

**OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE
FALL 1 - 2021**

Latin American Studies I

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AGENDA

WEEK 5 - LAS APPROACHES TO THE CARIBBEAN

- Intro from *Confronting Black Jacobins: The United States, the Haitian Revolution, and the Origins of the Dominican Republic* (2015) by Gerald Horne
- Intro from *Empire's Crossroads: A History of the Caribbean From Columbus to the Present Day* (2014) by Carrie Gibson
- "The Black Jacobins, Past and Present" by Selma James from *The Black Jacobins Reader* (2017), ed. by Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg
- "Report from the Bahamas, 1982" by June M. Jordan

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

WHAT IS LATIN AMERICAN
STUDIES (LAS)?:
DISCIPLINARY INTRODUCTION,
HISTORY, AND CONCERNS

WEEK 2

THE COLONIAL ERA:
CONTACT TO 1800

WEEK 3

THE COLONIAL ERA:
1800-PRESENT

WEEK 4

NATIONALISM AND THE
AFTERLIVES OF COLONIAL
VIOLENCE

WEEK 5

LAS APPROACHES TO THE
CARIBBEAN

WEEK 6

LAS APPROACHES TO
LITERARY AND VISUAL ARTS

<https://prestontaylorstone.com/2021/07/17/las1/>



LEFT: *UPRISING OF THE SLAVES, HAITI AND AFRICA, YEAR 1790*

ABOVE: *VODOU LANDSCAPE*

JACQUES-ENGUERRAND GOURGUE

THE BLACK JACOBINS CLR JAMES 1938

In 1789 the French West Indian colony of San Domingo supplied two-thirds of the overseas trade of France and was the greatest individual market for the European slave trade. It was an integral part of the economic life of the age, the greatest colony in the world, the pride of France, and the envy of every other imperialist nation. The whole structure rested on the labour of half-a-million slaves. In August 1791, after two years of the French Revolution and its repercussions in San Domingo, the slaves revolted. The struggle lasted for 12 years. The slaves defeated in turn the local whites and the soldiers of the French monarchy, a Spanish invasion, a British expedition of some 60,000 men, and a French expedition of similar size under Bonaparte's brother-in-law. The defeat of Bonaparte's expedition in 1803 resulted in the establishment of the Negro state of Haiti which has lasted to this day. The revolt is the only successful slave revolt in history, and the odds it had to overcome is evidence of the magnitude of the interests that were involved. The transformation of slaves, trembling in hundreds before a single white man, into a people able to organize themselves and defeat the most powerful European nations of their day, is one of the great epics of revolutionary struggle and achievement....It is Toussaint's supreme merit that while he saw European civilization as a valuable and necessary thing, and strove to lay its foundations among his people, he never had the illusion that it conferred any moral superiority. He knew French, British, and Spanish imperialists for the insatiable gangsters that they were, that there is no oath too sacred for them to break, no crime, deception, treachery, cruelty, destruction of human life and property which they would not commit against those who could not defend themselves.



THE BLACK JACOBINS CLR JAMES 1938

The slaves destroyed tirelessly. Like the peasants in the Jacquerie or the Luddite wreckers, they were seeking their salvation in the most obvious way, the destruction of what they knew was the cause of their sufferings; and if they destroyed much it was because they had suffered much. They knew that as long as these plantations stood their lot would be to labour on them until they dropped. The only thing was to destroy them. From their masters they had known rape, torture, degradation, . and: at the slightest provocation, death. They returned in kind. For two centuries the higher civilisation had shown them that power was used for wreaking your will on those whom you controlled. Now that they held power they did as they had been taught. In the frenzy of the first encounters they killed all. yet they spared the priests whom they feared and the surgeons who had been kind to them. They, whose women had undergone countless violations, violated all the women who fell into their hands, often on the bodies of their still bleeding husbands, fathers and brothers. "Vengeancel Vengeancet" was their war-cry, and one of them carried a white child on a pike as a standard.

And yet they were surprisingly moderate, I then and afterwards, far more humane than their masters had been or would ever be to them. They did not maintain this revengeful spirit for long. The cruelties of property and privilege are always more ferocious than the revenges of poverty and oppression. For the one aims at perpetuating resented injustice, the other is merely a momentary passion soon appeased. As the revolution gained territory they spared many of the men, women, and children whom they surprised on plantations. To prisoners of war alone they remained merciless. They tore out their flesh with redhot pincers, they roasted them on slow fires, they sawed a carpenter between two of his boards. Yet in all the records of that time there is no single instance of such fiendish tortures as burying white men up to the neck and smearing the holes in their faces to attract insects, or blowing them up with gun-powder, or any of the thousand and one bestialities to which they had been subjected. Compared with what their masters had done to them in cold blood, what they did was negligible, and they were spurred on by the ferocity with which the whites in Le Cap treated all slave prisoners who fell into their hands.

TRANSNATIONAL SLAVE REBELLIONS

- The repetitive articulation of plans to invade Jamaica and Dixie from the island was suggestive of a spreading contagion of unrest in the hemisphere, which reflected, then generated, even more unrest. From 1789–1815 there were dozens of slave rebellions and conspiracies in the Americas...But it was in 1795 in Spanish Louisiana—apparently encouraged by the possibility of a French attempt to invade and force retrocession of the former colony—that Africans rose up.³¹ This slave conspiracy in Pointe Coupee was blamed by those on the scene on the direct influence of island revolutionaries.³² There had been an extensive plot in July 1791—days before the ignition in Hispaniola—and in October one conspirator was said to have stated that he and his comrades were simply awaiting word from Hispaniola before deciding to “strike a blow” in concert with islanders. Spanish settlers were accused, in turn, of courting Africans and storing arms for use by the enslaved against French settlers. That this conspiracy was apparently incubating for eighteen months contributed immeasurably to a sense of insecurity, creating conditions for Africans to engage in arbitrage among the major powers, thereby weakening slavery as a whole.
- Miles away in St. Lucia, during that very same year, a British general conceded sadly that “the Negroes are completely Masters of the Island.” A similar battle was unwinding in Grenada between Britain and France. London’s man announced apprehensively in mid-1796 that the “insurgents” leading the “insurrection” there could be “supplied by canoes from Trinidad and Guadeloupe with arms and ammunition.” British settlers were under siege with repeated complaints as early as December 1791 from Bermuda—within hailing distance of the Carolinas—about “seditious Negroes.”
- In Venezuela in 1795 an enslaved African, Jose Chirino, who had visited Hispaniola returned with militant demands for imposition of “the law of the French.”⁴⁰ A few years later another revolt shook the northern coast of South America, as a militia leader, Francisco Xavier Pirela, was said to be in touch with crews of ships from Hispaniola.⁴¹ Then the “Revolt of the Tailors” in Bahia, Brazil, raised the provocative issue of racial equality as well as independence.⁴² Even the rebellion in Mexico in 1810 was said to have featured the now ubiquitous hand of Haiti.



FROM THE US PERSPECTIVE

- "What came to be called the Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804, was one of those rare transformative social, political, and economic detonations made all the more remarkable in that it took place in not only the richest and most productive colony of the French Empire but of any empire. But it also implicated the slave-holding republic in that Paris spent heavily in backing North American rebels opposing their seemingly eternal enemy across the channel, which contributed to a crisis in Paris that sparked a transforming revolt in 1789, and this correspondingly contributed mightily to the radicalization of the island. Revolutionary violence in both France and Hispaniola seemed to some U.S. citizens to flow together in a common river of blood that signaled a new departure that could reach the mainland."
- "the recently born United States, birthed not least because of its desire to maintain slavery in the face of abolitionist pressure from London, was then confronted by a threatening slave revolt not far from its shores, which created enormous leverage for Britain to wield against its former colony. There was some sympathy for Paris at this time, especially due to the anti-monarchical trends unleashed there in 1789. At the same time, the United States was coming into sharp conflict with France—the island's former colonial master—which created initial pressure to boost the rebellious Africans to gain leverage against Paris, though this was inimical to the interests of the all-powerful slaving forces in Dixie. This laid the basis for an early dual policy toward the island, initially boosting—then in a continuously malignant pattern—undermining the revolutionaries. This also heightened sectional tensions, as the nation hurtled toward civil war. Mercantile interests in New England were increasingly in favor of trade relations with the island—even during the reign of the man respectfully known as "General Toussaint"—while Dixie quaked in its boots at the prospect of armed Africans surging to power on the island."

Caribbean island	Year of slave uprising ^[53]
Antigua	1701, 1831
Bahamas	1830, 1832–34
Barbados	1816
Cuba	1713, 1729, 1805, 1809, 1825, 1826, 1830–31, 1833, 1837, 1840, 1841, 1843
Curaçao	1795-
Dominica	1785–90, 1791, 1795, 1802, 1809-14
Grenada	1765, 1795
Guadeloupe	1656, 1737, 1789,1802
Jamaica	1673, 1678, 1685, 1690, 1730–40, 1760, 1765, 1766, 1791–92, 1795–96, 1808, 1822–24, 1831–32
Marie Galante	1789
Martinique	1752, 1789–92, 1822, 1833
Montserrat	1776
Puerto Rico	1527
Saint Domingue	1791
Saint John	1733-34
Saint Kitts	1639
Saint Lucia	1795-96
Saint Vincent	1769–73, 1795–96
Santo Domingo	1522
Tobago	1770, 1771, 1774, 1807
Tortola	1790, 1823, 1830
Trinidad	1837



CANE CUTTERS IN JAMAICA, CA 1880S.



AFTER REVOLUTION: CUBA

- At a basic level, liberation in Saint-Domingue helped entrench its denial in Cuba. As slavery and colonialism collapsed in the French colony, the Spanish island underwent transformations that were almost the mirror image of Haiti's. The sugar no longer produced in Saint-Domingue was now produced in Cuba. Machinery, suddenly without a purpose in revolutionary Saint-Domingue, found its way to Cuba; so too did men who worked as sugar technicians and others considered experts in managing slaves. Many of the African captives who would have once arrived in Cap Français or Port-au-Prince were diverted to Havana. The Haitian Revolution thus hastened and hardened Cuba's sugar revolution and the brutal practices of enslavement that came with it. Two decades after Haitian independence, Cuba had emerged as the world's largest producer of sugar and one of the greatest consumers of enslaved Africans in the nineteenth-century world.
- "There is no need for doubt. The hour of our happiness has arrived," announced Cuba's most prominent sugar planter. If by *our* he meant white planters such as himself, rather than the inhabitants of the colony more generally or the enslaved labor force in particular, his prediction proved more than correct. Sugar took off. In Havana province, center of the boom, the number of mills almost doubled in the two decades after the start of the Haitian Revolution. The average productive capacity of those mills also more than doubled, with the largest ones producing well above that average. With so much more sugar suddenly being produced, Cuba surpassed Saint-Domingue, overtook Jamaica, and became by the 1820s the world's largest producer of sugar, the new pearl of the Antilles.



AFTER REVOLUTION: CUBA

- The Cuban slave system that emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century, then, was one that had internalized the Haitian Revolution and the liberation it represented: as model, as warning, and sometimes as concrete possibility. The Haitian Revolution – the circulation of its example and the material consequences of its achievement of emancipation and independence – profoundly shaped the experience of enslavement and conceptions of freedom in Cuba and the Atlantic World in the nineteenth century.
- The nineteenth century saw the rise of what historians sometimes refer to as the “second slavery.” The “first slavery” was that of the early sugar islands, British colonies such as Barbados starting in the seventeenth century, and Jamaica and French Saint-Domingue in the eighteenth. The second wave of slavery in the nineteenth century consisted of the rise of new or reinvigorated slave regimes producing tropical commodities at unprecedented scales in areas formerly marginal to the global economy, most notably Cuba, the U.S. lower South, and southeastern Brazil.
- Napoleon’s invasion of the Iberian peninsula in 1808 set off a complex chain of events that by 1826 had resulted in the independence of all of Spain’s American territories, save Puerto Rico and Cuba. That year, an Irish-born sugar planter in Havana addressed himself to Spain’s prime minister to explain that divergence. “[Cuba’s] property owners,” he wrote, “have a direct interest in not separating from the mother country, for they know without a doubt that any movement would lead them to their ruin, and they fear exposing themselves to the fate suffered by the unfortunate victims of Santo Domingo.”
- *Haiti* was, in the hands of Cuban planters and their allies, a flexible notion and image, invoked strategically in ways meant to strengthen the hand of slavery in Cuba. Thus in 1791, the revolution was an argument for expanding slavery and the slave trade; in 1811, Haiti was justification for postponing abolition. Throughout, the planters were supremely confident that they could manage the risks.

US INTERVENTION IN THE CARIBBEAN

- The thirteen colonies and later the US were far more than a backdrop or trading partner, but a steadily rising behemoth that the whole hemisphere, for better or worse, had to learn to coexist with. The obsession with the 'exceptionalism' of the US can push aside any wider or often more nuanced view of this relationship.
- 1898-1933, ***The Protectorate Era*** (so-called because the US grants itself with the Platt Amendment the right to intervene in the Caribbean as a 'protector' of the region)
 - 1906, the U.S. Secretary of War William H. Taft was appointed as the "provisional governor" of Cuba.
 - 1915, Marines entered Haiti to defend U.S. corporations. Arguing that the Germans might be interested in increasing their presence in the Caribbean, they remained on the island until 1934.
 - 1916, the U.S. sent troops to the Dominican Republic to impose a military government. The foreign occupation lasted until 1924.
 - 1930, the U.S. supported the establishment of Rafael Trujillo's military regime in the Dominican Republic. This Caribbean dictator, who became famous for his human rights violations, remained in office until his murder in 1961.
- 1933-1954, ***The Good Neighbor Years*** (so-called because of the 'good-neighbor' foreign policy agenda of the FDR administration)
 - 1952, shortly before closing its Good Neighbor Era, the U.S. supported the coup led by General Fulgencio Batista in Cuba
- 1954-1991, ***The Cold War***
 - 1963, Dominican Republic's president Juan Bosch was dismissed through a military coup, which aimed to contain the aspirations of progress promoted by the society's organized sectors. Repression was called "bringing some order," a task that the dictatorship failed to do on its own.
 - 1965, over 40,000 U.S. Marines invaded the Dominican Republic to eliminate those who organized an insurrectionary resistance whose purpose was to get President Bosch back to the country. To end the supposed communist threat, the military operation required the elimination of about 3,000 people.
 - 1983, about 7,000 U.S. troops invaded Grenada to overthrow President Maurice Bishop, who was the leader of the New Jewel Movement, a leftist party that organized the popular resistance against Prime Minister Eric Gairy's authoritarian regime.
- 1991-, ***The Buffer Zone Era***
 - 1994, US invades Haiti
 - 2004, Haiti suffers a US-backed coup, performed by paramilitaries who invaded from the Dominican Republic.

PUERTO RICO, US COLONY 1898-1950

- 1898: Spanish-American War won by US, meaning that Spain hands over Cuba, Philippines, and Puerto Rico. Cuba becomes its own country not long after (although the Platt Amendment means that US can intervene when it sees fit and gives the US a permanent foothold on the island in the form of Guantánamo Bay).
- 1900: Foraker Act creates a government in PR, which had previously been run by the Dept of War; also creates a legal precedent that all laws of the US constitution apply to the island. In 1909, the act is amended to place the supervision of Puerto Rican affairs in the jurisdiction of an executive department to be designated by the president.
- 1917: Jones Act is written into law, granting Puerto Ricans US citizenship, creating the Senate of Puerto Rico, authorizing elections of a Resident Commissioner (which had previously been appointed by the US president), and eliminating taxes on Puerto Rican bonds. Two months later, the Congress enacts the Selective Service Act, conscripting all male US citizens to the military. Though the act created a more structured government for the island, the United States Congress still held the right to veto or amend bills and laws passed by the territorial legislature. In addition to veto power, the United States could prevent the enforcing of actions taken by the legislature. The Act stated that the President of the United States was to appoint members of the Puerto Rico's legislative branch, as well as the directors of the six major government departments: Agriculture and Labor, Health, Interior, and Treasury (with the advice of Congress) and the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Education. The Act also made English the official language of the Puerto Rican courts, government, and the public education systems.
- March 21, 1937, a peaceful march to commemorate the ending of slavery in Puerto Rico in 1873. The police, under the orders of General Blanton Winship, the US-appointed colonial Governor, opened fire, 20 unarmed people were killed, with wounded persons ranging between 100–200.
- 1948: US Congress mandates the island create its own constitution.
- 1950: Governor Luis Muñoz Marín elected and told by Truman administration to not pursue independence. Months later, Puerto Rican nationalists will attempt to assassinate Truman.

PUERTO RICO, US COLONY - 1950S

- Sugar mill owners between the period of 1898 and 1945 turned their sugar mills into monocultural plantations in response to the economy of the 20th century. The sugar mills and tobacco, cigar, and cigarette factories gained the United States' attention due to their fast productions and large amount of produce. Women and children were the primary workers within these industries. Puerto Rican trades went to the United States 95% of the time.
- By 1950, Puerto Rico's agricultural economy was transformed entirely into a sugar monoculture economy, supplemented by gardens for local consumption. American sugar companies had an advantage over the local sugar plantation owners. The local plantation owner could finance his operations only at local banks which offered high interest rates, compared to the low rates that American companies received from the commercial banks in Wall Street. This factor, plus the tariffs imposed, forced many of the local sugar plantation owners to go bankrupt or to sell their holdings to the more powerful sugar companies. Sugar was considered one of the few strategic commodities in which the United States was not fully self-sufficient.
- Puerto Rico was granted the status of Commonwealth (estado libre asociado) by the US in 1952, having first elected a governor, Luis Muñoz Marín, in 1948. In the same year, 'Operation Bootstrap' began, with the aim of stimulating economic growth. Mainland US firms were lured to the island through tax breaks, while infrastructure improvements were also made. The aim was to transform the economy away from agriculture and over-reliance on the monocrop of sugar, which made the island's fortunes too dependent on the fluctuations of the international market. The resulting industrialization also brought people into the cities, swelling the population of San Juan, and changing the rural-urban balance. Soon manufacturing jobs outpaced those in sugar and other agriculture, and there was a push to increase tourism. Critics claimed that by eradicating longer peasant agrarian traditions, the scheme made Puerto Ricans dependent on US capital and companies, but others on the island thought the investment was both necessary and worthwhile.

HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION 1953-4



- The United States' leading expert in fertility and hormone disorders, Dr. John Rock, and biologist Gregory Pincus join forces in 1953 in order to develop an oral contraceptive. Katherine Dexter McCormick (an heiress who would ultimately fund a large part of the research project) writes that once the research team was ready to take the trial further in the form of a wider clinical trial, they had to choose a location which would not only offer them a guise from the U.S. government, but also an opportunity to closely monitor and control their test subjects: "... a cage of ovulating females to experiment with". Why choose PR? The presence in PR of Clarence Gamble, who had already been involved in plans lead by the government to control the population by pushing women towards sterilization as a method of birth control, meant that many women were on birth control and it had been legal since 1937.
 - The women who were given the pills only understood that they would prevent pregnancy, they knew nothing of the potential health and safety risks of taking the pills. As one woman who participated in the trials described it, "[p]hysicians dispatched their assistants to rap on doors throughout the town's slums, telling women they didn't have to have another child if they took the pills regularly."
 - The women were administered 10 milligrams of the experimental combination of estrogen and progesterone, more commonly known as Enovid, the first contraceptive pill. Enovid contained up to ten times the now acceptable dose of hormones found in modern-day birth control. Even though the health risks were originally hidden from the women testing the contraceptive, they nonetheless began to show themselves. The women participating in the trial began to experience "side effects of nausea, dizziness, headaches, and blood clots..."

PUERTO RICO, US COLONY - 1950-NOW



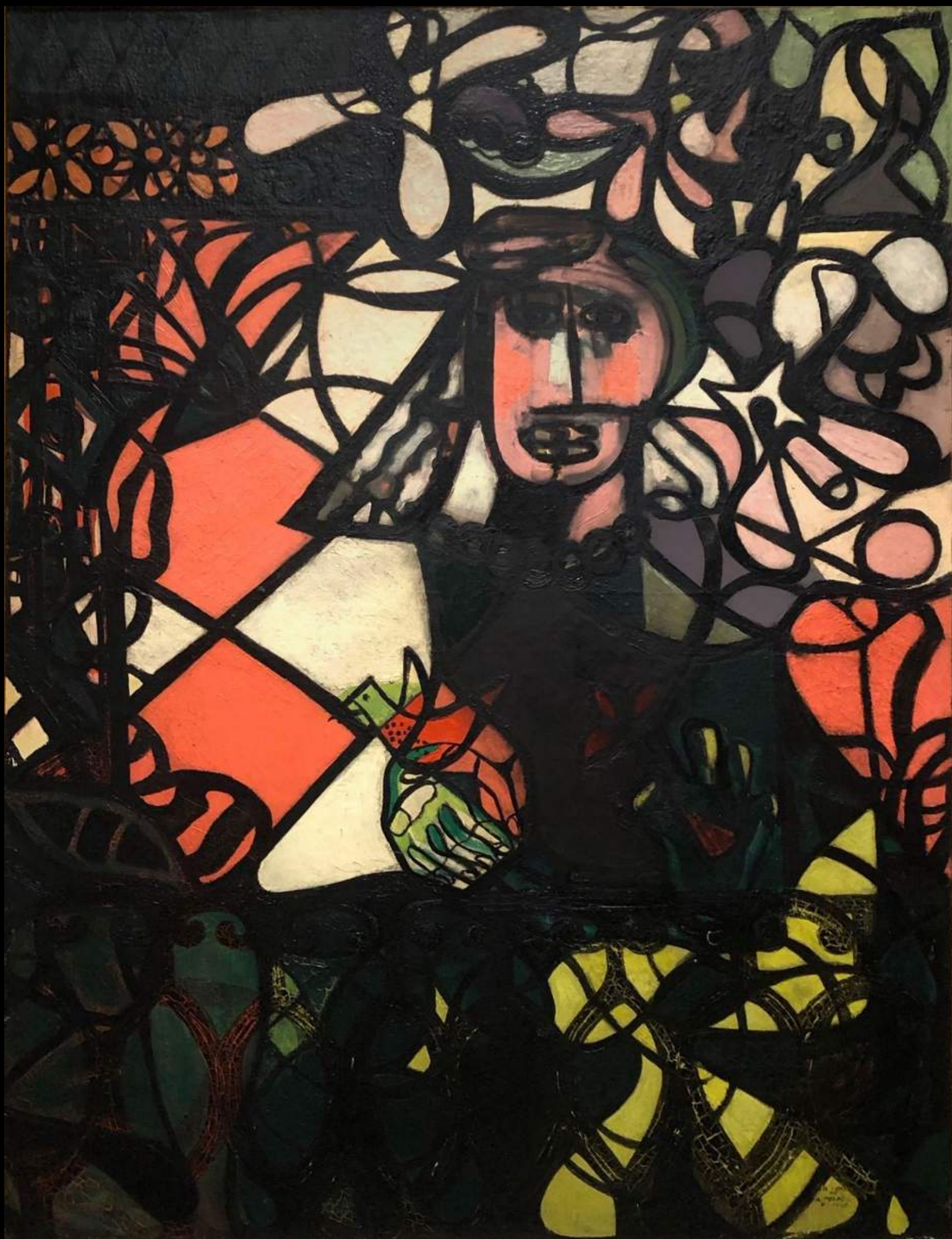
- The 1950s saw the development of labor-intensive light industries, such as textiles; later manufacturing gave way to heavy industry, such as petrochemicals and oil refining, in the 1960s and 1970s. The industrialization was in part fueled by generous local incentives and freedom from federal taxation, while providing access to continental US markets without import duties. As a result, a rural agricultural society was transformed into an industrial working class. Manufacturing activity, however, has been burdened by electricity rates two to three times the average in the United States.
- In 1996, US repeals a 1976 tax break that had brought major investments into the island. By the time the law was totally phased out by 2006, nearly all the American businesses that flocked to the island had gone.
- As of 2017, the island has a 45 percent poverty rate and 12.4% unemployment that is more than twice the mainland U.S. average. As of 2018, 70% of the population is living with water that violated U.S. law

LIFE AND DEBT (2001) DIR. STEPHANIE BLACK



GLOBAL ECONOMICS WITH CARIB CENTER

- The shipping lanes in and out of these islands brought the world together. Silks moved from China to Panama to Spain and onwards. People moved, too; the seas could be a means to liberation and living outside the law, or a conduit to the living hell of enslavement. The sea also was the bringer of goods. Eager islanders awaited shipments of European wares, while Europeans demanded ever more ship loads of commodities to give them their sugar fix, or tobacco hit. The sort of global commodity chains we take for granted today – the ones that bring us iPads and cheap shoes– were forged in this period. But some caution should be exercised. Claiming to be the first ‘modern’ place or the earliest ‘globalized’ nation is a bit of an ivory tower arms race. Historians in many areas –medieval Europe, seventeenth-century India, fifteenth-century China – have claimed the roots of the modern world are to be found firmly planted in Westphalia, Bengal, or Shanghai. This is a contest with no clear winner. However, the links between the West Indies and the rest of the world certainly made them a contender for claims to early global connections. Within a relatively short space of time, the rise of European colonialism in the West Indies linked Santo Domingo to Manila, and Trinidad to India. There were other trade circuits, to be sure, but none that spanned east and west to such a degree – the route becoming faster still after the awkward trek across the Panamanian isthmus ended with the opening of the Panama Canal in the twentieth century.
- The Caribbean was both factory and marketplace. Fortunes were made and lost growing sugar and other crops; smaller islands could trade in global goods, at times flouting both commercial laws and tax regimes. It was an important hub in the development of the modern world economy. But, like the sweat shops of the present, the cost of such economic development was borne by the exploited workers; these islands were also the site of demographic upheaval and displacement in the name of profit, as African labourers were brought to their shores. Then, as the era of slavery drew to a close, Indians and Chinese followed these imperial paths to the doors of Trinidad, Guyana, * and Jamaica, with some even diverting to Cuba. In these small places, people from around the world lived together. The story was not always a happy one, but the outcome made the islands like nowhere else.



ABOVE: *BANDEJA CON FRUTAS* (1941)
AND **LEFT:** *MUJER* (1943)
AMELIA PELÁEZ DEL CASAL



NEXT CLASS...

WEEK 6 - LAS APPROACHES TO LITERARY AND VISUAL ARTS

- Ch 5-6, 8 Swanson from *The Companion to Latin American Studies* (2003), ed. by Philip Swanson

