

## Race & Revolution in the Caribbean

**Class Location:** Flint 115

**Class Meeting Times:** Tuesdays 12:50-3:50

**Introduction to the History of the Caribbean & Approach of the Course:** This seminar examines the direct relationship between dramatic shifts in the nature of the Caribbean's economy and the black-forged freedom struggles that generated new racial identities, cultures and political consciousness. Using slave narratives, memoirs, poetry and more conventional histories and political sources, we will explore the experiences of Black, Chinese and Hispano-Caribbean peoples of the 19th to 21st Centuries.

*More than any other part of the world, the Caribbean is the region most continuously defined by colonialism and slavery as well as the struggles against foreign control and labor exploitation on which they relied.* As the initial site of European conquest in America after 1492, the islands of the Caribbean were not only remapped according to the needs and desires of foreigners but literally “re-peopled” as European conquistadors hunted, killed and enslaved native populations to near extinction by the early 1600s. Absent natural resources like gold or silver, European rulers and Euro-American investors then sought to “replace” them with enslaved Africans, subjects of mixed racial descent and even indentured servants from China.

*Sugar was the primary product of colonial Caribbean economies from the 1640s through the late Nineteenth Century when the rise of abolitionism and independence movements challenged the sanctity and power of both plantations and planters in unprecedented fashion.* Until the 1959 Revolution, Cuba continued to be the world's largest single producer. Other societies, some of them still colonies today (such as Puerto Rico), sank into increasing poverty and continual cycles of transnational migration as their people searched for work, freedom and the collective hope born of individual opportunity—despite the promise of technological advancements and modernity over the course of the last two centuries. The reasons for this were political and, in many cases, still are: most elites and local governments of the Caribbean remain more accountable to foreign powers and investors than to local residents and citizens.

*Still, the fabulous wealth produced in the Caribbean and the depth of social injustice that wealth generated not only created highly dependent economies: the experience sparked a radical vision of equality and demands for freedom rooted in self-rule.* Even in the depths of slavery, Caribbean peoples embedded revolutionary values in the cultural textures and politics of everyday life even if and when revolution itself did not succeed.

*This class focuses on discovering and debating the expression of those values alongside their principal creator: the nature and role of race.* We hope to explore the consciousness of Caribbean actors who challenged and sought to topple colonial and neocolonial systems of injustice and wealth production for the few in Haiti, Cuba, Brazil and Puerto Rico.

**Academic & Intellectual Goals:** Although the cases we will study are organized chronologically, **this seminar (like all seminars) relies on reading and discussion of readings:**

- *This seminar is not intended as a substitute for a traditional lecture class that relies on the accumulation of facts and historically ordered knowledge.*
- *Instead, this seminar is designed to enable students to weigh the relative importance of different political, social, racial, gendered and economic factors in determining short- and long-term historical outcomes.*
- *Through the assigned readings, students will evaluate distinct forms of evidence, lines of argument, and counter-factual interpretations.*
- *We will also be reading one work of fiction and one work of contemporary journalism in order to assess how historical interpretation and knowledge can and should inform other kinds of writing.*

**The goal of the seminar is to produce an individual research project and 20-25-page paper that will meet the requirements of the history major, form a chapter in a thesis or in the long run, serve as a personal writing sample that puts the best writing, research and critical thinking skills students have developed while studying at UF on display.**

- *In preparation for their own final research paper and presentation, students will also engage in the discovery and analysis of primary sources within the comfortable confines of an in-class community setting.*
- *However, the purpose of our class readings and discussions will be to model and suggest how historical research is done, what questions historians ask and how they attempt to answer them.*
- *In researching and writing their research papers for the final assignment, students must implement what they learned by example: that is, they will need to identify sources relevant to the topic they select and examine microfilmed newspapers, archival collections, photographs, government documents, speeches, memoirs and other materials in order to write an original historical analysis in response to their topic or theme.*

**Required Readings:** There are **nine required books** available for purchase from the University of Florida Bookstore as well as through an on-line retailer of the your choice. ***In order to succeed in the class, you must acquire your own copies as you are required to bring them to class in order to cite examples and weigh evidence from them.*** Notes in the absence of the assigned reading are not acceptable as a substitute. **Participation is 30% of the grade** (see below) and being able to refer to your own highlighted, annotated and (hopefully dog-eared) text will facilitate the quality of your contributions to discussion. **In order of assignment, required books are:**

1. C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (Vintage, 1989; originally written 1938).

2. David Geggus, ed. The Haitian Revolution: A Documentary History (Hackett Publishing Co., 2014).
3. Lamonte Aidoo, Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power and Violence in Brazilian History (Duke University Press, 2018).
4. Aisha Finch, et al, Breaking the Chains, Forging the Nation: The Afro-Cuban Fight for Freedom and Equality, 1812-1912 (LSU Press, 2019).
5. Juan Francisco Manzano, Autobiography of a Slave/Autobiografía de un Esclavo (Wayne State University Press, 1996).
6. Ada Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868-1898 (UNC Press, 1999).
7. Ricardo Batrell, A Black Soldier's Story: The Narrative of Ricardo Batrell and the Cuban War of Independence, translated and edited by Mark Sanders (University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
8. Edwidge Danticat, The Farming of Bones (Soho Press, 2013).
9. **Note:** There is one additional reading that Prof. Guerra will scan and provide via Canvas. It is: Lisa Yun, The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba (Temple University Press, 2008). See Course Calendar and Assignment Schedule below.

**GRADING SCALE**

Grade Calculation	Grading Scale	Grade Value
Participation 30% (weekly discussion plus oral research presentation)	100-93=A	A=4.0
Short Response Papers 20%	92-90=A-	A-=3.67
Paper Prospectus 10%	89-87=B+	B+=3.33
Final Paper 30%	86-83=B	B=3.00
	82-80=B-	B-=2.67
	79-76=C+	C+=2.33
	75-72=C	C=2.00
	71-69=C-	C-=1.67
	68-66=D+	D+=1.33
	65-62=D	D=1.00
	61-60=D-	D-=0.67
	59-0=E	E=0.00

ASSIGNMENTS & EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESS

- Participation 30%
- Three Short Papers 30%
- Paper Prospectus 10%
- Final Paper 40%

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- 100%

**Course Delivery.** As a seminar, the success of this class depends on students' completion of reading assignments and willingness to "take risks" by sharing their ideas out loud in class. Professor Guerra will guide discussions with questions at the outset of every class meeting and frequently, provide a mini-lecture with a Power Point to help contextualize the relevance of the historical events we are reading or to explain those events themselves in a wider regional or political context.

**Participation. 30% of Final Grade:** Participation grades are calculated based on the following criteria:

- *Weekly attendance* (you can't participate if you are not there). Note that students who arrive more than 10 minutes late to class will receive a 50% reduction in their participation grade for the week. Each seminar is worth 10 points.
- *Quantity and quality of contributions to class discussion:*
  - Professor Guerra will begin each class with a "warm-up" period in which students will respond in writing to a question or share an idea or example from the reading.
  - She will collect these responses, use them in class to prompt discussion and assign a numeric grade to them that will serve as a complement to oral participation.
  - These written responses demonstrate students have read the reading but do not a substitute for talking.
- Willingness to engage peers' views and respond to them
- Oral presentations: Prof. Guerra will evaluate the organization, clarity and depth of research in each student's individual oral presentation of their final paper project. This oral presentation must consist of a 10-minute Power Point presentation of images and ideas that will help to structure the argument and case you want to analyze.

**Three Short response papers. 30% of Final Grade:** Students will write 3 short response papers of 4-6 pages each on a reading of their choice; however, **two of the 3 short papers must engage the secondary-source readings** assigned in class. The **third paper must analyze one of the primary-source readings** assigned in class (Manzano, Geggus or Batrell). Students may elect to write their papers on secondary or primary sources assigned in any order. You just need to dedicate one of these papers to analysis of Manzano, Geggus or Batrell, in other words.

- **Students will sign up and commit to the three readings on which they will write response papers at the second-class meeting on August 27th.**
- Papers on a reading are *due at the beginning of seminar on the day the class is due to discuss that particular reading.*
- **All students must have written at least one paper by Tu 10/01.**
- **See below** for specific recommendations and requirements.

- *Only hard copies will be accepted.* Students who encounter a problem printing must email the final paper to Professor Guerra *before* seminar meets so as to ensure that it will be accepted according to the above principle.
- *The goal is to analyze the reading on your own* and write about it independently, rather than rely on other class members' reading and views to develop your own.

**Paper prospectus and bibliography. 10% of Final Grade:** This document consists of a full or almost completed bibliography of sources for the final research paper as well as a 900-word abstract discussing the topic, the research questions you will ask of your sources as well as the potential "answers" or argument that you expect to craft from these sources. The richer the material and the more sophisticated the sources involved, the better the evaluation will be: thus, a good historian casts his/her net widely, seeking multiple kinds of sources, not just the easiest to find or simplest to understand.

- **A draft prospectus is due** in hard copy on **Tuesday, 15 Oct**, in class
- **A final prospectus is due** in hard copy on **Tuesday, 29 Oct**, in class
- **Students are required to consult with Prof. Guerra at her office hours before these dates** to decide on a viable topic and to discuss the progress of student research.

**Final Research Paper. 30% of Final Grade:** For students writing honors' theses, papers will represent a foundational part of the project. For non-thesis writing students, the paper offers an opportunity to craft a piece of original thought and writing that can serve as your calling card and writing sample in the future.

- Final research papers should be a **minimum of 20 pages long**, as per history department requirements.
- Final research papers are **due no later than 4 PM on December 12th in hard copy** to me and may be handed into the department secretary (Melissa Hale) for delivery.
- **How to select a research topic:** This class is about race and revolution in the Caribbean but you are not confined to the time periods, countries or topics we have studied so long as you engage either issues of race and/or revolution for Caribbean peoples in the Caribbean or the United States. Your topic, however, must be viable in terms of source availability and your own ability or inability to read non-English texts. For this reason, success is contingent on consultation with Prof. Guerra, as early as possible in the semester.
- **Great ways to start thinking about a topic and exploring its viability should include:**
  - **Using academic journal and library databases like JSTOR World Cat**

- **consulting with a research librarian** in the area of Latin American Studies at **Smathers Library East** (especially Margarita Vargas-Betancourt or Paul Losch)
- **consulting with the curator of the children's literature collection, Suzan Alteri** (racist or stereotypically racial depictions of Caribbean peoples were constant themes in children's books until the 1990s) or **the head of Florida's archival collections, Carl Van Ness in Special Collections at Smathers Library East**
- searching the collections of on-line, declassified documents at the website for the **National Security Archive** or searching full-text digital copies of press accounts in **ProQuest Historical Newspapers**
- searching **government documents databases** that will lead you to review the transcripts of Congressional hearings and debates in Congress held to discuss events in a particular country and US policy in relation to them; meeting with the government documents librarian

### *Other Course Policies*

**Excused Absences:** Students who will not be able to take an exam at the scheduled time, need an extension of the due date for a paper or were unable to attend class due to illness **must** provide medical documentation of their condition at the time. Students who have other conflicts that will prevent them from being able to complete an assignment on time must notify Professor Guerra in advance and discuss whether or not the extension or make-up exam is merited. Students must also notify Professor Guerra if they will incur absences due to UF-sanctioned activities (such as participation in UF teams, etc.).

**Academic Honesty:** Violations of academic honesty standards include but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of another's work as one's own, bribery, conspiracy and fabrication. The criteria for assessing whether student behavior meets one or more of these violations as well as the sanctions imposed may be reviewed at the website: <http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/Rules/4017.htm>

**Students with disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to Professor Guerra when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resource Center through their website: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

**Make-up Policy and Extra Credit:** There is no extra credit. There is no way to make-up for missing discussions of the weekly reading assignment. These will normally take place before or after lecture on Thursdays, unless otherwise noted below in the course schedule. Unexcused absences from discussion will result in a participation grade of zero for that week. Evaluation of oral participation in discussion is based on the criteria described immediately below this section.

**Other Course Policies:** All cell phones must be turned to vibrate at the beginning of class. ***Internet web-surfing, texting, checking of email, or other tasks unrelated to note-taking during discussion or other classroom activities is not permitted.*** Professor Guerra will confiscate the cell phone or laptop of any student found engaging in these activities during class and s/he may be asked to leave the classroom. A second violation will result in disciplinary sanction.

## Course Calendar and Assignment Schedule

**REMINDER:** You signed up on the second day of class, Tuesday 27 August, to write papers on at least two secondary sources and one primary source, drawn from the regular assigned readings below.

- **It is your job to keep track of the deadlines you set for submitting papers.** However, you must have submitted at least one short paper, either on a secondary source assigned reading or a primary source assigned reading, by Tuesday 1 October.
- **Remember that papers are due on the date that the reading you have selected to analyze will be discussed, at the start of class.**
- **Note for two secondary-source book papers:** You are not writing a book report or book summary. You should select an aspect of history to discuss or you should evaluate how the historian has approached his/her evidence to write the historical analysis. You are writing an argument about some aspect of the book—its approach, the history itself, or why the historian’s contribution matters. You must have and underline your thesis statement. You must provide and cite examples that support your thesis from the book itself. You must cite all examples, using the social science method of citation in the *Chicago Manual of Style* or correct footnotes.
- **Note for primary-source paper:** Select a primary source from the assigned readings below. If you choose to use Geggus’s collection, *you must analyze at least 2 documents or more.* What are the source’s silences? What are its messages? What were the goals of its author(s)? Who was the document intended to reach and how did this concern shape or not shape the narrative? You must have and underline your thesis statement. You must provide and cite examples that support your thesis from the book itself. You must cite all examples, using the social science method of citation in the *Chicago Manual of Style* or correct footnotes.

Tu 8/20 Introduction to the Course, Content & Syllabus

Tu 8/27 Origins of Caribbean History and Historiography: The Haitian Revolution  
*Assigned:* C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins. *Read:* Prefaces to p. 198.

Tu 9/03 First Black Nation in the History of the World: Haiti, Hero & Pariah  
*Assigned:* C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins. *Read:* pp. 242-377.

Tu 9/10 Haiti’s Revolution as Living History, “Haunting Memory” & Impossible Possibility  
*Assigned:* Geggus, ed. The Haitian Revolution: A Documentary History. *Read:* pp. 98-205.

Tu 9/17 Tyrants and Tyrannies: Cuba’s Plantation Economy and “Slave Society”  
*Assigned:* Finch, et al, Breaking the Chains, Forging the Nation. *Read:* Part 1, essay by Gloria García; Part 2, essays by Ferrer, Finch, Reid-Vázquez, Grant and Dorsey.

Tu 9/24 Explaining Slavery and Slaves to Masters: The Voice & Mission of Juan Francisco Manzano

*Assigned:* Manzano, Autobiography of a Slave/Autobiografía de un Esclavo. *Read:* All.

**HARD DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF FIRST PAPER 10/01. That means that if you have not written one so far, you must write a paper on Aidoo for submission in class.**

Tu 10/01 A History that Dare Not Be Named: Male Rape & the Making of a White Master Class

*Assigned:* Aidoo, Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power, and Violence in Brazilian History. *Read:* pp. 1-66; 111-186.

Tu 10/08 Unspeakable History: The Chinese in Cuba

*Assigned:* Yun, The Coolie Speaks. *Read:* pp. 1-132.

Tu 10/15 Cuban Crucible, Part 1: The First Cross-Race/Cross-Class Revolution of the Caribbean

*Assigned:* Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation & Revolution, 1868-1898. *Read:* pp. 1-92.

**DRAFT PROSPECTUS DUE IN CLASS.**

Tu 10/22 Cuban Crucible, Part 2: Cooptation, Resurgence, Revolution & Foreign Invasion

*Assigned:* Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation & Revolution, 1868-1898. *Read:* pp. 112-202.

Tu 10/29 Cuban Crucible, Part 3: Destinies Stolen, Racism's Return & History Hidden

*Assigned:* Finch, et al, Breaking the Chains, Forging the Nation. *Read:* Part III, essays by Helg, Rushing, Pappedemos and Brunson.

**FINAL PROSPECTUS DUE IN CLASS.**

Tu 11/05 The History Most Cubans Forgot & the Memory of Ricardo Batrell (1st of 2 sessions)

*Assigned for first hour of class:* Batrell, A Black Soldier's Story. *Read:* Introduction and translator's note by editor Mark A. Sanders, pp. ix-lxvii.

*Assigned for last two hours of class:* **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FIELD TRIP.** We will walk to Smathers Library East to meet with archivists and discuss the collections on race and revolution in Caribbean history.

Tu 11/12 The History Most Cubans Forgot & the Memory of Ricardo Batrell (2nd of 2 sessions)

*Assigned:* Batrell, A Black Soldier's Story. *Read:* pp. 3-121.

Tu 11/14 Ricardo Batrell and Historians Who Challenged Cuba's Official History of Antiracism

*Assigned:* Batrell, A Black Soldier's Story. *Read:* pp. 122-222.

Tu 11/19 Resurrecting the Legacies of a Silenced Past: Historical Novel as History Lesson

*Assigned:* Danticat, The Farming of Bones. *Read:* pages tba.

Tu 11/26 The Power of the Story and the Challenge to Historians: History vs. Historical Fiction

*Assigned:* Danticat, The Farming of Bones. *Read:* pages tba.

**Tu 12/03 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**



Lillian Guerra, Ph.D.  
Professor of Cuban & Caribbean History

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Office Hours: Th 12-2 PM

**FINAL RESEARCH DUE ON 12/12 no later than 4 pm** to Dr. Guerra's office (Keene Flint 218) or to Melissa Hale, secretary of the Department of History, in hard copy.

12/12 5 PM WELL-DESERVED VACATION!!!