STUDY ABROAD IN BRAZIL
Syllabus

1. Course Description: This course is designed as an interdisciplinary and critical introduction to the history, society, literature, and culture of Brazil, the largest nation of Latin America. Students will learn about Brazil’s colonial experience as the only Portuguese colony in the Americas, its unique experiment with monarchical institutions in the nineteenth century, and the trajectory of its uneven modernization in the twentieth century. The course will examine diverse topics including contemporary race relations, gender, sexuality, religion and spirituality, class conflict, and migration, as well as various aspects of Brazilian cultural production and performance, as reflected in film, music, literature, and other forms of popular culture.

2. Topics covered and Mode of Delivery: Students will engage in critical analysis of a variety of texts, including films, fiction, and ethnographic and historical accounts, as they also pursue their own areas of intellectual and research interests. Classes will be a mix of lecture and workshop. Films screenings will be scheduled outside of class, with clips from the films shown during class. The course will be taught in English. Portuguese-language texts will be available in English translation or with English subtitles; if a text was originally written in Portuguese, the instructor will also provide the original text for the students with knowledge of Portuguese.
Course Requirements and Grading

Assessment:

Participation and Attendance: 10%
Research for Cultural Workshops (report to be posted on student Vlogs): 20%
Daily Response Papers/ (Blog Article; one page to be written per day): 25%
Oral Presentations: 20%
Final Research Paper: 25%

- **Class Participation/Attendance**: Students are expected to attend every class and workshop, and to be prepared to discuss the assigned readings; make relevant and original critical comments in their assignments; and draw connections between past and present readings and class topics.

- **Weekly Research for Cultural Workshops**: Students are required to attend museum visits and cultural workshops/ offered almost every afternoon with an artist. The workshops will talk about the major rhythms/cultures in the music and dance of Pernambuco (such as capoeira, frevo, caboclinho, maracatu de baque virado, afoxé, mangue beat, forró/baião and coco). The artist will provide information about these rhythms; however, students are required to conduct their own research using material available on the Web in order to address the topics of the workshops. You will create a report that will include pictures (it might include also videos) and create weekly brief entries in our Blog with images, important information, links for further research, etc.)

- **Daily Response Papers (in hard copy and posted on the course blog)**: Students will be asked to submit a one-page (300 words minimum) description and critical analysis of the readings assigned for the particular day. These responses must be written carefully and demonstrate a clear understanding of the readings. Very important: no late assignment or sent by email will be accepted! Students will post their response papers on the course blog adding visuals and important supplementary content such as external links). Blog address: summerinbrazilnyu.blogspot.com; Blog name: Summer in Brazil NYU You have
received an invitation from the professor to act as an administrator of this Blog. If you have not accepted the invitation, contact your professor immediately to be added to the site. Your weekly report is due on Friday late evenings. Your report should be posted on time otherwise it will not be accepted.

- **Oral Presentations:** Students will be asked to present on a given topic to the rest of the class. Each presentation should be 15 minutes long and be engaging and well organized. Prepare 3 questions at the end of the presentation to initiate discussion among the students. Students are encouraged to explore different presentational modes: film or video (which could take the form of personal footage of their experiences in Brazil), short lecture, PowerPoint presentation, performance (including musical performance), photo essay, etc.). Students will choose a topic and be assigned a day for their presentation at the start of the course.

Available Dates for Oral presentation: Jun 13th, Jun 17th, June 18th, June 19th, June 20th, June 24th, June 25th, June 26th. Take a look at the corresponding themes of these dates and we will have the dates and themes assigned on our first day of class.

- **Final Research Paper:** Students will choose a topic related to Brazil and its diverse populations. The final paper will be approximately 5-10-pages long (typed, double-spaced, times new roman, 12pt) and should demonstrate the ability to construct a critical argument, creativity, and familiarity with the chosen topic. The papers must be well written and clearly organized and provide evidence of high-quality research and analysis.

**RECOMMENDED MOVIES:**
- Aquarius (*Aquarius*) (dir. Kléber Mendonça Filho, 2016)
- Bacurau (dir. Kléber Mendonça Filho, 2019)
- Sugar (* Açúcar*) (dir. Renata Pinheiro and Sérgio Oliveira, 2017)
- How Tasty Was my Little Frenchman (*Como era gostoso o meu francês*) (dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1971)
- Black Orpheus (*Orfeu Negro*) (dir. Marcel Camus, 1959)
- Beyond Ipanema (dir. Guto Barra and Beco Dránoff, 2009)
- Moro no Brasil (dir. Mika Kaurismäki, 2002)
- Tattoo (*Tatuagem*) (dir. Hilton Lacerda, 2013)
- Carandiru (dir. Héctor Babenco, 2004)
- Black God, White Devil (*Deus e o Diabo na terra do sol*) (dir. Glauber Rocha, 1964)
- Entranced Earth (*Terra em transe*) (dir. Glauber Rocha, 1967)
- The Rock and the Star (*O Rochedo e a Estrela*) (dir. Katia Mesel, 2007)
- The Transgressor (*Os Transgressores*) (dir. Luis Erlanger, 2017)
Course Overview

The syllabus is subject to minor changes

**June 11th**

**PART I Introduction:** The goal of this session is to introduce to the course syllabus, themes, requirements and expectations. We will also assign the topics and dates for presentations and familiarize ourselves with the regional complexity of Brazil. We will situate Pernambuco in a broad Brazilian historical perspective by presenting its specific history and cultural intricacies. We will screen parts of the movie *Aquarius* to have a critical understanding of our locale, its social issues, and the local arts scene as a tool for social criticism.

**Activities:** Go over syllabus. Assign dates for student presentations.

**Reading:** Thomas E. Skidmore. “A Brief Sketch of Brazil and Its Place in the World.” In: *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*. Oxford University Press, 2010. 1-8

**Part II Politics and Historical Background:** In this session, we will consider the urban and rural divides in Brazil, as well as conditions of social inequality. While highlighting the historical chronology of important political movements
and economic cycles, we will expand on the different depictions of the colonial period through the arts. We will explore Pernambuco’s role during colonial times, its socio-economic structure based on its sugar plantations and reflection in the present times.


Reading:


EXCERPTS FROM THE MOVIE: Aquarius (dir. Kléber Mendonça Filho, 2016)

AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: Capoeira, loas and rhythms

June 12th

Anthropophagy and Modernismo: This session will discuss the importance of indigenous culture in colonial times and Oswald de Andrade’s concept of Anthropophagy as a way of discussing Brazilian culture and society. We will talk about Brazilian Modernismo in the 1920’s, paying particular attention to the contributions of painter Cicero Dias and poet Manuel Bandeira, both natives of Pernambuco, to the Modernismo movement in Brazil.

Readings:


Recommended reading:


Recommended Film:

How Tasty Was my Little Frenchman (Como era gostoso o meu francês) (dir. Nelson Pereira dos Santos, 1971)

**AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: Frevo Dancer**

**June 13th**

**Brazil and its Myths of Identity:** In this session we will explore the different attempts to conceptualize Brazilian identity. We will talk about the malandro (or trickster) figure as a national hero in Mario de Andrade’s novel *Macunaima*, and its re-working in a new literature of violence, such as Paulo Lins’s novel *Cidade de Deus*. We will also touch upon the 1970’s local movement *Movimento Armorial* and its concept of *raça parda* (mixed race).

**Readings:**


**Film:**

*City of God (Cidade de Deus)* (dir. Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund, 2003)

**AFTERNOON: Visit Instituto Ricardo Brennan**

**June 17th**

**Part I- Race, I:** In this session we will discuss the social and racial structures in Brazil from the XV-XVII centuries, with a particular focus on slavery, an institution that lasted in Brazil longer than in any other country in the Americas. We will take into account the long-term impact of the African slave trade on Brazilian culture and society and critically analyze the myth of racial democracy within Gilberto Freyre’s narrative and his national building discourse as a whole.

**Readings:**


Film:

*Black Orpheus (Orfeu Negro)* (dir. Marcel Camus, 1959)

**Part II- Race, II:** This session will discuss contemporary racial politics in Brazil, in particular, recent discussions about “blackness,” racial privilege, and racial quotas. This session with also analyze how movements in the US such as “Black Lives Matter” dialog with Black movements in Brazil, such as “Vidas Negras Importam.”

Readings:


Film:

*What is it worth? (Quanto vale ou é por quilo?)* (dir. Sergio Bianchi, 2005)

**AFTERNOON: Visit to Gilberto Freyre Museum**

**June 18th**

**Part I: Cultural Production, I:** This session will introduce students to various forms of Brazilian cultural production and ideologies of hybridity in Brazilian art. We will be particularly attentive to foreign and domestic depictions of the celebration of hybridity, engaging in critical analysis of the concept’s multiple meanings and representations.

Readings:


**Film:**

*Beyond Ipanema* (dir. Guto Barra and Beco Dránoff, 2009)

**Part II: Cultural Production, II:** This session will discuss the importance of the Northeast of Brazil as an important source of cultural production in the country. We will focus specifically on the dialog between folklore rhythms and commercial music in Recife, highlighting MangueBeat as a hybrid movement.

**Readings:**


**Film:**

*Moro no Brasil* (dir. Mika Kaurismäki, 2002)


**AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: Mangue Beat**

**June 19th**

**Part I: Gender and Sexuality, I:** This section explores social constructions of gender and sexuality in Brazil, particularly definitions of masculinity/femininity and LGBTPQIA+ groups. We will discuss current Brazilian debates on gender and sexuality in the face of a new conservatism and political influence exercised by the evangelical movement in Brazil.
Readings:


Film:

Carandiru(dir. Héctor Babenco, 2004)

**Part II: Gender and Sexuality, II:** This session will explore resistance by feminist and LGBTQIA+ groups through activism, music, and film. We will focus primarily on Recife cinema, Funk music, and the networks of activism through music in the poor communities (**favelas**) of Rio de Janeiro and Recife. We will also discuss traditional folkloric music related to Candomblés in Recife.

Readings:


*Recommended Reading:*


Recommended film:

Tattoo (Tatuagem) (dir. Hilton Lacerda, 2013)

**AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: Pandeiro (rhythms from the Brazil)**

**June 20th**

**Part I: Internal Migration:** In this session, we will focus on internal migration from the Northeast to other regions of the country. We will analyze how the discourse of a “dry Northeast” has been constructed and explored in the arts (theater, cinema, and literature).

Readings:


*Recommended reading:*


Films:

Black God, White Devil (Deus e o Diabo na terra do sol)(dir. Glauber Rocha, 1964)

Part II: Immigration: The session will focus internal migration to the Northeast of Brazil, focusing on specific migratory waves from the past and in recent times. 1) The myth of the Dutch: we will discuss the Dutch legacy to Recife’s identity as an anti-colonial resistance tool; 2) From Recife to Manhattan: we will explore Jewish migration to Recife and the establishment there of the first synagogue of the Americas; and 3) The Chinese in the Tropics: we will talk about recent Chinese immigration and issues of globalization.

Readings:


Recommended reading:

“Guanxi, the new law of Chinese Recife” Diario de Pernambuco(May 24th, 2015).

Film:

The Rock and the Star (O Rochedo e a Estrela)(dir. Katia Mesel, 2007)

AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: São João Rhythms (Forró/ Baião /Quadrilha)

June 24th
**Visual Arts and Urban Space: Activism and Community Work.** This session will explore current dialogs between Brazilian visual artists on issues of social inequality. We will focus on work by Jonathas de Andrade and the *O Norte* group.

*Readings:*


Movie in-class: *The Fish (O Peixe)* (dir. Jonathas de Andrade, 2016)

*Film:*

*The Transgressor (Os Transgressores)* (dir. Luis Erlanger, 2017)

*AFTERNOON: Visit to Casa da Rabeca Cultural Center*

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**June 25th**

**Cordel Literature: Northeastern Identity in the Making:** In this session we will explore the historical, sociological and cultural context of Cordel literature (popular broadsheets) reflecting upon its relevance to the Armorial Movement and local literary writers (such as João Cabral de Melo Neto and Ariano Suassuna), as well as to pop culture (such as Derlo Almeida’s works). We will analyze some traditional broadsheets, with their oral poetic forms, including discussion of bookmaking and printmaking. The weekly response paper will consist of the making of a Cordel book by students.

*Readings:*


*Recommended reading:*

Film:


AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: The music of Coco

June 26th

Contemporary Brazilian Cinema: Recife in the Spotlight: In this session we will talk about Novo Cinema Pernambuco and Recife’s leading role in current Brazilian cinema production.

1) https://lwlies.com/reviews/neighbouring-sounds/Neighbouring Sounds by REVIEW BY DAVID JENKINS @DAVEYJENKINS


Film:

Neighbor Sounds (O Som ao Redor) (dir. Kléber Mendonça Filho, 2012)

AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: Contemporary music in Recife

June 27th: Presentation and Discussion of Research Topics for the Final Paper

AFTERNOON WORKSHOP: Museu do Homem do Nordeste
SAMPLE