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## **Term Information**

Effective Term Autumn 2026

## **General Information**

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area African American & African Std  
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org African-Amer & African Studies - D0502  
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences  
Level/Career Undergraduate  
Course Number/Catalog 4344  
Course Title Religion, Revolution, and Art in the Caribbean  
Transcript Abbreviation RelRevArCaribbean  
Course Description This class examines alternative modes of sovereignty under & in the wake of colonial control of Caribbean nations, with a focus on the role of religion & aesthetics in challenging, negotiating, & reimagining structures of power. Students will engage in close reading of visual art & literature alongside historical case studies of religion, race, & politics in select Caribbean contexts.  
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

## **Offering Information**

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week  
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never  
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No  
Grading Basis Letter Grade  
Repeatable No  
Course Components Lecture  
Grade Roster Component Lecture  
Credit Available by Exam No  
Admission Condition Course No  
Off Campus Never  
Campus of Offering Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

## **Prerequisites and Exclusions**

Prerequisites/Corequisites None  
Exclusions Not open to students with credit for RELSTDS 4344.  
Electronically Enforced Yes

## **Cross-Listings**

Cross-Listings Cross-listed in Religious Studies

## **Subject/CIP Code**

Subject/CIP Code 05.0201  
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course  
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

## Requirement/Elective Designation

Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

## Course Details

### Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students will learn about varied modes of Caribbean creativity arising in response to a specific history of colonialism, racialization, and ongoing economic exploitation and political dependence. This will involve specific details about religious
- As part of this, students will rethink "sovereignty" outside of state power, approaching the term as linked to embodied sensations, self-determination, fleeting experiences of freedom, experiences of performance before or engagement with others.
- Relatedly, students will think comparatively about the role of art and literature as well as the religious imaginary and alternative modes of sociality and politics as all part of a broad human cultural array.
- "Race," too is a category that this class seeks to reconsider not merely as imposed but also as self-proclaimed and, importantly, reinvented through ongoing processes.

### Content Topic List

- Caribbean Religion and Revolution
- Caribbean Art, Theology, and Community Change
- Caribbean Theology. and Revolution

### Sought Concurrence

No

## Attachments

- AFAMAST 4344 Caribbean Religion Course Proposal Dew.docx: Syllabus  
(Syllabus. Owner: Beckham,Jerrell)
- CurriculumMap&ProgramLearningGoals\_AAAS.docx: Curriculum Map  
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Beckham,Jerrell)
- AFAMAST RELSTDS 4344 Themes form Dew Caribbean.pdf: GE Theme Form  
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Beckham,Jerrell)

## Comments

## Workflow Information

| Status           | User(s)                                                                                             | Date/Time           | Step                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Submitted        | Beckham,Jerrell                                                                                     | 09/18/2025 04:25 PM | Submitted for Approval |
| Approved         | Dew,Spencer L                                                                                       | 09/18/2025 04:42 PM | Unit Approval          |
| Approved         | Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal                                                                    | 10/13/2025 08:25 PM | College Approval       |
| Pending Approval | Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler<br>Neff,Jennifer<br>Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal<br>Steele,Rachel Lea | 10/13/2025 08:25 PM | ASCCAO Approval        |

**Religion, Revolution, and Art in the Caribbean**  
**4344-level course proposal, AAAS/RELST**  
**Dr. Spencer Dew, [dew.50@osu.edu](mailto:dew.50@osu.edu)**  
**Office: 424 Hagerty Hall / Office Hours TBA**

**Catalog Description:** This class examines alternative modes of sovereignty under and in the wake of colonial control of Caribbean nations, with a focus on the role of religion and aesthetics in challenging, negotiating, and reimagining structures of power. Students will engage in close reading of visual art and literature alongside historical case studies of religion, race, and politics in select Caribbean contexts.

**Course Description:** This course examines four Caribbean sites—Jamaica, under British colonial rule and independence; Haiti, in its revolutionary moment and the present day; Puerto Rico from Spanish “discovery” to its ongoing status as a US “possession”; and, finally, New Orleans from its time as a French territory to the contemporary, post-Katrina, moment. Approaching religious, political, and artistic innovations not as separate categories but as always intertwined, this course focuses particularly on the question of alternative sovereignties. We examine the ways that Caribbean movements have located in otherwise social formations, affective experiences, imagined realities not merely resistance to colonialism, racialization, and international corporate capitalism, but also alternative visions and embodiments of sovereign power that allow for the temporary eclipse of such hegemonic structures. Examples include the reasoning sessions of Rastafari communities, opening the Biblical text to radical new readings via an experience of direct “I-and-I” presence not only among human participants but with the deity as well; the aesthetic excess of sartorial style and performative displays of the Haitian Vodou lwa through their human “horses”; queer perreo intenso on the steps of San Juan’s Cathedral, itself a historic spot for slave auctions, transformed into not merely a location for anti-colonial protest but a genuinely a-colonial instantiation of alternative being.

We consider the Caribbean as a vanguard for creative confrontations with modernity, a series of distinct spaces, characterized by creolization, which have and continue to respond to colonialism in its ever-advancing forms, racialization and governmental control of sexuality and family planning and structure, environmental exploitation and change, and ever-new modes of capitalist utopianism. This class, moreover, considers four specific sites distinguished by their rich political, artistic, and religious history—from Jamaica, birthplace of the Rastafari traditions that reinterpret not only primitive Christianity but also the political mission of Marcus Garvey, to New Orleans, where new forms of Voodoo develop both as metaphysical and socio-economic systems, entrepreneurial enterprises that simultaneously reimagine the very reality of capital. Along the way we’ll consider case studies such as the role of Vodou in the Haitian Revolution and contemporary artistic modes as forms of resistance and imagining otherwise in the world’s oldest colony, Puerto Rico. Political history and religious study will be combined with literary and artistic criticism. The course will cover both major works in Caribbean Studies and Religious Studies, with an eye toward alternative sovereignties. We will also engage in close reading of individual oeuvres of visual artists (students will each conduct more research on visual art and give class presentations) and individual literary texts (short stories, poetry, and a novel) for each of the three island nations under consideration here.

**Requirements:**

- The first requirement for this class is a commitment to attentive engagement and open wrestling with the texts, images, and films we will examine together over the course of the semester. I expect all students to complete required reading/viewing in advance, making notes during and after said reading. All students should arrive to class ready to discuss and

think both about and with the material. Participation—which will include occasional “cold calling” to answer questions and pre-class tasks such as selecting a given pass for discussion—will account for 20% of your final grade.

- This class also involves four in-class essay opportunities. For the first three of these, you will be given a choice between three distinct prompts (for instance, for Part #1 of the class, on Jamaica, the essay opportunity will offer a choice between analyzing modes of re-imagining power in the Jamaican examples, for instance, or reading the required work of literature in light of the religious and political case studies related to Jamaica, or offering an outline of how Rastafari, as a system of thought and practice, both continues and departs from genealogy of black rebellion and resistance in Jamaican history). These essays should reference specifics from readings and course discussions; the fourth such essay, the final exam, will be cumulative and require synthetic reflection on all of our Caribbean case studies. Each of these four assignments is worth 15% of your final grade.
- You will each, independently but in consultation with the instructor, select another artist from one of these four Caribbean sites to 1) write a brief analysis of (100 words, in the style of an art review, examples of which will be provided) and 2) prepare a 2-slide PowerPoint for a five-minute presentation to share with the class. Each part of this project will be worth 10% of your final grade.

#### Required Texts:

- The majority of texts for this class will be provided as PDFs via Carmen. Students should, however, purchase the following three books from the OSU bookstore:
    - Kei Miller, *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*
    - Danticat, *Claire of the Sea Light*
    - Luis Negrón, *Mundo Cruel*
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#### Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the [Committee on Academic Misconduct](#) (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#), and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute Academic Misconduct.

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so please review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If an instructor suspects that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, the instructor is obligated by University Rules to report those suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that a student violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in the course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If students have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, they should contact the instructor.

#### Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite, and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology, but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in scholarship, or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

### **Religious Accommodations**

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#).

Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#)

### **Disability Statement (with Accommodations for Illness)**

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If students anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a

disability (including mental health and medical conditions, whether chronic or temporary), they should let their instructor know immediately so that they can privately discuss options. Students do not need to disclose specific information about a disability to faculty. To establish reasonable accommodations, students may be asked to register with Student Life Disability Services (see below for campus-specific contact information). After registration, students should make arrangements with their instructors as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that accommodations may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If students are ill and need to miss class, including if they are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of viral infection or fever, they should let their instructor know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations.

[slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu)

<https://slds.osu.edu/>

098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave

614-292-3307 phone

### **Intellectual Diversity**

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

### **Grievances and Solving Problems**

According to University Policies, if you have a problem with this class, you should seek to resolve the grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, take your case to the department chairperson, college dean or associate dean, and to the provost, in that order. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-8-23. Grievances against graduate, research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant's department.

### **Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct**

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a welcoming community. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office (CRCO):

Online reporting form: <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>

Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605

[civilrights@osu.edu](mailto:civilrights@osu.edu)

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Civil Rights Compliance Office to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

For more information about this syllabus please see [Syllabus Policies & Statements webpage](#)

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### Course Goals:

- 1) Students will learn about varied modes of Caribbean creativity arising in response to a specific history of colonialism, racialization, and ongoing economic exploitation and political dependence. This will involve specific details about religious and political movements and artistic production, both in the islands and as global exports.
- 2) As part of this, students will rethink “sovereignty” outside of state power, approaching the term as linked to embodied sensations, self-determination, fleeting experiences of freedom, experiences of performance before or engagement with others.
- 3) Relatedly, students will think comparatively about the role of art and literature as well as the religious imaginary and alternative modes of sociality and politics as all part of a broad human cultural array. This class is committed to pushing beyond pigeon-hole categories like “art” and “religion,” revealing instead that such terms are necessarily intertwined and require a methodology attentive to such entanglement. By the end of the course, students should have a sophisticated sense of the stakes for and means by which one might responsibly proceed with such study.
- 4) Finally, “race,” too is a category that this class seeks to reconsider not merely as imposed but also as self-proclaimed and, importantly, reinvented through ongoing processes. The imagination of racial identity and histories, whether in relation to the African diaspora or to Caribbean indigeneity, is a primary site for religious, cultural, and political creativity. Students are expected to be able to offer detailed evidence for this, in multiple contexts, by the end of the semester.

### Course Schedule

#### Week 1:

- Introduction to the Class
- Theoretical Framings: Religion and Waves of Colonialism in the Caribbean
  - Selections from Pané, *An Account of the Antiquity of the Indians*, and Román, *Governing Spirits*

#### Week 2:

- Theoretical Framings: Race and Governance in the Caribbean
  - Selections from Godreau, *Scripts of Blackness* and Reyes-Santos, *Our Caribbean Kin*
- Theoretical Framings: Aesthetics and Alternative Sovereignty in the Caribbean
  - Thame, “Sovereignty, Freedom, and the Problem of Blackness in Jamaica” and Harrison, ““What you say, elsa?”: Postcolonial Sovereignty and Gendered Self-Actualization”

## Part 1: Jamaica

### Week 3: Maroonage

- Roberts, “Part II: Slave Theorists of Freedom” from *Freedom as Maroonage*
- Selections from Bilby, *True-Born Maroons*

### Week 4: Rastafari

- Selections from Barrett, *The Rastafarians* and watch “Roots Daughters: The Women of Rastafari”
- Selections from Jean-Marie, *An Ethos of Blackness*

### Week 5: Global Jamaican Culture

- Edmonds, “Rastafari Rules” and Roberts, “Why Maroonage Still Matters” Mann, “Embodied Meaning in Jamaican Popular Music”
- Visual art: Shoshanna Weinberger

### Week 6: Kei Miller

- Literature: Kei Miller, *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*
- In-class reflective essay #1

## Part 2: Haiti

### Week 7: Vodou and Revolution

- Selections from Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law*
- Selections from Ghachem, *The Old Regime and the Haitian Revolution*

### Week 8: Vodou and Aesthetic Sovereignty

- Selections from McAlister, *Rara!* and Nwokocha, “Kouzen’s Makout”
- Visual art: Edouard Duval-Carrie

### Week 9: Edwidge Danticat

- Literature: Danticat, *Claire of the Sea Light*
- In-class reflective essay #2

## Part 3: Puerto Rico:

### Week 10: The Oldest Colony

- Selections Monge, *Puerto Rico*
- Selections from Davila, *Sponsored Identities* and Lebrón, *Policing Life and Death*

### Week 11: Disaster Capitalism and Embodied Sovereignty

- Klein, *The Battle for Paradise* and screen Bad Bunny and Bianca Graulau, “Apagón”
- Selections from Zambrana, *Colonial Debts* and Bonilla, *Non-Sovereign Futures*, plus Negrón-Muntaner, “Puerto Rico Remade”

### Week 12: Martorell and Negrón

- Visual art: Antonio Martorell
- Literature: Luis Negrón, *Mundo Cruel*

### Week 13: Alternative Capital?

- In-class reflective essay #3

#### **Part 4: New Orleans**

- Kobe Roberts, “Introduction” and “The ‘Bisness’: The Centrality of Economics and Local Culture to Business Models in New Orleans Voodoo” and ““Green Money Means Success”” from *Voodoo and Power*

#### **Week 14: Sovereignty and its Discontents**

- Williams, *Mardi Gras Indians* and DeWulf, “Sangamentos on Congo Square,” watch “All in a Mardi Gras Day”
- Visual Art: Post-Katrina slideshow; Maccash, “Flowers through the Cracks” and Poterfield, “New Orleans artists mark 20 years since Hurricane Katrina”

#### **Week 15: Presentations**

- Student Presentations
- Student Presentations

**Final Exam on date assigned by University**

# GE Theme course submission worksheet: Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations

## Overview

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Courses in the GE Themes aim to provide students with opportunities to explore big picture ideas and problems within the specific practice and expertise of a discipline or department. Although many Theme courses serve within disciplinary majors or minors, by requesting inclusion in the General Education, programs are committing to the incorporation of the goals of the focal theme and the success and participation of students from outside of their program.

Each category of the GE has specific learning goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) that connect to the big picture goals of the program. ELOs describe the knowledge or skills students should have by the end of the course. Courses in the GE Themes must meet the ELOs common for **all** GE Themes and those specific to the Theme, in addition to any ELOs the instructor has developed specific to that course. All courses in the GE must indicate that they are part of the GE and include the Goals and ELOs of their GE category on their syllabus.

The prompts in this form elicit information about how this course meets the expectations of the GE Themes. The form will be reviewed by a group of content experts (the Theme Advisory) and by a group of curriculum experts (the Theme Panel), with the latter having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals common to all themes (those things that make a course appropriate for the GE Themes) and the former having responsibility for the ELOs and Goals specific to the topic of **this** Theme.

## Briefly describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme (Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations)

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In a sentence or two, explain how this class “fits” within the focal Theme. This will help reviewers understand the intended frame of reference for the course-specific activities described below.

*(enter text here)*

The proposed upper-level course “Religion, Revolution, and Art in the Caribbean” examines the range of creole cultural innovation that has emerged from Caribbean contexts in a direct result to—and offering both critique or an alternative formations to—colonialization and its related economic and social (i.e. racialization) elements. It is, thus, explicitly a class on traditions (religious movements and communities as well as artistic, intellectual, and political traditions), cultures (of specific contexts, namely Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and the mainland Caribbean city of New Orleans), and transformations (innovation and change, the reimagining of existing narratives, symbols, and sources). To name just one example: Rastafari, as an important religious tradition indigenous to the Caribbean, emerges from a specific cultural context and develops its own, semi-isolated culture (especially in the early years) predicated on the

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| transformation of preexisting Christian texts and theological ideas, reimagined in a radically new way. |
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## Connect this course to the Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes

Below are the Goals and ELOs common to all Themes. In the accompanying table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The specifics of the activities matter—listing “readings” without a reference to the topic of those readings will not allow the reviewers to understand how the ELO will be met. However, the panel evaluating the fit of the course to the Theme will review this form in conjunction with the syllabus, so if readings, lecture/discussion topics, or other specifics are provided on the syllabus, it is not necessary to reiterate them within this form. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

**Goal 1:** Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations. In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities.

**Goal 2:** Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

|  |                                                      |
|--|------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs |
|--|------------------------------------------------------|

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>ELO 1.1</b> Engage in critical and logical thinking.</p>                                                        | <p>This course helps students to further develop their critical and logical thinking skills through in-class analysis and discussions as well as through assessments in the form of in-class essays and an independent project.</p> <p>In class: the participation grade hinges on coming to class prepared to discuss—including being “cold-called” upon—each session’s readings and to think comparatively about that session’s topics in relation to other sessions’ topics. Moreover, through discussion guided by the professor, the students are encouraged to ask questions, consider alternative points of view and challenge their assumptions. For instance, in Week 3, we wrestle with the very notion of “freedom”—can one be free while living in fugitivity? Is freedom only ever temporal, fleeting? Is freedom a state of independence or only something that can be experience in community? These are big philosophical questions emerging from and serving to get students deeper into the history of the specific cases of maroon communities in Jamaica, which, in turn, echo (as both historical formation and set of guiding concerns) across our work in the Caribbean.</p> <p>Assessments: 20% of the final grade is based on active, informed participation—meaning that demonstrate that they have read closely, with pen in hand, and come to class with questions and passages from / aspects of the texts that they want to discuss in detail.</p> |
| <p><b>ELO 1.2</b> Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or ideas within this theme.</p> | <p>Each session students will engage with significant scholarship and rich case studies, representing a diversity of opinions and approaches to the complex topics that are the repeating concern of the class.</p> <p>In-class: The goals of this upper-level course involve high-level thinking and real wrestling with open intellectual questions: Goal #2 in particular, on the issue of “sovereignty” and its varied interpretations and instantiations (“from below”) is the kind of goal a 4000-level AAAS/RESLT course should be structured around, requiring capacious reading and rigorous class discussions that seek to integrate and set up “debates” with the required readings and the case studies they cover.</p> <p>Assessments: Here again the participation grade is relevant, as are the in-class essays. Finally, the two-part analysis of a student-selected artist (in the form first of a review and then a 2-slide presentation to be shared with the class) also reflects a chance for students to demonstrate their grasp on the deep and overarching intellectual concerns of the course. For instance, how does Marie Vieux Chauvet’s literary work reflect a critique of/counterimagination of “sovereignty”? Or, if a student were to choose New Orleans, how might Flagboy Giz’s engagement in the textured history of Black</p>                                                                                                               |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Maskers indicate an engagement with questions of sovereignty (and race, and governmental power) discussed in class and in readings (both about Kongo and New Orleans)?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>ELO 2.1</b> Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences.                                                                                                                          | <p>The previous question begins to get at this: to go after the big ideas that are central to the goals of this class, synthetic thinking is required. This class, moreover, is designed to be audacious in its desire for synthesis: thinking across scholarship, religious case studies, documentaries, literary fiction, and visual arts. This class results both from the professor's research interests and experiences and an abiding faith that, if led through this material with care and encouraged to slowly read and consider material with an always-open (but critical) mind, students will draw unexpected and rewarding conclusions from the material curated in this syllabus. While certain aspects of approaches and experiences can be clearly predicted (students will be required to wrestle with the role of Christianity not merely in justifying slavery but also in providing a vocabulary for the resistance of slavery and ongoing anti-black racism; new religious imaginaries will serve as means of and vocabularies for "resistance" and "freedom" while perpetuating or inverting existing social hierarchies, as in the case of gender difference); at the same time, other approaches and experiences (particularly in terms of how the visual and literary are read in relation to the explicitly political histories) remain, for me, inchoate. I am designing this class, in this way, to be surprised, to be forced (myself) to question my own thinking and think in new ways. Indeed, I think all "Themes" courses should include such an element, and that such a pedagogical approach should characterize at least all upper-level OSU courses in the Humanities.</p> |
| <b>ELO 2.2</b> Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self- assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts. | <p>Students are invited to reflect and self-assess their progress.</p> <p>Assessments: At the start of each new unit (i.e., week 7, when we begin the sessions on Haiti), students will, at the start of class, not only write a question about the material under consideration that day but also a couple of sentences reflecting on their own performance in the previous in-class essay and summarizing their experience with the previous unit. These will be collected and used to gauge engagement and morale as well as what may need to be repeated or clarified as we move toward the final exam.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## Goals and ELOs unique to Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations

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Below are the Goals and ELOs specific to this Theme. As above, in the accompanying Table, for each ELO, describe the activities (discussions, readings, lectures, assignments) that provide opportunities for students to achieve those outcomes. The answer should be concise and use language accessible to colleagues outside of the submitting department or discipline. The ELOs are expected to vary in their “coverage” in terms of number of activities or emphasis within the course. Examples from successful courses are shared on the next page.

**GOAL 3:** Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

**GOAL 4:** Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals’ experience within traditions and cultures.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Course activities and assignments to meet these ELOs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <b>ELO 3.1</b> Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue. | <p>This course tackles this ELO in multiple ways, but for this form let me focus on “religious belief” (and practice) as a central means by which people in the Caribbean locations under consideration here have responded to historical and contemporary issues (namely: racialization, enslavement and ongoing anti-blackness, colonial rule, and capitalist economic structures).</p> <p>In-class: students study examples of religious responses (practical, imaginary, metaphysical, ethical critiques) to these forces (from Rastafarian withdrawal and eschatological visions to Vodoun militarism and actual revolution) and afterlives thereof (from Rasta’s struggle with or embrace of commodification to Vodou’s alternative economy nonetheless mired in the global economy). We will also consider how irruptions of religious fervor may pass as either illegible or as “merely protest” (the perreo intenso on the steps of the Cathedral and former slave auction site in San Juan, for instance, should be read as far more than “political” action [though also that] and as embodied, ecstatic experience that is simultaneously critique [engaging in the world as-is] and instantiation of “otherwise,” a social alterity [an enactment of the utopian? At least, as I think the class will agree, a mode of experiential “sovereignty” unlike that represented by the state but not entirely unlike that represented by the Church-as-idea, distinct from the Church as state-like structure]). That sounds heady, and it is, but my point is that students will be led into significant discussion/consideration of the ways that, for instance,</p> |

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|  | <p>“religion” responds to, reinforces, reifies, and rejects “historical and contemporary issues,” though also how these are not clear-cut, one-way moves. The *messiness* of human culture and history is reflected, as well, in how aspects of culture are entangled (like knotted headphone cords!) and inextricable from the “issues” they both take issue and harmonize with.</p> <p>Assessments: The tall order for this class will be to articulate this entanglement, and here I think the final project on a work of art, chosen by the student from a Caribbean locale of their choice, is the best example. Students must fit their “reading” of this artwork into the larger work of the class, the dynamics of “resistance” and “embrace” (both incomplete words, hence their scare quotes) and wrestle with their own stance on how such a work “responds” to big issues. What kind of arguments, after all, does art make? How might different readings, or different valences/claims, co-exist? What is gained (or lost) by an approach to history and human culture open to, even attentive to, such nuance and complication? How does one (and here students might root themselves in their particular major/disciplinary formation) think about one’s own work and thinking when confronted with such complexity? While the syllabus explicitly challenges the restrictions of categories like “religion,” “art,” and “politics,” there is another term, in the course’s title, that will be called into question, read even against itself: the “revolutionary” is also counter-revolutionary, hegemonic as well as otherwise, continuing trends of power while contesting some... To move beyond simple binaries or monolithic readings of history is an overarching concern for this class and a way of thinking the Caribbean is particularly privileged in helping students grapple with and think through.</p> |
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| <p><b>ELO 3.2</b> Analyze the impact of a “big” idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.</p> | <p>The big ideas here are, again, multiple, but the religious ones seem most useful for this form: Rastafari in Jamaica (among other traditions); Vodou in Haiti – these are two “big” re-imaginings of the world, human sociality, and power that have deep histories of consequence and change across the Caribbean and, indeed, the globe.</p> <p>In-class: The course is set up to move from locale to locale, through case studies that themselves add to our understanding of even “bigger” ideas (like sovereignty). As we move through the weeks on a given religious tradition, we will come to understand its contingent origin and contributions to larger structures and, then, how that system changed (and changed the nation in which it originated) over time. Haiti’s tense relationship with Vodou, that founding worldview that nonetheless was quickly demonized and has been repeatedly coopted as well as persecuted, gives the richest example of a “big” idea that has a very bumpy history a place it continues to contribute to the transformation of.</p> <p>Assessments: Class discussion, in-class essay at the end of each unit, and the final exam will all return to this ELO, the impact (and afterlife more generally) of innovative concepts.</p> |
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**ELO 3.3** Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.

The Caribbean is the ground-zero for European colonization of the New World, and colonization continues in both literal (Puerto Rico is a legal “possession” of the United States) and so-called “postcolonial” (nonetheless entangled in global economic and political structures) forms. The conquest of the Caribbean involved not merely the imposition of imperial claims by powerful foreign nation-states, but also the Christian church, in various state-linked European forms, and “racialization” (the identification first of “Indians” as a separate category of human, then, later, the importation of “black” persons via the chattel slave trade across the Atlantic). This triad of state, religion, and race is particularly important for considering interactions between dominant and sub-cultures, which this class seeks to show to be varied and fluid, ongoing and distinguished by wildly innovative interpretations. Rather than simplistic rejection, for instance, of imposed economic forms or gender norms or ideas of “race,” the cultures of the Caribbean responded in varied ways, often indicating the existing of a far deeper history of interactions between different cultures with differing degrees of power. It is important for students to realize that no cultures under consideration in this class are monolithic and none represented a “blank slate” at some point in history: enslaved Africans imported, for instance, from Kongo Kingdom brought with them both sophisticated political structures and sensibilities and an already-developed history of melding these uniquely African stances and practices with Iberian Catholic symbolism and performances. The suits displayed by Mardi Gras Indians in New Orleans, for instance, have a deep history that precedes European arrival in the continent of Africa, but \*also\* a deep history in Iberia, as a specific European reading of an older Christianity. Before anyone reached the New World, there was already a complicated story playing out of interactions and adaptations and contestations between various, multiple cultures (and various, multiple, notions of power: worldly, otherworldly, aesthetic, physical, etc.).

In-class: through the analysis of specific case studies—whether a religious ritual or a work of visual art—students will be shown the traces of multiple cultures mixing and being mixed together. For example, Week 11 will consider tourism, weighing both the exploitative aspects and the value to the economy (or, indeed, economies, plural, as issues such as eco-tourism and visits to food sovereignty sites are discussed alongside neo-colonization by self-described crypto-utopians). In the previous week, Week

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|                                                                                               | <p>10, we will consider the role of the Puerto Rican police force both in terms of reactionary violence against protests, particularly on college campuses, but also as a career path within the beleaguered colony. Police will be read as an arm of the power of the state but also as human individuals negotiating their own powerlessness and human needs.</p> <p>Assessments: each of the first three in-class writing assignments, serving as culminations to course units on specific Caribbean locales, will require students to parse out and offer analysis of the interactions of cultures involved in given religious, political, and/or artistic examples from that site. Students will be asked to think of power as shifting and multiple, in keeping with the course goal of rethinking the notion of “sovereignty” itself, and students will consider cultural encounter not as a clash resulting in a winner and a loser but as a complicated set of ongoing exchanges, in keeping with the Caribbean theoretical and historical concept of “creolization” around which this class is also framed.</p> |
| <p><b>ELO 3.4</b> Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.</p> | <p>This course tracks changes and continuities, beginning with the colonial conquest of the Caribbean (and the Taino culture and religion, which, while largely lost, is the subject of a vigorous contemporary “reconstruction” movement). The ideas and social structures imported through the colonizing nations will, themselves, immediately be subject to change—a major focus for this course—and the continuation of structures within them helps to challenge simplistic ideas of, say, religion as a “revolutionary” (or merely or purely revolutionary) social force.</p> <p>In-class: Moving through the history of a given tradition forces students to observe and analyze the changes and continuities. For instance, weeks 7 and 8 move from the initial (explicitly revolutionary) origin of Haitian Vodou as a creole religion developed in maroon communities in the mountains, its use as a motivating force for war and liberation, then contrasts that (always slightly romanticized) history with contemporary modes of Vodou. Explicit here is the contrast, too, between Vodou as</p>            |

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|                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>“political” versus (or in addition to?) Vodou as aesthetic, as cultural, as spectacle and performance (but also always an imagination and enactment of “power,” just power in a different way that a gun).</p> <p>These discussions and subsequent writing assessments will prompt students to develop a more sophisticated understanding of how “change” coexists with “continuity,” how history does not move in one (“progressive”) direction, *and* (importantly for the goal of this class as a rethinking of “sovereignty”) how “power” is likewise imagined and experienced in varied, sometimes even contradictory or seemingly contradictory, ways.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><b>ELO 4.1</b> Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.</p> | <p>Attentive to the differences between given Caribbean contexts but also to similarities shared and possibilities, moreover, of thinking through comparative examples from these contexts, this course prompts students to be aware both cultural differences and similarities.</p> <p>In-class: students will consider “Caribbean” as a frame for thinking about political history, religious innovation, and art (literary and visual) while also exploring the historical roots of difference (even before different European powers claimed islands for themselves).</p> <p>Assessments: students will demonstrate, both in the in-class writing, understanding of each distinct context under consideration here (Jamaica, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and New Orleans), while the final exam will include an essay question asking students to think synthetically across and through their work on the Caribbean as a general “place” and way of thinking/being.</p> |

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| <p><b>ELO 4.2</b> Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference, impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues</p> | <p>By the end of the course, students will recognize and explain race as not merely socially consequential as a construct but also as an ongoing, contested, re-invented category, the subject of political formation, religious creativity, and artistic expression. We will also cover, though less, the notion of “cultural nationalism” and the unique forms of ethnicity within the Caribbean (and its diaspora) and touch on the role of gender as both policed by colonialism and later forms of corporate capitalism (part of discussion during weeks 10-12 will touch on the history of eugenics, forced sterilization, and anti-queer rhetoric and actions in Puerto Rico, under both US and local colonial rule).</p> <p>Assessments: The in-class essay at the end of the Jamaica section will be particularly focused on the imagination and re-imagination of “race”—to what degree is the Rasta worldview merely an inversion of normative white Christianity, for instance, and what does it mean for reggae, thick with Rasta references, to be a music appreciated and even made by folks of different racial and national backgrounds? A sample question, for instance, would ask students to consider what the founders of Rasta might think about German reggae bands using the distinctive Iyaric or “dread talk,” and/or is the image of Haile Selassie as the returned Jesus only of use to or something the exclusive cultural patrimony of those descended from enslaved Africans? Such prompts might also appear in class discussion, sure to stimulate both critical reflection and hearty class debate.</p> |
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|                                                | <b><i>Program Learning Goals</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                         |
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|                                                | <b>Goal A:</b><br>Demonstrate an understanding of the cultural, socio-political, and historical formations, connections, conditions, and transformations evident throughout the African World and Black Diaspora. | <b>Goal B:</b><br>Identify, critique, and appreciate the intersections between race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality from the historical and existential perspectives of African and African-descended peoples. | <b>Goal C:</b><br>Implement interdisciplinary research methods and methodological perspectives applicable to advanced study, community development, and public service. |
| <b><i>Core Courses</i></b>                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2201                                           | Beginning                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Intermediate                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 3310                                           | Intermediate                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Intermediate                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 3440                                           | Intermediate                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Advanced                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Beginning                                                                                                                                                               |
| 4921                                           | Intermediate                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Advanced                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Intermediate                                                                                                                                                            |
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| <b><i>Elective Courses</i></b>                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>2000-Level</b> ( <i>Max of 3 courses</i> )  | Beginning                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Beginning                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Beginning                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>3000- Level</b> ( <i>Max of 3 courses</i> ) | Beginning/Intermediate                                                                                                                                                                                            | Beginning/Intermediate                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Beginning/Intermediate                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>4000-Level</b>                              | Advanced                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Advanced                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Advanced                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>5000-Level</b>                              | Advanced                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Advanced                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Advanced                                                                                                                                                                |
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