

**Spanish 545: The Speculative Caribbean**  
**Fall 2018**  
**Mondays 2:00 pm – 4:50 pm**

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**Course Description**

The Caribbean has been described as a “laboratory”, a “social experiment”, “marvelous,” and “unthinkable”—paradoxical terms that, on the one hand, bespeak the region’s biopolitical foundation and, on the other, suggest an inability to make sense of it within the logic of Western reason. With this in mind, this course examines how these ways of capturing Caribbean existence inform and are informed by the rise and more recent boom of Caribbean speculative fiction. As scholars such as John Reider and Lewis Gordon have noted, many of the classic texts in the Western speculative canon can be read as allegories of the violent colonial encounter between Europeans and racialized others in the New World, displaced to an alien elsewhere. Turning our attention to the contemporary Caribbean, we will consider how its speculative fiction theorizes the region’s transition to post/neocolonial modes of governance that, nevertheless, dehumanize its peoples, destabilize its politics, and call into question the possibility of a sustainable future. Through critical readings of Spanish, French, and Anglo-Caribbean fiction in the genre—spanning marvelous realism, fantasy, science fiction, science fantasy, and gothic horror, the course will explore themes related to belonging, nation/statehood, sovereignty, race, gender, the (in)human, apocalypse, and futurity. We will study these themes as they appear in the writing of Erna Brodber, Pedro Cabiya, Alejo Carpentier, Nalo Hopkinson, Rita Indiana Hernández, José “Pepe” Liboy, René Philoctète, José Miguel “Yoss” Sánchez, Pedro Antonio Valdez, and the film *Juan de los muertos*. We will also amplify our understanding of the speculative Caribbean in light of theoretical considerations by Jean Baudrillard, Antonio Benítez Rojo, Jacques Derrida, Colin Dayan, Sybille Fischer, Frantz Fanon, Guillermina De Ferrari, Édouard Glissant, Fredric Jameson, Iván de la Nuez, Emily Maguire, Achille Mbembe, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Christina Sharpe, Darko Suvin, Alexander Weheliye, Cary Wolfe, and Sylvia Wynter. The course will be conducted primarily in Spanish.

**Please note:** A comprehensive syllabus and schedule of the readings will be posted by mid summer

