

**University of Florida  
Department of Political Science  
Fall 2016**

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**Anderson Hall 210**  
**Mondays 11:00-12:30, Tuesdays 1:00-2:30, and by appointment**  
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**Politics of the Caribbean (POS 4931/LAS 4935)**

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.

## Class Texts

### *Required*

Stephan Palmié and Francisco Scarano. 2011. *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### *Optional*

Mark Schuller. 2016. *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Antonio Sotomayor. 2016. *The Sovereign Colony*. Lincoln: Nebraska University Press.

## Writing Requirements and Grade

The grade will be based on a five-page paper (10 points), a mid-term examination (20 points), research paper proposal oral presentation (5 points), research paper proposal written presentation (5 points), a 12-15 pages research paper (25 points), research paper presentation (5 points), a final examination (20 points), class attendance (5 points), and participation (5 points).

### Five Page Paper (10 points)

Students will read one of the optional books (see above) and address the questions offered by the professor. This five-page paper will rely only on the selected book as a source.

### Midterm Exam (20 points)

The mid-term will be held during class hours. Blue books will be required and the student is expected to complete the exam during the exam period.

### Research Paper Proposal Presentation (5 points)

The proposal and annotated bibliography presentation should last five minutes and will be an opportunity for students to present their research question, working hypothesis for their research paper, and to offer a preliminary bibliography of five sources (no class readings). The topic of the paper should be discussed with the professor for approval prior to the class presentation. The rubric that will be used to evaluate the presentation will be posted on our Canvas page.

### Research Paper Proposal Document (5 points)

In this document the student will offer a proposal of their final research paper, outlining the research question, working hypothesis, and relevant literature that will be used. The topic of the paper should be discussed with the professor for approval prior to the class presentation. This document should be three pages long, featuring a cover page, research question with an abstract, and an annotated bibliography page with five academic sources (no class readings). The rubric that will be used to evaluate the document will be posted on our Canvas page.

### Research Paper (25 points)

The 12-15 research paper 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. It is expected that students will make use only of academic sources that have not been assigned for the class. Students are required to make use of a minimum of seven academic sources.

#### Research Paper Presentation (5 points)

In this 5-7 minute presentation students will present their research findings and receive feedback from the class as well as the professor. The rubric that will be used to evaluate the presentation will be posted on our Canvas page.

#### Second Exam (20 points)

The second exam will be due at the end of the semester. The format of the exam will be announced in a timely fashion during the semester.

#### 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. The rubric for participation will be posted on our Canvas page. If you do not feel comfortable by participating in class feel free to send me an email with your thoughts to [casuarez@ufl.edu](mailto:casuarez@ufl.edu).

#### Attendance (5 points)

The professor will take attendance either by roll book, canvas, or index card. Students are therefore allowed three absences from days of class without penalty. Any absence after the third one will be penalized by taking three points per missed class. A student who leaves the class before it is over will not be considered as present in terms of attendance. Written evidence will be required in order to justify absences. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of their number of absences during the semester. If a student has any questions about their attendance on a particular day, this issue should be brought up in writing no later than the following class.

#### 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

The Canvas grade book will be updated as class assignments are graded. Please note that the grade book does not include the grades for Participation and Attendance.

#### On Timeliness

Students are expected to turn in their assigned work on time. If a student is not able to turn in their work on time they will have offer written evidence in order to justify the tardiness. If said evidence is not produced one letter grade will be deducted per day after due date.

### 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: Palmié and Scarano, Introduction. (8/23)

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

Reading: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 1, Chapter 2. (8/25)

Questions for discussion: What type of influence did geography and ecology played in the colonization of the Caribbean?

Reading: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 6. (8/30)

Questions for discussion: Why the Caribbean transitioned from an economy driven by settlers and natives to one driven 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 (9/1)

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 (9/1)

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 (9/6)

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 (9/8)

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 (9/8)

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 Questions Distributed (9/13)**

## **V. Sovereign Countries**

### *A. Commonwealth Caribbean*

Reading: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 20, Chapter 23, Chapter 35. (9/13-9/15)

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 (9/20)

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: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 18, Chapter 37. (9/22)

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 (9/27)

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 (9/29)**

#### *C. Cuba*

Reading: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 22, Chapter 34. (9/29)

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 (10/4)

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 (10/6)**

### **Research Paper Proposal Document and Presentations (10/11-10/13)**

## **VI. Colonies, territories, and others**

#### *A. Puerto Rico*

Reading: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 29, Chapter 36. (10/18-10/20)

Questions for discussion: Is Puerto Rico's reality any different than the rest of the islands of the Caribbean? How can we best characterize the relation between Puerto Rico and the United States?

Reading: Suárez Carrasquillo, *Gated Communities and City Marketing*. C (10/20)

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: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 14. (10/25)

Questions for Discussion: What was the political structure of the colonial Dutch Caribbean?

Reading: Allen, *The Complexity of National Identity Construction in Curaçao*. C (10/27)  
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: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 23. (10/27)

Questions for Discussion: How was the transition for the peasantry from slavery to emancipation?

Reading: Breton et.al. *The challenges of population ageing and migration in the French overseas départements*. C (11/1)

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 (11/3)

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 (11/8)

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. Neoliberal Challenges*

Reading: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 38. (11/10)

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 (11/10)

Questions for discussion: How have free trade agreements 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 (11/15)

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: Schmelzkopf, *Tourism in a Mobile Society*. C (11/17)

Questions for discussion: How has globalization impacted tourism in Vieques? What types of divisions are present on the island?

Reading: Kinnaman, Solid Waste Management in the Caribbean. C (11/17)

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. Migration and Diasporas*

Reading: Palmié and Scarano, Chapter 39. (11/22)

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?

**Research Paper Due (11/29)**  
**Research Paper Presentations (11/29-12/1)**  
**Final Exam TBA**