

**RomL 4860/6860**  
**Prof. Lesley Feracho**

**Fall 2005: T,TR: 2-3:15**  
**Office Hours: Wed.10-12**  
**360A Gilbert**

### **Afro-Hispanic Identity: Women of the Hispanophone Caribbean**

The purpose of this course is to study the voices of women of African descent in the Spanish-speaking island-nations of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, as well as those countries not “traditionally” considered Caribbean but part of that region through processes of migration. In particular, we will look at the West Indian communities of Panama and how it challenges former definitions of Caribbeanness.

Through narrative, poetry and film we will explore how historically marginalized Afro-Hispanic women use the written medium (and cinematic medium) to reformulate their identities and address the impact of race, gender, class, sexuality, religion and other factors in their process of self-definition.

#### **Distribution of Grades**

- Attendance: 5%
- Participation: 12%
- Mini-presentation: 10%
- Critical analysis (Mini-papers): 20%
- Midterm Paper: 20%
- Final Paper: 33%

#### **II. Class Structure**

**1. Each student will be responsible for coming to class having read the material and ready to contribute in class with relevant comments and questions.**

**2. Presentations:** Each class discussion a group of students will be responsible for giving a class presentation leading class discussion of **one theme** in the text (literary and critical) being discussed that week and providing 2-3 questions to start class discussion. A written summary of important points of the presentation and any works cited is to be handed in the day of the discussion. .

**3. Critical Analysis:** Throughout the semester students will be expected to hand in a 2 - 3 page written critical analysis of **one theme** in one or more of the texts discussed up to that point. **No late papers will be accepted. Any difficulty handing in the assignment on time must be discussed with me prior to the date it should be received by me.**

**4. Research Papers:** A 8-10 page critical, literary analysis of **one theme** developed in one or more of the texts discussed in class is to be handed in as a Midterm paper. The text to be analyzed for this paper will be chosen by the student-- who can meet with me to discuss the paper topic and research strategies. The paper must have atleast 2 outside sources other than the text. **Online information will not be considered as one of the sources.** A bibliography must also be included. Both citations in the paper and the bibliography at the end must follow **MLA Handbook Guidelines.**

**b. Final Research Paper:** A 10-12 page critical, literary analysis of **one theme** developed in one or more of the texts discussed in class will be handed in as a final paper. The text to be analyzed for this final paper will be chosen by the student and can be an

expansion of the smaller commentary papers handed in throughout the class or of the midterm paper. Students are expected to meet with me to discuss the paper topic and research strategies.

The paper must have at least 3 outside sources other than the text. **Online information will not be considered as one of the sources.** A bibliography must also be included. Both citations in the paper and the bibliography at the end must follow **MLA Handbook Guidelines.**

## Syllabus

### I. Introduction to the Hispanic Caribbean and the Role of Women

Class 1(8/18) A. Introduction to the Region

B. Introduction to class themes

### II. Week 2: Gender, Race, Class and the Reformulation of Identity (8/23, 8/25)

A. **Women in the Caribbean:** "Introduction: Literary Discourse and Ideology; The Literary-Ideological Map." From *Charcoal & Cinnamon: The Politics of Color in Spanish Caribbean Literature*. (P)

B. "Introduction" from *Daughters of the Diaspora*.(P)

C. "Introduction: Migratory Subjectivities" (Davies, Carole Boyce. From *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the subject.*)(P)

### III. Week 3: Cuban Women's Voices: *Reyita* (8/30, 9/1)

A. **Critical Reading:** "The Displaced Island of Postcolonialism" (P)

B. **Critical Reading:** "De/colonization and the Politics of Discourse in Women's Autobiographical Practices" (P)

B. *Reyita*

(**Suggested Rdg.:** *Introduction to the Caribbean:* Chapter on Women and Development. (R)

### IV. Week 4: *Reyita* (9/6, 9/8)

**Presentation 1 (9/6:Chapter 3)**

*Reyita* concluded

**Mini-paper #1 Due**

### V. Week 5: National Intersections: Gender, Race and Cuban Nationality (9/13, 9/15)

**Critical Rdg.:** "Cultural Identity in the Postcolonial Context" (P)

A. "Black woman;" "Persona " (Morejón) (P)

B. "Street of the women of the world" (Herrera) (P)

C. "My name" (Saldaña)(P)

**Critical Reading:** "The Zeal for Self-Denomination in the Poetic Works of Excilia Saldaña"

**Excerpts from Cuban-American film."Cuban Roots, Bronx Stories."**

## **PART TWO: PUERTO RICAN LITERATURE**

### **VI. Week 6: Puerto Rican Identity: Women, National Identity and Sexuality (9/20, 9/22)**

**A. Critical Reading:** "Conceptualizing Difference in Caribbean Feminist theory" from *New Caribbean Thought*

**B. Julia de Burgos:** "Cry of the Kinky Haired Girl;" "To Julia de Burgos;" "I became my own path"

**(Suggested Reading:** "I am the Life, the Strength, the Woman")(P)

**D. Mayra Santos Febres:** "The Institute of Culture Says"

**Mini-paper #2 Due**

### **VII. Week 7: Race, Gender and Sexuality Pt.2 (9/27, 9/29)**

A. Mayra Santos Febres: "Broken Strand;"

**Presentation #2**

B. (suggested Reading: "Marina's Fragrance")

C. Film and discussion--"Brincando el charco"/"Jumping over the pond"

### **VIII. Week 8: Perceptions from the outside: Representations of Race and Identity In Contemporary Puerto Rican literature (10/4, 10/6)**

A. Ferré, Rosario. "When women love men"

**Critical Reading:** "Through the looking glass darkly" (P)

B. "Matters of the Heart" and Discussion

### **IX. Week 9 : PART THREE: LITERATURE OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (10/11, 10/13)**

**Critical Reading:** "La raza dominicana and Haiti"(R)

Discussion of *Farming of the Bones* - (Class 1: Chapters 1-6)

**(Suggested Reading):** "Race and *negritude* in Dominican Literature" (Reserve)

**Presentation #3 (10/11): chapters 4-6**

**Midterm Paper Due 10/13**

(novel of interest: Alvarez, Julia. *In the time of the Butterflies*. There is also a film version.)

### **X. Week 10: Gender, Violence and the Nation: Danticat continued.**

**Continue reading *Farming of the Bones*: 7-15 (10/18)**

**No class 10/20**

### **XI. Week 11: *Farming of the Bones*: 16-26 (10/25)**

**Fall Break: 10/27-10/28**

**(Over the Break finish *Farming of the Bones*)**

### **XII. Week 12: Double Identities: Haiti and The Dominican Republic (11/1, 11/3)**

Conclusion of *Farming of the Bones*

**Mini-Paper #3 Due**

**Presentation #4 (11/3): Concluding Chapters of *Farming* TBA**

- B. Critical reading: “Remembering Hispaniola: Edwidge Danticat’s *The Farming of the bones*”. (R)
- C. “Parsley” by Rita Dove (handout)

**XIII. Week 13: Migrations and Identity (11/8, 11/10)**

- A. Discussion of *Song of the Water Saints* (Class 1: pp.1-36)  
**Critical Reading: “On Becoming” (R)**

**XIV. Class 14: Caribbean Diaspora: Definitions of Home (11/15, 11/17)**

- A. Discussion of *Song of the Water Saints*  
**Presentation # 5 (11/17): chapters --TBA**  
**[Suggested Reading: “From Post-coloniality to Uprising Textualities” (Reserve)]**

**XV. Class 15: Conclusion of *Song of the Water Saints*(11/22)**

**Mini-paper #4 Due: Students will write about the final paper: paper should include: a) topic and thesis; b)books to be analyzed; c) possible conclusions and d) useful secondary sources.**

**Thanksgiving Break: 11/23-11/25**

**Begin *Mama’s Girl*. (If possible: read it all, it’s pretty short)**

**XVI. Week 16: Representations of the Gendered Voice (11/29, 12/1)**

- A. Film : “My American Girls”. I will give film themes and we will discuss it in class.
- B. -Discussion of *Mama's Girl*  
**Presentation #6: 12/1: beginning chapters TBA.**

**XVII. Week 17: Crossing borders: Caribbean-U.S. Identity (12/6, 12/8)**

- Conclusion of *Mama's Girl***  
**Critical Reading: “Secret latina at large” (R)**  
-Review of class themes