

HIST/AFRC/LALS/GSWs 2401
Indians, Pirates, Runaways and Rebels:
Unofficial Histories of the Colonial Caribbean
Fall 2024

Dr. Yvonne Fabella
College Hall 208C
fabella@sas.upenn.edu

Mon 1:45-4:45



Agostino Brunias, *Free Women of Color with their Children and Servants in a Landscape*, c. 1770-96.
Brooklyn Museum.

This seminar considers the early history of the colonial Caribbean, not from the perspective of European colonizing powers but rather from “below.” Beginning with European-indigenous contact in the fifteenth century, and ending with the massive slave revolt that became the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), we will focus on the different ways in which indigenous, African, European and creole men and women experienced European colonization in the Caribbean, as agents, victims and resisters of imperial projects. Each week or so, we will examine the experiences of a different social group and their treatment by historians, as well as anthropologists, archaeologists, sociologists, and novelists.

Along the way, we will pay special attention to the question of primary sources: how can we recover the perspectives of people who rarely left their own accounts? How can we use documents and material objects—many of which were produced by colonial officials and elites—to access the experiences of the indigenous, the enslaved, and the poor? We will have some help approaching these questions from the knowledgeable staff at the Penn Museum, the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, and the Van Pelt Library.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:

- **Participation (25%):**
Students’ active, informed participation drives this course! Complete the assigned reading

thoroughly and thoughtfully, arriving in class prepared to talk about it. Often, you will be given reading questions beforehand; be ready to discuss those questions in class and cite examples from our texts to support your conclusions. During class discussions, you are expected to engage your fellow students, responding to their perspectives and questions in addition to those of the instructor. Your participation grade will be determined by the quality of your comments more than their quantity. This portion of your final grade will also include your contributions to in-class exercises.

- **Response Papers (15%)**

Students are required to submit four, one-page papers (hard copy and via Canvas) that respond to our weekly readings. Students may choose the weeks for which they write their papers, but **three of the four papers must be submitted by 10/21. Late response papers will not be accepted.** If they choose, students may submit five total response papers, in which case the paper with the lowest grade will be dropped. Response papers should address one of the prompts provided on Canvas and cite specific examples from the assigned texts.

- **Map Quiz (5%)**

A fill-in-the-blank quiz testing your knowledge of the region's geography, with an emphasis on locations covered in the class.

- **Primary source analysis (25%):** Each student will locate one relevant primary source and write a 5-page paper that situates the source in its historical context. The source may be found in the Van Pelt stacks, in the Kislak Center, online, or even in the Penn Museum. Students must incorporate relevant books and articles from the course syllabus as well as outside secondary readings to support their analysis. A proposal will be due, through Canvas, on **11/4**. Final research papers are due on **11/25**.

- **Final paper (30%):** A final paper will be due on **12/19**. The assignment sheet will be distributed on the last day of class.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic honesty is fundamental to our community. The Penn Code of Academic Integrity can be found online (http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html).

Violations of that Code, including intentional and unintentional acts of plagiarism, will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and may result in failure for the course.

According to the Penn Code of Academic Integrity, plagiarism includes "[u]sing the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgment. Example: copying another person's paper, article, or computer work and submitting it for an assignment, cloning someone else's ideas without attribution, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc."

Paraphrased ideas and directly quoted text must be cited properly in all written work. If you have questions about how to cite sources correctly, consult with Dr. Fabella or the Weingarten Learning Resource Center.

Class Meeting Schedule – provisional and partial

Week 1 (9/9): Introduction

Isaac Curtis, "Masterless People: Maroons, Pirates and Commoners" (on Canvas)

Week 2 (9/16): The Indigenous Caribbean: Taino and Carib/Kalinago

- From *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and its Peoples*, ed. Stephan Palmie et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011):
 - Reinaldo Funes Monzote, "The Columbian Moment: Politics, Ideology and Biohistory"
 - Jalil Sued-Badillo, "From Tainos to Africans in the Caribbean: Labor, Migration, and Resistance"
 - Lynne A. Guitar, "Negotiations of Conquest"
- Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, selections
- Map quiz discussion

Week 3 (9/23): Taino and Kalinago history and archaeology

Kathleen Deagan, *En Bas Saline: A Taino Town before and after Columbus*

<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/histarch/research/haiti/en-bas-saline/>

***At 3:10, we'll meet in the Kress Entrance Lobby of the Penn Museum. We'll spend the remainder of class working on an object-based learning exercise with Taino and Carib/Kalinago artifacts!*

Week 4 (9/30): Privateers, buccaneers, and pirates

Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), pg. 1-102.

In-class Map Quiz

****NOTE: The last day to drop a class is 10/7**

Week 5 (10/7): Indentured laborers

Hilary Beckles

Jenny Shaw, "To Live in Perpetual Noise and Hurry: Creating Communities on Caribbean Plantations," in *Everyday Life in the Early English Caribbean* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 2013), 71-100.

Primary source: Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), 93-99.

Week 6 (10/14): Kislak Center visit

***Class will meet in the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts (6th floor of Van Pelt Library, room 626), where we will learn about and work with Caribbean-related documents from the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries!*

Week 7 (10/21): The Kalinago in the Eastern Caribbean

Tessa Murphy, *The Creole Archipelago: Race and Borders in the Colonial Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021)

****10/24: Film viewing and discussion with Director Anne-Sophie Nanki! Plan to attend this Thursday evening event.**

Film: *Ici s'Acheve le Monde Connu/Here Ends the World We've Known* (2022)

Overview: "1645. Guadeloupe. Ibátali, a Kalinago native and wife of a French colonist, leads Olaudah, an escaped African captive, on a journey where he may lose his freedom and his life. She is ready to sacrifice him to save her own skin. But their wounds bring them together. Will this be enough to make them something other than what colonisation has decided they should be: a savage to be exterminated, an African to be enslaved?"

Weeks 8-14 to be revealed in the first class!