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African Heritage and the Caribbean-Brazilian Experience

Michelle D. Thompson
CUNY City College

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African Heritage/Caribbean-Brazilian Experience
BLST 10200-L (25468)
Professor Michelle Thompson
Mthompson4@ccny.cuny.edu
Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
NAC 7/306

What's this course about? This course will engage the analysis of the historical conditions that shaped the lives of African peoples in the Caribbean and Brazil emphasizing cultural continuities, human organization and similarities in global Black experience among Africans on the continent and in the Western hemisphere, vis-à-vis European politico-economic control and cultural impact.

Further, we will examine the history of the Caribbean and Brazil through the larger construct of the African Diaspora. The themes of forceful dislocation, slavery, emancipation, immigration, the quest for freedom, decolonization, longing for “home,” redefining self in a new place, and the relationship to one’s imagined home in the British, French, and Spanish Caribbean will all be examined throughout the semester. However, the course will have a greater focus on the British Caribbean.

A student successfully completing this course should be able to

- Analyze primary source materials for their contexts, biases, and reliability;
- Comprehend and evaluate secondary works of history, both articles and books;
- And use the library to find information for research.
- Use the past as context for the present.

How will we do this? Given the current political climate in the U.S. and our impact, we will examine these themes through self-directed learning. Paolo Friere, an educator who wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* critiqued traditional ways of teacher/student interactions because the fundamental presumption was that the teacher had all of the information, and students simply had to deposit that information they acquired through lectures in their brain banks.

Banking information does not provide a way for students to critically engage with why the information is the way it is, what it has to do with the pressing challenges with which they engage, and how to fundamentally understand and create the world they want.

Every class will be an opportunity to discuss and explore these themes through the lens of the one final project you will do over the course of the semester. What happens in a given class will depend on your staying up to date with the components of the assignment due, reading what is required to do a particular part of the assignment, bringing questions to class, and engaging in small group.

As a result, this course is a NO TEXTBOOK course!

How can I see you if I have questions? You have to set up an appointment with me to meet during office hours. No

appointment, no meeting. You can set up that appointment here:

<https://calendly.com/mdionnethompson/office-hours>

Oh no, what if I plagiarize? It is imperative, as we seek to fulfill the objectives of the course that we abide by academic integrity. City College's policy on academic integrity can be found at <http://www1.cuny.edu/upload/academicintegrity.pdf>.

What if I need more support? In compliance with CCNY policy and equal access laws, appropriate academic accommodations are offered by the AccessAbility Center. Students who are registered with the AccessAbility office and are entitled to specific accommodations must arrange to have the Office notify the Professor in writing of their status at the beginning of the semester. If specific accommodations are required for a test, students must present the instructor with a form from the AccessAbility Office at least one week prior to the test date in order to receive their accommodations.

Where do I find everything? All information about the course will be posted on Blackboard, including the syllabus. Further, any course announcements will be posted on Blackboard. Make sure that your City College email address is entered into the system properly so that I can communicate with you throughout the semester.

Classroom Etiquette: During your tenure at CCNY, you are to address your Professors as "Professor XXX," or "Doctor XXX" if they have that credential. Under no circumstances are

they to be called Mr., Ms., Miss., or Mrs. Please refer to me as Professor Thompson or Dr. Thompson.

Further, when addressing email to all of your professors, as we have multiple teaching obligations, make sure your emails are written as follows:

Dear Professor/Doctor XXX:

My name is XXXX and I am in your XXXX Class that meets on DAYS at TIME.

Then you can ask your question.

This way I will be able to answer your questions much more efficiently.

Attendance: I expect that you will attend class. Making progress on your project is fully dependent on attendance. I will take attendance but assume that all absences are excused. You will only be penalized if you miss excessive numbers of classes. This will equal 5.5/100 of your final grade.

There are two days this semester that are designated for research days. You may use these days to do whatever you can, during class time, to advance your final project.

Your attendance will also be required at library research sessions. We will have one here at CCNY in September, with a particular focus on finding primary sources.

Class Participation: Class will not work at all if you do not participate. This means that you will need to make regular progress on your paper, engage with your sources and raise questions

when you have them, engage in discussion about what those sources mean and their implications, and ask questions about your secondary sources. This will equal 5.5/100 points of your final grade.

Assignments: The assignments to assess both your understanding of the Caribbean and Brazil form a historical perspective and to assess your reading and writing skills are as follows. *All assignments must be turned in on*

Blackboard. Any assignments that are emailed to me will receive a zero (0).

The links for the assignments disappear. Once the links disappear, you may not hand that assignment in anymore. Also, all assignments, unless noted otherwise, must be Microsoft Word, or .pdf documents so that they are graded efficiently. **Any assignments that are turned in using other programs (such as .txt, pages, etc.) will receive a zero (0).**

- **One final project:** The final project starts the first day of class and you will be working on it throughout the semester. The total will be 80% of your grade. This grade will include selecting your topic, primary source, bibliography, the thesis statement, and the draft, all of which are 6.66 points each, a total of 40 points. The final project will be 40 points. The total grade for the paper will be based on eighty (80) points. *Any late component of this assignment will receive a zero (0), and if the final assignment is late, that too will receive a zero (0).* You will receive a description of the assignment and what you need to do.

Grading Matrix

Grade Component		Score
Attendance		10
Participation		10
Final Project	Topic	6.66
	Primary Source	6.66
	Bibliography	6.66
	Research Questions	6.66
	Thesis Statement	6.66
	Draft	6.66
	Final Project	40
Total		100

Schedule

Date	Theme	Assignment/Reading
January 28 and 30	Discussion of Project Topics and themes that connect with people in the Caribbean and Brazil	

	How to conduct research sessions for primary and secondary sources with the library.	
February 4 and 6	Discussion of topics for the project.	
February 11 and 13		Project Topic Due
February 18 and 20		
February 25	Discussion and workshopping primary sources	
February 27 - Research Day		
March 3 and 5	Discussion and workshopping primary sources	<i>Film: Sankofa</i>
		Primary Source Due <i>Film: Sankofa</i>
March 10 and 12	Discussion of bibliographies/secondary sources that you found	
March 17 and 19 We will not be meeting this week.		Bibliography Due
		<i>Film: Sugar Cane Alley</i>
March 24		
March 26 - Research Day		

March 31 and April 2	Discussion and workshopping thesis statements.	Research Question Due <i>Film: Sugar Cane Alley</i>
April 7	Discussion and workshopping thesis statement.	Thesis Statement Due November 7
April 9 - Spring Break		
April 14 and 16 Spring Break		
April 21	Discussion of final project and challenges with it. Also, discussion of sources you find to put project together.	Project Draft Due April 23
April 23 - Research Day		
April 28 and 30		
May 5 and 7		Final Project Due May 7 <i>Film: Life and Debt</i>
May 12 and 14		<i>Film: Life and Debt</i>

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