

## Critical Ethnic Studies 260: Insurgency, Solidarity and Coloniality of Power

Kalamazoo College  
Spring 2019  
M/W/F 11:55-1:10

### Dr. Reid Gómez

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Office Hours: Monday 1:10-3 and Wednesday 1:10-4

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CES260 is an interdisciplinary survey course designed to engage students in the study of power. Our main focus will be on instances of continuity and insurgency, between and among world indigenous, national and transnational subjects. Embedded in this practice will be the assertion of epistemic rights, and simultaneous world views, as well as the varied and landed responses made to the entanglement of race and colonization. We engage history and narrative through the power of storytelling and the critical fictions of conquest and enslavement. Most important, we will ask: what alternatives to modernity/coloniality can we conceive of through practices of insurgency and solidarity? How can we restore relations that have been severed, or disfigured, by these same world systems, as well as our wide-ranging responses to them?

### Required Reading:

1. *The Kingdom of this World\** (a novel) by Alejo Carpentier (English Translation)  
\*Students may choose to read this text in the original Spanish (*El Reino de Este Mundo*) Please note: there are two translations of this text available. You may read from either translation, but you must know what translation you are working with.
2. *Almanac of the Dead* (a novel) by Leslie Marmon Silko
3. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson
4. *Account of a remarkable Conspiracy formed by a Negro in the Island of St. Domingo* (aka *Makandal, Histoire véritable*) (This is a short piece, I will provide a weblink to the piece on our course blog.)
5. *Handouts and supplemental readings I will distribute in class*

One additional text selected by each student for themselves from this recommended reading list:

1. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* by Samuel R. Delany
2. *Critical Thought in the Face of the Capitalist Hydra I: Contributions by the Sixth Commission of the EZLN* by Sixth Commission of the EZLN
3. *The Cooking of History: How Not Study Afro-Cuban Religion* by Stephan Palmié

*NB: This is a reading intensive course. You must not allow yourself to fall behind on the reading schedule. It is recommended that you attempt to get ahead of schedule, as the end of the term will be shortly upon us. The page numbers listed by week represent an absolute minimum of progress—you will be held responsible for meeting those deadlines.*

**Assignments:**

Setting Out:	10 points
Response Paper 1:	15 points
Response Paper 2:	15 points
Response Paper 3:	15 points
Keywords and Context Paper:	15 points
Making A Statement:	20 points
Participation and Decorum:	10 points

**Part One:**

**The Kingdom of This World**

*“For this reason, bowed down by suffering and duties, beautiful in the midst of his misery, capable of loving in the face of afflictions and trials, man finds his greatness, his fullest measure, only in the Kingdom of This World.”*

**Week One: Haiti and an Unthinkable History**

Reading: complete reading of the entire novel, *The Kingdom of this World*, by the second class meeting and before Friday of week one.

Setting Out Paper: due Wednesday, 3 April 2019, in class: No exceptions.

**Week Two: The Kingdom of This World, Ti Noël, and the Gods**

Reading: review the novel and be prepared to discuss the questions Carpentier raises on pp. 116-117, 151, 171, and 179 (these page numbers are for the translation by Harriet de Onís). Review the novel and be prepared to discuss the questions Carpentier raises on pp. 84-5, 108, 124, and 130 (these page numbers are for the translation by Pablo Medina). If you are working with the Spanish language text, please work with one of your colleagues to locate the corresponding page numbers.

Response Paper 1: due Friday at 3 pm to the office in Humphrey House. No exceptions.

Recommended reading: *The Cooking of History: How Not Study Afro-Cuban Religion* by Stephan Palmié

**Part Two:**

**Almanac of the Dead: The Indian Connection**

*“Sixty million Native Americans died between 1500 and 1600. The defiance and resistance to things European continue unabated. The Indian Wars have never ended in*

*the Americas. Native Americans acknowledge no borders; they seek nothing less than the return of all tribal lands.”*

**Week Three: The United States of America**

Reading: *Almanac of the Dead*, pp. 1-200

**Week Four: Mexico and Africa**

Reading: *Almanac of the Dead*, pp. 201-400

**Week Five: The Americas and The Fifth World**

Reading: *Almanac of the Dead*, pp. 401-600

Reading: *Account of a remarkable Conspiracy formed by a Negro in the Island of St. Domingo* (aka Makandal, Histoire véritable) (nb: page 578 of the Almanac)

Key Words and Context Paper 3: due Friday at 3 pm to the office in Humphrey House. No exceptions. Please email me an additional copy of the paper as well (by Friday at 3 pm).

**Week Six: One World, Many Tribes**

Reading: *Almanac of the Dead*, pp. 601-763

**Week Seven: Prophecy and the Five Hundred Year Map**

Reading: *Almanac of the Dead* (including Five Hundred Year Map on front piece)

Response Paper 2: due Friday at 4 pm to the office in Humphrey House. No exceptions.

Recommended reading: *Critical Thought in the Face of the Capitalist Hydra I: Contributions by the Sixth Commission of the EZLN* by Sixth Commission of the EZLN

**Part Three:**

**As We Have Always Done:**

**Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance**

*“we call our nation ‘Kina Gchi Nishnaabe-ogamig—the place where we all live and work together.”*

*“And we must not just ask what is the alternative: we need to do the alternatives over and over until we get it right.”*

**Week Eight: Radical Resurgence, Resurgent Method, Kwe**

Reading: READ THE ENTIRE BOOK (*As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*) BEFORE WEEK 8 (see DOGL note) (LBS)

**Week Nine: Aniin, Land as Pedagogy, Embodied Coresistance**

Reading: (see DOGL note) (LBS) and Kelly, Robin D. G., “Black Study, Black Struggle” (handout)

Response Paper 3: due Friday at 4 pm to the office in Humphrey House. No Exceptions.

## **Week Ten: Conclusions, Black Study, Black Struggle and Closing**

Reading: Conclusion (LBS)

Blog and course material (in total)

Making A Statement (paper): due Friday at 4 pm to the office in Humphrey House. **No exceptions.**

Recommended reading: *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* by Samuel R. Delany

**Format for All Written Assignments:** A note about form: all papers must be typed, proofread and printed. You should use a number 12 font. Times New Roman is my preferred font. All papers should include your name, my name (spelled correctly), the date, the assignment and an original title. There are no exceptions to these formatting requirements. Points will be deducted for failure to comply. Additional details for each assignment follow:

*NB: I recommend you keep a writer's diary for the duration of this class. This is a private space and you should keep it close at all times. Do not let anyone look through this space. If you want to share items you've placed in your diary, read it aloud, or copy out the section (in the spirit of the Almanac). Use the Almanac and Clinton as your guides. Write, draw, doodle, cut-n-paste and copy—this will provide the source material for each of your written assignments, as well as class dialogue and discussion.*

### **Setting Out: 10 points**

This paper must be one page, single-spaced, and comprised of three paragraphs and a final statement. The first paragraph will clearly state: This is where I am (in relation to the course material). The second paragraph will clearly state: This is where I'd like to go (in relation to the course material). The third paragraph will clearly state: These are my special areas of interest, or questions (in relation to the course material). Each paper will be evaluated according to the clarity and detail of the writing (style being indivisible from content). At the bottom of the page you must identify the text you have selected for your individual reading, and your Key Words and Context paper.

### **Response Paper 1: 15 points**

This paper should be 500 words (you must include word count) that critically address the primary text (Carpentier). You should formulate an argument you can then argue. Following Strunk and White's "Elementary Principles of Composition" (rule no. 12) you should "Choose a suitable design and hold to it." Your writing should reflect your passion and creativity, and should be profound. Consequently, you should select a point, or matter, you genuinely care intensely about. Each paper will be evaluated according to three principles: has the author (you) identified a key concept (or argument) of the text,

can they articulate that concept in their own words, and finally have they clearly and effectively formed an original argument/response to that concept.

### **Response Paper 2: 15 points**

This paper should be 500 words (you must include word count) that critically address the primary text (Silko). You should formulate an argument you can then argue. Following Strunk and White's "Elementary Principles of Composition" (rule no. 12) you should "Choose a suitable design and hold to it." Your writing should reflect your passion and creativity, and should be profound. Consequently, you should select a point, or matter, you genuinely care intensely about. Each paper will be evaluated according to three principles: has the author identified a key concept (or argument) of the text, can they articulate that concept in their own words, and finally have they clearly and effectively formed an original argument/response to that concept.

### **Response Paper 3: 15 points**

This paper should be 500 words (you must include word count) that critically address the primary text (Simpson/LBS). You should formulate an argument you can then argue. Following Strunk and White's "Elementary Principles of Composition" (rule no. 12) you should "Choose a suitable design and hold to it." Your writing should reflect your passion and creativity, and should be profound. Consequently, you should select a point, or matter, you genuinely care intensely about. Each paper will be evaluated according to three principles: has the author identified a key concept (or argument) of the text, can they articulate that concept in their own words, and finally have they clearly and effectively formed an original argument/response to that concept.

### **Keywords and Context Paper: 15 points**

Your paper should be divided into two parts. In the first part you should identify the keywords and concepts used in the text you've selected. You can present these in the form of a glossary. The second part of the paper should provide the context supplied by the reading, to the field and also to the course material. Both parts of the paper will eventually be posted on the course blog.

### **Making A Statement: 20 points**

This paper is your opportunity to integrate, frame and narrate an understanding of the entire ten weeks of reading and discussion. In preparation you should review your "setting out" paper, your writer's diary and each of your response papers. The course keywords and context papers may also be used as a resource. In this paper you should formulate an original statement that addresses one of the central questions raised in the class. **This insight (argument) should be grounded in each of the four texts you were responsible for.** Your argument should weave a complex and sophisticated narrative that brings the entire course experience into a perspective—this perspective should be multifaceted and will certainly change. If you need assistance formulating your argument, generating ideas, or testing conclusions please contact me regularly. Your work will be evaluated on several levels: attention to detail and accuracy of understanding of the course texts, clarity of argument, originality of argument, and you're your ability to weave together our diverse range of texts and approaches.

**Participation and Decorum: 10 points**

Your participation will be evaluated on your attendance, participation in class discussion, use of office hours, responsibility toward intellectual partners (when, and as, assigned) and response to email correspondence.

**Translation Policy:**

The class will be held in a multi-lingual format. Everyone is required to give gracious, generous and truthful (communication driven) translations of their words and their work as well the words and work we share together (in readings, on the blog, etc.,)

**Required Attendance and Participation:**

*Class participation:* We create the class together. Everyone's voice is essential and valuable. We will focus on listening, speaking and responding to each other. Dialogue (meaningful conversation) and translation (between languages and viewpoints) will be an everyday activity. Daily attendance is required. Any and all absences must be discussed with me, in writing, or during office hours; together we will decide on the best means of making up any missed work. Any unexcused absence will result in a reduction of grade (by 10 points).

*Class Responsibility and Decorum:* Each class session will consist of group discussion and individual writing exercises. My goal is to maintain an intellectually stimulating and supportive class environment. I expect everyone to be prepared for, and to participate in, discussion. Readings are to be completed before each class. Each member of the class is expected to follow a code of ethics: no tardiness, no sleep deprivation, no demeaning, hateful or violent remarks, no cell phones, no internet or email, no texting and no intimidation. Failure to follow this code of ethics will result in direct and immediate action.

**Resources:**

- Kalamazoo College Library: [https://reason.kzoo.edu/library/research\\_help/](https://reason.kzoo.edu/library/research_help/)
- The Writing Center: <http://reason.kzoo.edu/writingcenter/>
- Student Code of Conduct: <https://reason.kzoo.edu/studev/stuconduct/>
- Title IX: <https://reason.kzoo.edu/titleix/whatis/>