

**University of Florida
Department of Political Science
Fall 2015**

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Politics of the Caribbean (Pos 4931-14 EC)

Course Description

This course will consider the Caribbean as a subject of political study. It will consider the political forces that have impacted the Caribbean since colonization, after independence, and those who are still in a territorial, dependency, or colonial status. The course will focus significantly on the Spanish and English speaking islands, but will also address the experience of the islands that were colonized by other European powers. Some of the topics that will be discussed in the class will be colonialism, decolonization, imperialism, geopolitics, nationalism, populism, authoritarianism, clientelism, democratization, drug trafficking, neoliberalism, and migration. Finally the course will consider if we can effectively approach the Caribbean as a single object of study, or whether we should understand it as a more fluid political region.

Course Objectives

Students will debate the common themes of Caribbean politics; analyze how the field of political science has contributed to the understanding of the Caribbean. Also students will analyze the contributions from other fields that have tried to address power dynamics in the Caribbean.

About the Syllabus

Based on the composition of the class, our progress discussing these issues, elements beyond our control, and student needs, this syllabus is flexible and may change. Throughout the semester, you will be notified of any changes that might emerge. During the first day of class the professor will read and explain this syllabus at length. It is the student's responsibility to understand the requirements for this class and asking all the appropriate questions about this document to the professor. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at <https://catalogue.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance>.

Readings

The assigned texts are required and available at the UF Bookstore. It will be our source of discussion and used extensively. In addition, during the course the professor will offer required readings that will be available on our Canvas page identified by a C. This

syllabus is a living document, and in case of changes in the readings students will be properly notified.

Assigned Text

Franklin W. Knight (2011). *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (3rd Edition). Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780195381337

Writing Requirements and Grade

The grade will be based on a four-page paper (10 points), a mid-term examination (20 points), research paper topic oral presentation (5 points), research paper topic written presentation (5 points), a 10-12 pages research paper (30 points), a final examination (20 points), class attendance (5 points), and participation (5 points).

Papers (10+30=40 points)

The four-page paper (10 points) will be written responding to questions that will be offered to the students. The 10-12-research paper (30 points) will be the product of your original research. The topic of the research paper should be pertinent to the class and approved by the professor.

Research Paper Oral and Written Presentation (5+5=10 Points)

The second paper presentation should last five minutes and will be an opportunity for students to present their hypothesis for their research paper, and to offer a preliminary bibliography. The topic of the paper should be discussed with the professor for approval prior to the class presentation. In this presentation the student will offer a proposal of their final research paper, outlining the research question, and relevant literature that will be used. This same information should be handed in writing to the professor on the day of the presentation.

Exams (20+20=40 points)

The mid-term and final examinations will be short in nature. Blue books will be handed and the student is expected to complete the exam during the exam period.

Participation (5 points)

Students are expected to attend and be active components of the class and discussion. It is expected that by the end of the semester all students have participated by offering quality contributions. If you do not feel comfortable by participating in class feel free to send me an email with your thoughts to casuarez@uf.edu.

Attendance (5 points)

Students are therefore allowed three absences from days of class without penalty. Attendance will be taken by either roll book, or index card. Any absence after the third one will be penalized by taking three points per missed class. Written evidence will be required in order to justify absences.

Grade scale

A	94 and above
A	90-93
B	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
E	59 and below

Rubric

The short papers will be graded according to the following elements: (1) format and timeliness, (2) textual evidence, (3) critical evaluation, (4) spelling and grammar.

The presentation will be evaluated according to the following elements: (1) background, (2) summary, (3) critical evaluation, (4) discussion, and (5) presentation style. A more detailed description of the rubric used for evaluation will be posted as a document on our Canvas class page.

Academic Honesty

An important component in academic work is recognizing one's work as well as others. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not allowed. **Any violations of the academic honesty policy will be vigorously pursued. All students are expected to adhere scrupulously to the University policy concerning academic honesty.** In order to respect this principle students are expected to abide by the Academic Honesty Policy. A copy of the Academic Honesty Policy can be found in the following link, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the policy. Following these guidelines will assure that original academic work will be recognized and celebrated.

Concerns with a Grade

In the case that a student disagrees with a grade that concern should be presented in writing. This statement should be handed in writing the next class day after receiving your grade. The merits of the concern will be evaluated taking into consideration how deeply the student is thinking about the subject at hand, and whether or not this student can provide textual evidence to justify their claim. After careful evaluation, I will notify the student about my decision and adjust the grade accordingly if applicable.

Incompletes

Students who have not completed the required class work will only be evaluated by the work that was turned in by the day it was due. Incompletes will only be awarded under exceptional circumstances. Incompletes will be given when students comply with the following conditions, (1) notifying the professor two weeks prior to the last day of class,

(2) providing written evidence for the medical condition, or situation that has prompted the student to request an incomplete. The student and professor should agree upon a proper arrangement on how the missing work will be submitted. The student will have the following semester as the time period to complete the missing work; failure to do so will result in an E.

Special Needs

Testing accommodations and other needs will be addressed for students with proper documentation. Please make sure to inform me of these needs in writing during the first week of class. Retroactive accommodations will not be considered. In case of questions about Disability Resource Center feel free to contact them at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Classroom interaction

Respect is required at all times. Textual evidence is crucial when engaging in intelligent academic debates. Please make use of this tool when elaborating your arguments in the classroom. Refrain from comments that are not related to class discussion. Video or audio recording of the class is not allowed. Finally, the use of cell phones, and laptops are prohibited.

Course evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

I. Introduction

Review course syllabus.

II. Settlement and Early Colonization

Reading: Knight, Chapter 1. (8/27)

Questions for discussion: What type of social structures did the European forces encountered in the Caribbean?

Reading: Knight, Chapter 2. (9/1)

Questions for discussion: What type of influence did the metropolitan power had in our understanding of the emerging colonies? What was the role that Florida played at this time of early colonialism?

Reading: Knight, Chapter 4. (9/3)

Questions for discussion: Why the Caribbean transitioned from an economy driven by settlers to one drive by slaves? Were there any significant differences in terms of how each metropolitan country asserted its power?

III. On Democracy and Institutions

Reading: Sutton, *Caribbean Politics*. C (9/8)

Questions for discussion: Are there any common thread that defines what constitutes the Caribbean? How does the author characterize Caribbean politics?

Reading: Erikson and Minson, *The Caribbean: Democracy Adrift?* C (9/8)

Questions for discussion: How have Caribbean democracies have been characterized after independence? What are some of the challenges that Caribbean democracies are facing according to the authors?

Reading: Sutton, *Westminster Challenged, Westminster Confirmed*. C (9/10)

Questions for discussion: Why there has been so much activity in terms of constitution reform in the Commonwealth Caribbean? Can it be argued that any conclusive results have emerged out of the activity in the Commonwealth Caribbean?

IV. Caribbean Integration

Reading: Pantojas García, *Economic Integration and Caribbean Identity*. C (9/15)

Questions for discussion: How can regional integration be achieved in the Caribbean? What are the political forces that threaten said integration?

Reading: Bryon, "*Singing from the same hymn sheet*". C (9/17)

Questions for discussion: What type of mechanisms did the Caribbean used to articulate a single voice when negotiating with the European Union? What type of lessons did emerge for Caribbean diplomacy after the Cotonou Agreement?

First Paper Topic Distributed (9/22)

V. Sovereign Countries

A. Commonwealth Caribbean

Reading: Knight, Chapter 10. (9/22)

Questions for discussion: Is there a common political history to what is the Commonwealth Caribbean? What are the distinctive traits of these islands?

Reading: Seguino, *Micro-Macro Linkages between Gender, Development and Growth*. C (9/24)

Questions for discussion: How do gender differences impact the economic development of CARICOM countries? What type of actions can states take in order to remediate this inequality?

B. Haiti and the Dominican Republic

Reading: Knight, Chapter 7. (9/29)

Questions for discussion: How have these two countries shared La Hispaniola? What are some of the major challenges today?

Reading: Frankema et.al, *An Island Drifting Apart*. C (10/1)

Questions for discussion: Are there similar political forces in Haiti and the Dominican Republic? How has the Dominican Republic differentiated itself from Haiti?

First Paper Due (10/6)

C. Cuba

Reading: Knight, Chapter 8. (10/6)

Questions for discussion: Could it be argued that Cuba has had a democratic regime at any point of the 20th century? What are some of the challenges that the current regime and the Cuban people faces today?

Reading: LeoGrande, *Normalizing US-Cuba relations*. C (10/8)

Questions for discussion: Does the author point to the reason why normalization is happening now? What are some of the challenges that stand in the way of complete normalization?

Mid term in class (10/13) Research Paper Presentations (10/15-10/20)

VI. Colonies, territories, and others

A. Puerto Rico

Reading: Knight, Chapter 9. (10/22)

Questions for discussion: Why does the author refer to Puerto Rico as having an "ambivalent identity"? Is it justified?

Reading: Suárez Carrasquillo, *Gated Communities and City Marketing*. C (10/27)

Questions for discussion: What is the role that the use of the English language had as part of the city marketing campaign? Has neoliberalism promoted the emergence of city marketing practices by municipalities on the island?

B. Dutch Caribbean

Reading: Allen, *The Complexity of National Identity Construction in Curaçao*. C (10/29)

Questions for Discussion: Could it be argued that there is a distinct national identity for Curaçao? Is this identity a threat to the Netherlands?

C. French Caribbean

Reading: Breton et.al. *The challenges of population ageing and migration in the French overseas départements*. C (11/3)

Questions for discussion: What types of demographic trends are occurring in the French overseas départements? What do these changes mean for France?

Reading: Bonilla, *Guadeloupe is Ours*. C (11/3)

Questions for discussion: What triggered the political mobilization of island residents? How did authorities respond to their claims?

D. US Territories

Reading: Roopnarine, St. Croix's Secession Movement in the USVI. C (11/5)

Questions for discussion: What have been the arguments for the secession of St. Croix from the USVI? Are there procedural policies in place in order to facilitate secession?

F. UK Overseas Territories

Reading: Clegg, The UK Caribbean Overseas Territories. C (11/10)

Questions for discussion: How does the author characterize the relationship between Britain and its Overseas Territories in the Caribbean? Are there any differences amongst the islands?

VII. Current Challenges

A. Drug Trafficking

Reading: Platzer et.al. *Illicit Drug Markets in the Caribbean*. (11/12) C

Questions for discussion: What is the importance of the Caribbean in the drug trade? Do any of the drugs stay for being consumed in the Caribbean?

B. Debt

Reading: Fridell, *Debt Politics and the Free Trade 'Package'*. C (11/17)

Questions for discussion: How have free trade agreements has placed a number of islands in debt? How can the Caribbean escape economic agreements that put them at risk?

C. Climate Change

Reading: Taylor et.al. *Climate Change and the Caribbean*. C (11/19)

Questions for discussion: Has climate information been incorporated into the developmental plans and policies of the region? What are the implications of climate change for the Caribbean?

D. Consumption

Reading: Scher, *Heritage Tourism in the Caribbean*. C (11/24)

Questions for discussion: How has neoliberalism facilitated the growth of heritage tourism? Why have islands in the Caribbean resorted to "selling culture"?

Reading: Kinnaman, Solid Waste Management in the Caribbean. C (12/1)

Questions for discussion: What are the factors that have increased the level of consumption in the Caribbean? Will waste production keep increasing in the region?

E. State

Reading: Knight, Chapter 11. (12/3)

Questions for discussion: What are some of the challenges that the Caribbean faces in the future? Can we think today of the Caribbean as a single region?

**Second Paper Due (12/3)
Final Exam TBA**