April 10

Rhys, O'Callaghan, Welsh; discuss interest in / feasibility of making podcasts?

**Week 13**

Tues., April 15

RR: Swanzy, "The Literary Situation in the Contemporary Caribbean" (249-52); "1966-1979: Introduction" (282-97); poetry TBA

Thurs., April 17

Samuel Selvon, *Moses Ascending***Week 14**

Tues., April 22

Samuel Selvon, *Moses Ascending*

Thurs., April 24

Samuel Selvon, *Moses Ascending***Week 15**

Tues., April 29

Jamaica Kincaid, "A Small Place" (bspace); Elizabeth Nunez, *Prospero's Daughter*

Thurs., May 1

Elizabeth Nunez, *Prospero's Daughter***Week 16**

Tues., May 6

Elizabeth Nunez, *Prospero's Daughter*

Thurs., May 8

Elizabeth Nunez, *Prospero's Daughter* (last class)**Paper 5 (4-5 pps.) due****\*\*There is no final exam scheduled for this class. You have completed your work for R1A when you turn in Paper 5.\*\***

{ Above is syllabus as originally distributed. Below is revision made in conversation with students and distributed in Wk 12. }

## Revised Syllabus for Weeks 13-16

### Week 13

Tues., April 15

C. L. R. James, *Minty Alley*

Rhys, "The Day They Burnt the Books (RR 237-42) & "Let Them Call It Jazz" (photocopy)

**Paper 3 (3 pps.) due**

Thurs., April 17

In-class peer-review workshop; Jhoanna Infante will facilitate in Kea's absence

### Week 14

Tues., April 22

Continue to discuss Rhys stories, plus the following from *RR*:

"1950-65: Introduction" (206-21);

Swanzy, "The Literary Situation in the Contemporary Caribbean" (249-52);

"1966-1979: Introduction" (282-97)

**Revised Paper 3 due**

Weds., April 23

Screening of *The Harder They Fall*, write TBA details here: \_\_\_\_\_

If you can't make the screening, you can watch the movie on your own at the MRC in Moffitt.

Thurs., April 24

discussion of *The Harder They Fall*

### Week 15

Tues., April 29

Elizabeth Nunez, *Prospero's Daughter*

**\*\* you are expected to finish the novel for this class meeting!**

Thurs., May 1

Elizabeth Nunez, *Prospero's Daughter*

\* deadline to submit draft résumés for optional workshop

### Week 16

Tues., May 6

Elizabeth Nunez, *Prospero's Daughter*

Thurs., May 8

last class – optional résumé workshop

**Paper 5 (4-5 pps.) due**

**\*\*There is no final exam scheduled for this class. You have completed your work for R1A when you turn in Paper 5.\*\***