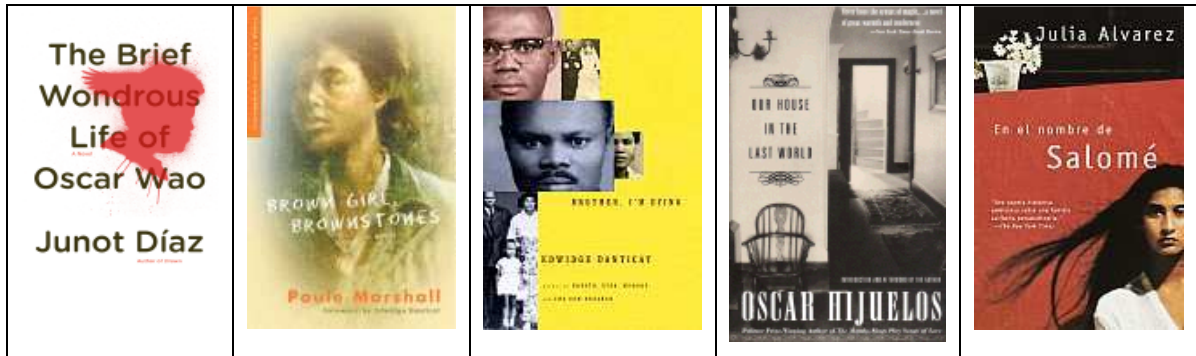


AFRICANA STUDIES 262

LITERATURE OF THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA



Spring 2007

Prof. Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert
Chicago Hall 144
Telephone: x5611
e-mail: liparavisini@vassar.edu

Office Hours:

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:45 to 1:30
And by appointment

Course Description: Study of the work of writers of Caribbean origin in the United States and Great Britain, with special attention to their explorations of migration, colonial and post-colonial histories, race, and ethnic identity, and to their reception by readers and critics..

Class Dynamics: Classes will be based on dialogue, open discussion and specific student questions. Lectures will be provided occasionally to guide and inform discussion of particular concepts or texts but will not substitute for student participation. Therefore students are responsible for coming to class prepared, having read and/or viewed assigned materials, and ready to comment on them.

Students are responsible for bringing to my attention any problems they may encounter during the semester. This includes issues of comprehension, individual assignments or other concerns that may affect student performance.

Required Work:

There are three types of written work required for class.

1. A series of brief responses (150 words each) to the readings that appear in **RED** on the syllabus. Look below for dates due. The responses are due by 5pm of the evening before class and should be posted on our Blackboard site. You are welcome to respond to any postings and are responsible for reading all your classmates' postings by class time.

2. A midterm paper (2000 words minimum) focused on a critical engagement with two of the essays discussed in class.
3. A 4000-word research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

If, in the course of writing any of the required work you should make use of the ideas or wording of a consulted source, you must provide documentation to that effect following the guidelines established in the *MLA Handbook* or *Chicago Manual of Style*. If you are unclear as to what requires documentation, consult the *Manual*, the pamphlet on *Originality and Attribution: A Guide for Student Writers at Vassar College*, or myself. Failure to acknowledge sources constitutes a breach of academic integrity and will be referred to the College's Academic Panel. This applies equally to material taken from the worldwide web.

Attendance Policy

Attendance to class meetings is **obligatory**. Absence from class will not constitute a valid excuse for lack of preparedness or late work. Students can keep abreast of course assignments through Blackboard or through contact with fellow students or the instructor. After the first unexcused absence from class, subsequent absences will result in a corresponding reduction of the final grade (see below).

Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities who are registered with the Office of Disability and Support Services. Please schedule an appointment with the instructor early in the semester to discuss any accommodations for this course which have been approved by the Director of Disability and Support Services as indicated in your DSS accommodation letter.

Required Texts (available at College Bookstore):

Junot Diaz's *The Brief Life of Oscar Wao*

Jamaica Kincaid's *My Garden*

Edwidge Danticat's *Brother, I'm Dying*

Oscar Hijuelos' *Our House in the Last World*

Patricia Powell's *A Small Gathering of Bones*

Julia Alvarez's *In the Name of Salome*

Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise*

Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstone*

Discussion Schedule:

September

- 2 Introduction
- 4 Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstone*
Paule Marshall's "From the Poets in the Kitchen" (Blackboard)
- 9 Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstone*
Martin Japtok's "Paule Marshall's Brown Girl, Brownstones: Reconciling Ethnicity and Individualism" (Blackboard)
Please post brief response to this text by 5pm the day before class.
- 11 Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstone*
- 16 Oscar Hijuelos' *Our House in the Last World*
- 18 Oscar Hijuelos' *Our House in the Last World*
Lori Ween's "Translational Backformations: Authenticity and Language in Cuban American Literature" (Blackboard)
Please post brief response to this text by 5pm the day before class.
- 23 Oscar Hijuelos' *Our House in the Last World*
- 25 Patricia Powell's *A Small Gathering of Bones*
- 30 Patricia Powell's *A Small Gathering of Bones*
Timothy Chin's "The Novels of Patricia Powell: Negotiating Gender and Sexuality across the Disjunctures of the Caribbean Diaspora" (Blackboard)
Please post brief response to this text by 5pm the day before class.

October

- 2 Patricia Powell's *A Small Gathering of Bones*
- 7 Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise*
- 9 Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise*
Kim Robinson-Walcott's "Claiming an Identity We Thought They Despised: Contemporary White West Indian Writers and Their Negotiation of Race" (Blackboard)
Please post brief response to this text by 5pm the day before class.
- 14 Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise*
FIRST PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT.
- 16 Julia Alvarez's *In the Name of Salome*
- 28 Julia Alvarez's *In the Name of Salome*

Lucía Suárez's "Julia Alvarez and the Anxiety of Latina Representation"
(Blackboard)

Please post brief response to this text by 5pm the day before class.

30 Julia Alvarez's *In the Name of Salome*

November

4 Jamaica Kincaid's *My Garden*

6 Jamaica Kincaid's *My Garden*
Elizabeth DeLoughrey's "Island Ecologies and Caribbean Literatures"
(Blackboard)

Please post brief response to this text by 5pm the day before class.

11 Jamaica Kincaid's *My Garden*

13 Edwidge Danticat's *Brother, I'm Dying*

18 Edwidge Danticat's *Brother, I'm Dying*
Katharine Capshaw Smith's "Splintered Families, Enduring Connections: An Interview with Edwidge Danticat" (Blackboard)

Please post brief response to this text by 5pm the day before class.

20 Edwidge Danticat's *Brother, I'm Dying*

25 Junot Diaz's *The Brief Life of Oscar Wao*

December

2 Junot Diaz's *The Brief Life of Oscar Wao*
Armando Celayo and David Shook's "In Darkness We Meet: A Conversation with Junot Diaz" (Blackboard)

Please post brief response to this text by 5pm the day before class.

4 Junot Diaz's *The Brief Life of Oscar Wao*

9 Conclusions

Course Evaluation Criteria

10% Class Attendance (Please note that after the second unexcused absence from the class you will forfeit 5 percentage points off your final grade for every subsequent absence).

20% Class participation

20% Brief responses

20% Midterm paper

30% Final paper

Final paper will be due by 5pm on the second day of final exams.