Instructor Information
Prof. Carina Ray
Mandel 219
cer15@brandeis.edu
Office Hours: W 4:00-6:00PM/Th 10:00-11:00AM

Course Location and Meeting Time
Wednesday @ 6:30-9:20PM
Mandel G10

Course Description
This seminar draws on the genre of reggae music as a source for understanding how Africa, its people, its history, and its contemporary circumstances are imagined, understood, represented, and engaged by African descended people in Jamaica and in the broader African diaspora. By focusing attention on the ways in which reggae music and culture engage Africa, this course explicitly brings Africa and the African diaspora into a single analytic frame. Beginning with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which roots the historical relationship between West Africa and Jamaica, we will contextualize reggae within the interlocking legacies of plantation slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism, and the cultures of resistance birthed in response to these oppressive forces.

While the course is broadly concerned with the ways in which music has been and continues to be a means of resistance in Jamaica, we will pay especially close attention to reggae’s evolution out of ska and rocksteady across the 1960s and into the early 1970s as the genre became increasingly politicized set against the backdrop of post-World War II immigration to Britain, Jamaican independence in 1962, ongoing anticolonial struggles in Africa, and the social and political unrest that rocked Jamaica in the 1970s. This historical moment of national upheaval also provides an opportunity to examine the ways in which reggae and Rastafarianism become wedded to one another, endowing the genre with its Pan-African sensibilities. From the depravations of plantation slavery, to Marcus Garvey’s Back to Africa Movement, Rastafarianism’s Afrocentrism and doctrinal focus on Ethiopia and Haile Selassie (Ras Tafari Makonnen), and the politics of African liberation, reggae music has arguably been the most powerful
cultural conduit through which the diaspora has engaged its African roots. As such this course will give primacy to reggae lyrics as our foundational texts to be supplemented and contextualized by secondary sources (both peer reviewed journal articles and several key monographs), documentaries, and visual material (primarily in the form of album covers).

Over the course of the semester you will hone in on a research topic that emerges out of your exploration of reggae lyrics, and your work will culminate in a final paper and teaching demonstration that uses a set of lyrics to teach a ‘chapter’ of Africa’s history.

**Learning Goals**
- Introduction to the genre of reggae music and its attendant cultural formations.
- Become conversant with the historical relationship between West Africa and Jamaica.
- Gain proficiency in reading and analyzing musical lyrics as text.
- Gain a deeper understanding of aspects of African history through the study of reggae music.
- Comprehension of reggae as an activist genre that is deeply connected to and invested in Black liberation and broader human rights struggles.
- Strengthen oral communication skills.
- Fulfill OC and DJW Core Requirements.
- Fulfill AAAS Specializations: History, Arts, Africa, African American or the Americas

**Course Readings**
You are expected to complete all readings and assignments on time as indicated on the course schedule. Bring all assigned readings with you to class and have them accessible before class begins. *If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.*

**Required Books**
- Monique Bedasse, *Jah Kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, & Pan-Africanism in the Age of Decolonization*
- Lloyd Bradley, *This Is Reggae Music: The Story of Jamaica’s Music*
- Horace Campbell, *Rasta and Resistance: From Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney*
- Ishion Hutchinson, *House of Lords and Commons: Poems*

**Course Reader**
All other assigned readings will be contained in our course reader.

**Grading Structure**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Lyrical Analysis</th>
<th>Final Teaching Demo</th>
<th>Final Paper</th>
<th>Seminar Participation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
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**Lyrical Analysis**
Over the course of the semester you will select, transcribe, and perform a close reading of six reggae songs of your choosing in order to explicate their core themes and concerns, to interpret figurative language, define and explain unfamiliar terminology, provide pertinent information about the singer/band/songwriter, and place the song within its immediate historical context. You will present your analyses in class, as part of our seminar’s mission to help you improve your oral communication skills. Each analysis should be between 3-5 double-spaced pages and will count for a total of 30% of your final grade (each analysis is worth 5% of your final grade).
Seminar Participation & Oral Communication

Engaged learning is a key to success in this seminar. Your thoughtful contributions, questions, and analyses are welcomed and expected. Formal oral presentations will take place 4 times over the course of the semester. You will present 3 of your 6 lyrical analyses to the seminar over the course of the semester in 5-minute formal presentations. You will receive both peer and instructor feedback on your 3 in-class presentations with a view to helping you prepare for your fourth and final presentation: a 10-minute teaching demonstration at the end of the semester. We will also hold a public speaking workshop in advance of the final presentations. Instruction and skill development in this area are designed to meet the following Oral Communication Foundational Literacy Learning Goals:

*To present a coherent, articulate, well-organized speech in front of a group.
*To lead a class discussion with peers in an in-depth, organized and thoughtful manner.
*To debate and converse about intellectual ideas.
*To listen to others in a focused and active manner.
*To constructively critique the professional communication of others.
*To feel comfortable and confident in a public and/or professional speaking situation in presentation style and content.
*To inform, persuade, critique and inspire through oral communication.

20% of your course grade is based on your seminar participation. Portions of your lyrical analysis and your teaching demo grades will also be decided based on the quality of your oral presentations.

Course Expectations

Weekly Time Commitment

This is a Four-Credit Course (with 2.5 hours of class-time per week). Success in this 4-credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings and preparation for quizzes, presentations, and exams, etc.).

Attendance

Attendance is absolutely mandatory. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. The presence of every student is valued and unexcused absences risk disrupting the cohesion of the class. Repeated absences are disrespectful to me, as your professor, as well as to your fellow classmates. If you plan to miss a class, you must have a valid excuse (ie. sickness or injury, family emergency) and inform me ahead of time. Excused absences will still require that all work is made up. More than one unexcused absence will result in an automatic 10% reduction of your final grade.

Classroom Conduct

Your classroom conduct will be a factor in your participation grade. You are expected to arrive to class on time, be attentive (no falling asleep), and focused (no cellphone use). Please use the restroom BEFORE you come to class. Eating is not allowed during class. We will take a short break half way through our class period – please use this time to go to the bathroom, have a snack, stretch your legs, check you cell phone, etc.

You are expected to maintain the highest standards of collegiality with your classmates. Discussions of the course materials and content must be conducted with awareness that we all bring differing levels of knowledge, experience and perspective to the subject matter. Acts of disrespect will not be tolerated. Repeated disruptive behavior will result in your failure of the course.
Academic Integrity
You are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity as stated in Section 4 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rr/ Plagiarism and evidence of cheating on exams will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failing grade. You may refer to the International Center for Academic Integrity for additional information: http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/home.php

Disability Policy
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in Academic Services (x63470 or brodgers@brandeis.edu.) Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

Computer Policy
Computers and other electronic devices, including iPads and other tablets, are not allowed in class. Please ensure that you bring you books and/or course reader to class with you.

Key Dates
February Break
April Break

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week #1
COURSE INTRO/LISTENING SESSION/ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS PRIMER w/Esther Brandon
READ:
Ishion Hutchinson, House of Lords and Commons: Poems, selected poems.

Week #2
“REDEMPTION SONG”: WEST AFRICA, JAMAICA AND THE TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE
LISTEN:
Bob Marley, “Redemption Song”
Granny Nanny Cultural Group, Granny Nanny Come Oh: Jamaican Maroon Kromanti and Kumina Music and Other Oral Traditions (selected tracks)
Bob Marley, “Slave Driver”
Burning Spear, “Slavery Days”
Tiken Jah Fakoly, “Slavery Days”
Willi Williams, “El Meina”
Melodians, “Rivers of Babylon”
Abyssinians, “Declaration of Rights”
Gregory Isaacs, “Slave Master”
Culture, “Too Long in Slavery”
Bunny Wailer, “Rise and Shine”
READ:

**Week #3**

*OLD MARCUS GARVEY*: BACK TO AFRICA AND THE ROOTS OF RASTA

**LISTEN:**
- Burning Spear, “Old Marcus Garvey”
- DJ Ray Ranking, “Tribute to the Hon. Marcus Mosiah Garvey”
- I Roy, “Tribute to Marcus Garvey”
- Culture, “Marcus”
- Aswad, “Back to Africa”

**READ:**
- Horace Campbell, *Rasta and Resistance*, Selected Chapters

**Week #4**

*RASTAMAN VIBRATION*: RASTAFARI, RELIGION, AND RESISTANCE IN JAMAICA

**LISTEN:**
- Bob Marley, “Rastaman Vibration,”
- Jimmy Cliff, “The Harder They Come,”
- Jacob Miller, “Tenement Yard”
- Bob Marley, “Get Up, Stand Up”
- Bob Marley, “Babylon System”

**READ:**
- Horace Campbell, *Rasta and Resistance*, Selected Chapters

**SCREENING:**
- Helene Lee, “The First Rasta”

**Week #5**

RAS TAFARI & ETHIOPIA IN THE DIASPORIC IMAGINATION

**LISTEN:**
- Black Uhuru, “I Love King Selassie”
- Aswad, “Ethiopian Rhapsody”
- Bob Marley, “War”
- Peter Tosh, “African”
- Mutabaruka, “Dispel the Lie”
READ:

SCREENING:
John Dollar, “The Emperor’s Birthday”

Week #6

“MAMA AFRICA”: MIGRATION & DIASPORIC (BE)LONGINGS

LISTEN:
Peter Tosh, “Mama Africa”
Peter Tosh, “African”
Black Uhuru, “African Love”
Lutan Fyah, “Kick It Inna Africa”
The Congos, “Open Up the Gate”
Dennis Brown, “Africa”
Mutabaruka, “Great Queens of Africa”
Mutabaruka, “Great Kings of Africa”
Jah Shaka, “Youths Dubwise”
Black Roots, “Africa”
Jah Bouks, “Angola”
Linton Kwesi Johnson, “Sonny’s Lettah”
Linton Kwesi Johnson, “Five Nights of Bleeding”
Linton Kwesi Johnson, “It Dread inna Inglan”
Mykal Rose, “African People”

READ:
Ishion Hutchinson, “Wanderer,” *House of Lords and Commons*
Monique Bedasse, *Jah Kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, & Pan-Africanism in the Age of Decolonization* (Selected Chapters)

Week #7

“REPATRIATION IS A MUST”: THE CONTESTED POLITICS OF RETURN

LISTEN:
The Heptones, “Repatriation is a Must”
Jah Shaka, “Repatriation Dubwise”
Dennis Brown, “Repatriation”
Midnite, “Repatriation Song”
Black Roots, “Far Over”
Dennis Brown, “Promise Land”

READ:
Monique Bedasse, *Jah Kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, & Pan-Africanism in the Age of Decolonization* (Selected Chapters)

Week #8
“BLACK LIBERATION”: LIBERATORY EPISTOMOLOGIES & PRACTICES

LISTEN:
Dennis Brown, “Black Liberation”
Mutabaruka, “Blakk Wi Blakk”
Mutabaruka, “I Doh Ave a Color Problem”
Tiken Jah Fakoly, “African Revolution”
Tiken Jah Fakoly, “Mama Africa”
Bob Marley, “Survivial”

READ:
Ishion Hutchinson, “The Ark by ‘Scratch,’” *House of Lords and Commons*.
Horace Campbell, *Rasta and Resistance: From Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney* (Selected Chapters)

Week #9
“AFRIKI”: RASTA & REGGAE RISING IN AFRICA

LISTEN:
Alpha Blondy, “Afriki”
Rocky Dawuni, “In Ghana”
Lucky Dube, “Rastas Never Die”
Takana Zion, “Jah Children”
Beniton & Stonebwoy, “Struggles”
Burna Boy, “African Giant”
Burna Boy & Damian “Jr. Gong” Marley, “Different”
Burna Boy & M.anifest, “Another Story”

READ:

**FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL PAIR AND SHARE**

**Week #10**

“AFRICA MUST BE FREE”: REGGAE AND AFRICAN LIBERATION

**LISTEN:**
Hugh Mundell, “Africa Must Be Free By 1983”
Bob Marley, “Africa Unite”
Bob Marley, “Zimbabwe”
Alpha Blondy, “Apartheid is Nazism”
Peter Tosh, “Not Gonna Give it Up”
Lucky Dube, “House of Exile”
Israel Vibration, “Dubbing Against Apartheid”
Israel Vibration, “Don’t Want Apartheid”

**READ:**

**Week #11**

ORAL COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP & FINAL PRESENTATION PREP

**Week #12**

“TRUE AFRICAN”: ROOTS RENAISSANCE AND THE RISE OF CONSCIOUS DANCEHALL

**LISTEN:**
Alley Cat, “True African”
Sizzla, “Praise Ye Jah”
Luciano, “Wicked Haffe Run Wey”
Yami Bolo, “Rise Up”
Terry Ganzie, “Mighty Jah Jah”
Damian Jr. Gong Marley, “Old Slave Mill”
Damian Jr. Gong Marley, “Welcome to Jamrock”

**READ:**
Louis Chude-Sokei, “Post-Nationalist Geographies: Rasta, Ragga, and Reinventing Africa”
Week #13
FINAL PRESENTATIONS