

# GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

## GPY 254 – The Caribbean in a Globalizing World



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<b>Contact Time</b>	2 hrs of tutorial per week, twice weekly office hours	
<b>Format</b>	Lectures, discussions, and debates based on key texts, case studies and videos	
<b>Class Assessment</b>	Bi-weekly in class exercises	55%
	Class Attendance and Participation	10%
	One page Research Proposal	15%      Week 7
	8 page Research Paper	20%      Week 12

### COURSE OVERVIEW

With a population of 15 million the countries of the Caribbean region are some of the most diverse in the world. With ethnic and cultural histories embedded in Africa, Europe, South and East Asia and the Middle East, the Caribbean is a 'quintessentially modern zone', to quote the late Stuart Hall, the living legacy of some of the earliest globalizing moments of the world capitalist system. As a important source of wealth in the early years of European, and later American, economic, political and industrial expansion, the Caribbean region was subject to systems of colonial and neo-colonial control and domination that many argue persist today in the levels of inequality, poverty and vulnerability that structure economic, social and political life in the region. Despite these issues, or perhaps, because of them the Caribbean in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a space that is in constant formation - a site of struggle and resistance, a site of mobility and transnationalism and a site of resilience and innovation. In this course we will survey scholarly debates that aim to explain, evaluate and intervene in Caribbean social transformation. We will examine not only the impact of global neoliberal processes on social relations within the Caribbean region itself, but also how these processes are transforming the geographic boundaries of the Caribbean itself. By examining the social, economic and spatial interconnectedness of the Caribbean territorial region and its increasingly de-territorialized diaspora, we will be able to identify possibilities for change and social justice for all Caribbean communities. In embarking on this course of study we will take a *feminist political economy approach*, focusing on the historical ways that the pursuit of wealth within a racial capitalist system has produced and reproduced patterns of uneven development and crisis in the Caribbean. The impacts of these inequalities on everyday lives and the local and global challenges that face efforts to effect social transformation. Using the methodology of *historical materialism* we will examine the material, the cultural and ideological challenges to change.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Identify the intellectual traditions within which concepts such as modernity, colonialism, racial capitalism, dependency, neoliberalism, uneven development and sustainability operate as frameworks for understanding the Caribbean
2. Consolidate knowledge about space, place, scale and power as abstract concepts through application to concrete issues of social justice in the Caribbean and its diaspora.
3. Make connections between specific patterns of uneven geographical development and forms of resistance, and struggle within Caribbean.
4. Make connections between the specific economic and political relationships and policies that reproduce patterns of uneven geographical development within and across the Caribbean and the changing political economy of powerful states.

Communicate complex ideas surrounding uneven development in the Caribbean and the social economic and spatial flows they generate, to a lay audience.

### SELECTED COURSE TOPICS

Colonialism, Slavery and Slave Societies; Plantation Economies, Creolization, Racial Capitalism, Resilience and Resistance, Dependency, Sovereignty, Self Reliance, Debt, Structural Adjustment, Austerity, Migration, Diaspora, Sustainability.

### SAMPLE OF TYPICAL COURSE READINGS (May change from Year to Year)

Higman, B. W. (2011). *A Concise History of the Caribbean*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Kelley, R. D. G. (2017). "What did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism." *Boston Review* January 12, 2017.

Mignolo, W. (2011). The Darker Side of the Enlightenment. *Reading Kant's Geography*. S. Elden and E. Mendieta. Albany, State University of New York Press: 319-343.

Thomas, D. A. (2007). "Blackness Across Borders: Jamaican Diasporas and New Politics of Citizenship." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* **14**: 111–133.

Hall, S. (1995). "Negotiating Caribbean Identities." *New Left Review* **218**: 3-14.

Beckles, H. (2013). *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Slavery and Native Genocide* Jamaica, University of West Indies Press.