

CLEN W4640y
REVOLUTION IN/ON THE CARIBBEAN

Prof. Frances Negrón-Muntaner

TR 2:40pm-3:55pm

Office hours: Tuesday at 1:30-2:30 PM; Thursday 4-5 PM
Office, CSER 422

Although a geographically small area, the Caribbean has produced major social and revolutionary movements, and two globally influential revolutions: the Haitian Revolution (1791) and the Cuban Revolution (1959). It has also produced literature and poetic discourse that has sought to revolutionize through analysis and language. In this course, we will examine texts that reflect on revolution and/or attempt to revolutionize by writers such as Aimé Césaire, CLR James, Derek Walcott, Alejo Carpentier, Frantz Fanon, Reinaldo Arenas, Michelle Cliff, and V.S. Naipaul, among others.

We will also read essays by Hannah Arendt, André Breton, Paul Breslin, A. James Arnold, Phyllis Taoua, Robin D.G. Kelley, Brad Epps, Kimberle Lopez, Bruce King, Maria Elena Lima, Yoani Sánchez, and Audre Lorde.

In addition, we will listen to a variety of music by Caribbean and African American musicians that take revolution as its theme in form and/or content.

Required texts (readings from these books will not be included in CourseWorks):

Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963)
Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)
CLR James, *The Black Jacobins* (1936/1938)
Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World* (1949)
Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* (1947)
Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (1961)
Reinaldo Arenas, *Before Night Falls* (1990)
Cristina García, *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992)
V.S. Naipaul, *Guerrillas* (1975)
Michelle Cliff, *No telephone to heaven* (1987)
Merle Collins, *Angel* (1987)

Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

Oral individual presentation (at least one in the semester, starting on week one). These presentations should be brief (between 5-8 minutes) and will consist of a summary of the text's main arguments and/or formal features, and a critical appraisal of the text.

Midterm (4-5 pages)

Research paper (12-15 pages) for undergraduates; 15-18 for graduate students.

Grading will be based on the following requirements:

Individual Presentation – 20%

In class participation – 20%

Paper – 30%

Midterm – 30%

Attendance is required and paramount. More than two absences will immediately affect your grade. There are no make-up exams, except in the case of severe illness or emergency. In these rare instances, the student must provide documentation and make an appointment to discuss an additional assignment to make up for the missed exam.

Unit 1: Introduction: The Idea of the Caribbean

References:

Sidney Mintz, “The Caribbean as a Socio-Cultural Area,” (*Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean*)

Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought* (chapter 1)

Antonio Benítez Rojo, “Introduction” (*The Repeating Island*)

Recording:

Lucesita Benítez, “Raza pura” (1973)

Units 2-3: What is a revolution?

Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963, chapters 1, 2, 6)

Recording:

Tracy Chapman, “Talkin’ ‘bout a Revolution” (1988)

Unit 4-5: What is a revolution? (Cont.)

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)

Andre Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924)

<http://www.screensite.org/courses/Jbutler/T340/SurManifesto/ManifestoOfSurrealism.htm>

Units 6-7: Re-membering the Haitian Revolution

CLR James, *The Black Jacobins* (1936)

A. James Arnold, "Recuperating the Haitian Revolution in Literature" in *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (2008)

Unit 8: Haitian Revolution (Cont.)

Derek Walcott, *Henri Christophe: A Chronicle in Seven Scenes* (1949/1950)

Paul Breslin, from *Nobody's Nation*, "The Early Poems and Henri Cristophe" (pages 75-82).

Recording:

Boukman Eksperyans, "Jou No Revolte"

Units 9-10: Haitian Revolution (Cont.)

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World* (1949)

Units 11-12: Revolutions in Language: Aimé Césaire

Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* (1947)

Phyllis Taoua, "The Emergence of Anti-Colonial Protest in the Imperial Crucible" in *Forms of Protest: Anti-Colonialism and Avant-Gardes in Africa, the Caribbean, and France* (2002)

Robin D.G. Kelley, "Keeping it (Sur)real" in *Freedom Dreams* (2003)

Recording:

Calle 13, "Atrève-te-te" (2005)

Unit 13: Revolution in Translation: Frantz Fanon

Frantz Fanon, from *Black Skin, White Masks* ("The Negro and Language" and "The Fact of Blackness")

Further reading:

Diana Fuss, "Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification." *Diacritics* (Summer-Fall 1994): 20-42.

Henry Louis Gates, "Critical Fanonism." *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1992): 457-470.

Unit 14-15: Fanon (Cont.)

Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (1961)

Recording:

Michael Franti "Keep Me Lifted" (Chocolate Supa Highway)

Unit 16: Battle of Words: The Cuban Revolution

Preliminaries

Fidel Castro, *Words to the Intellectuals* (1961)

<http://www1.lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1961/19610630.html>

CLR James, "From Toussaint Louverture to Fidel Castro" (1962)

Recording:

Silvio Rodríguez, "Canción urgente para Nicaragua" (1982)

Units 17-18: Cuban Revolution (Cont.)

In the Flesh

Reinaldo Arenas, *Before Night Falls* (1990)

Brad Epps, "Proper Conduct: Reinaldo Arenas, Fidel Castro, and the Politics of Homosexuality" (*Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6.2 (1995): 231-283. (CW)

Recording:

Carlos Varela, "Guillermo Tell" (1989)

Units 19-20: Cuban Revolution (Cont.)

Abroad

Cristina Garcia, *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992)

Kimberle Lopez, "Women on the Verge of a Revolution: Madness and Resistance in Cristina Garcia's *Dreaming in Cuban*" (CW)

Recording:

Willie Chirino, *Nuestro día ya viene llegando* (1991/1994)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwRXhDIA8dE>

Unit 21: Cuban Revolution (Cont.)

Cuba Now

Yoani Sánchez, "Generation Y Blog"

Recording:

Porno para Ricardo, "El general" (2007)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0iVq49Pa9k>

Units 22-23: Novel "Revolutions"

V.S. Naipaul, *Guerrillas* (1975)

Bruce King, "The Overcrowded Barracoon, "Michael X," *Guerrillas* and *India: A Wounded Civilization*," in *VS Naipaul* (E-Reserve)

Units 24-25: Still Dreaming of a Revolution

Michelle Cliff, *No telephone to heaven* (1987)

Maria Helena Lima, "Revolutionary Developments: Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* and Merle Collins's *Angel*," *Ariel* 24(1): 35-56, 1993.

Recording:

Bob Marley, "Revolution" (1980)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5YvRIQBPSc&feature=related>

Units 26-27: The Last Revolution?

Audre Lorde, "Grenada: An Interim Report" in *Sister Outsider* (1984)

Merle Collins, *Angel* (1987)

Unit 28: Review