

CARIBBEAN CULTURES (CAGC-UF)

CAGC-UF 101 Caribbean Cultures (4 Credits)

Islands in the Caribbean archipelago have been variously characterized as paradisaical, the sites of wealth-producing plantations, the ideal Spring Break destination, even as staging posts for narcotics traders. Caribbean landscapes function as metaphor, emblem, symbol, or even characters. Landscape – and geography - is implicated in the ways the identities of Caribbean states have been influenced by an accumulation of images, cultivated primarily by non-Caribbean individuals and agencies, including Columbus' journal entries, the documentation of European colonial governments and settlers, the brochures travel agents and the fantasies of tourists. Often in conflict with the fantasy projections of others, Caribbean peoples face the ongoing challenge of reclaiming their islands and building their societies, still haunted by histories of slavery and colonialism, while still subjected to multiple forms of commodification, consumption and economic domination. Based on readings from literature, history and cultural studies, this course takes an interdisciplinary, transnational approach to unpacking connections between the histories of slavery, indentureship and European colonialism and the Caribbean's current realities of inequality, internally – in particular inequalities of race and gender - and in its economic relations with the West. Questions addressed include: How have the residual legacies of slavery and colonization facilitated consumption in and of the Caribbean? And what cultural resources and strengths are deployed or lost to migration?

Grading: FAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No