CIEE Havana, Cuba

Course name: Afro Cuba: Racial Dynamics of the 21st Century
Course number: POLI 2003 HACS
Programs offering course: Havana Cuban Studies
Language of instruction: Spanish
U.S. Semester Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Term: Summer 2019 (June 15-July 13, 2019)

Course Details and Objectives
This course will explore the historic and social vision of Africans in Cuba. The courses proposes to debate the meaning and use of the term “afrocuban”, work to understand discrimination in Cuba as well as forms of resistance to racism. Students will have the opportunity to compare and contrast racial trends in Cuba with other countries to situate the Cuban process in a broader context. The course will address the evolution of race studies through the eyes of Cuban experts and will push students to debate about race as well as important figures, events and organizations. This course will additionally look at how equality generated by the Revolution is being threatened by the new political and economic context in Cuba. The bibliography includes recently published academic work that contributes to the social debate and design of public policy. All the texts in English and Spanish are written by Cuban authors.

Course Prerequisites
None

Evaluation
The course will combine in-class activities and debates with site visits
1. Attendance and class participation 20%
2. Fieldwork 30%
3. Final Paper 35%
4. Oral Presentation 15%

A) Attendance and participation (20%) All absences from class will need to be justified and may affect the final evaluation. Participation in class will be divided into two areas; first: the student will choose one text to summarize and critique at the beginning of the corresponding class (roughly 5 minutes in length), second: Every student will present an end of course project. The intention of the end of course project is to generate academic and intellectual exchange between professors and students.

B) Fieldwork (30%) Students will show interest and will actively participate and take initiative to fully benefit from the social exchange aspect of the fieldwork.

C) Final Project (35%) The final project will consist of an 8 page paper written in Spanish, or a 12 page paper in English. Each student can consult professors and experts about their topic. It is recommended that students pick a theme from the first week of class and communicate their
interest to the coordinator.

D) End of course presentation (15%) Each student will present their final project to the class.

Course Calendar:

Session # 1: Introduction
Objectives: Introduce topics and sessions. Introduce the topic of 'what it means to be afrocuban'? What does ‘racism’ mean within the revolution? Speak on class evaluation.

Session # 2: Afro-Cuban Religions
Objectives: Introduce different types of afro-Cuban cultures and its inception in Cuba with the slave trade. Religions such as Santeria, Palo Monte & the Abukua secret society will be discussed in detail. A tour to Afro-Cuban Temples in Cayo Hueso, Centro Havana (predominately afro-Cuban neighborhood) will be visited by students.

Session # 3: Hair, Beauty & Identity
Objectives: Discuss the topic of hair and beauty within AfroCuban identity and culture. The topic of private entrepreneurship run by women, in Cuba will also be discussed. Students will visit Mafa (an afro-Cuban business women) hair salon in the neighborhood of Alamar. Various topics will be discussed as it relates to the business of afro hair products and styling.

Session #4: Film “Raza” and debate
Objectives: Watch the short film ‘Raza’ filmed in 2008 by Eric Corlavan. This film focuses on the perception of racism and discrimination in Cuba by various social actors. Discuss the film and its messaging to the Cuban public and as well as its effectiveness.

Session #5: Hip Hop and Race in Cuba
Objectives: Discuss the topic of Hip Hop in Cuba, its origins and transformation within society. Various genres of hip-hop will be shared and listened to during the session.

Session # 6: Afro-Cuban Women & film “Reyita”
Objectives: Students will be shown the movie ‘Reyita’ by Daysi Rubiera and discuss the importance that Afro-Cuban women have had in Cuban society. Topics will revolve around gender & identity, afro-cubanismo, and historical aspects of women.

Session # 7: Black Theology, Christianism & Race
Objectives: The topic of black theology and Christianism in Afro-Cuban and Afro-American culture will be analyzed. The class will also focus on contemporary Cuba and discuss the importance of Christianity in Afro-Cuban culture.

Session # 8: Anti-racist movements today: group & tendencies
Objectives: This class will introduce anti-racist movements from the past in Cuba and the world as well as where this movement is today and the characteristics that define it. Students will visit the National Library and be shown books and journals that have focused on the traditions of anti-racist movements.
Session # 9: Poetry, gender & race
Objectives: This class will focus on poetry, gender & race by looking at different poetry works and literature. Students will analyze one reading and discuss the elements of gender & race found in the readings.

Session # 10: Differences & similarities between Cuba & the U.S.
Objectives: This class will be a comparative discussion of race relations between Cuba and the U.S by focusing on differences and similarities. This will be a good way to close the class by also summarizing the students experiences and perceptions.

Excursions & Cultural Activities:
Visit to the National Library, the anti-racist tradition in Cuba
Tour of Afro Cuban Temples (Cayo Hueso, Centro Havana)
Visit Cosmetologist ‘Mafa’ in her salon, Alamar
Excursion weekend Matanzas (July 5-7)

Required Readings:


Castro, Fidel (2001). Discurso pronunciado por Fidel Castro Ruz, Primer Secretario del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba y Presidente de los Consejos de Estado y de Ministros, en la Sesión Plenaria de la Conferencia Mundial contra el Racismo, la Discriminación Racial, la Xenofobia y las Formas Conexas de Intolerancia.
