

General Information

Title of Program: ***Resolver: Advanced Studies in Cuba Through Afro-Cuban Eyes and Sustainability***

Program Location: Havana, Cuba
Spring Break *March 5th-12th 2017*

Faculty Program Director

Name: Dr. Kwasi Densu

Title: Assistant Professor, Political Science

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Phone: 850-412-5548

Department: History, Political Science, African-American Studies and Geography

College: College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities



Will a second staff member, or student be required as support staff? **Yes** (OIED recommends one faculty member or support person per 15-22 students. If a program will have more than 15 students faculty directors may consider adding a second support staff, faculty member, graduate or undergraduate assistant as outlined above.)

First Support Staff

Name: Nia Travel and Tour
Services/Dr. Amandla Shabaka-Haynes

Title: Director, Tallahassee Branch, Birthing
Project
USA

Email: amandla.shabaka@gmail.com

Phone: 850-322-0107

Department: n/a

Expertise in the host country or in the discipline: Trained physician from Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM). Speaks fluent Spanish. Lived for 6 years in Cuba.



Program Rationale: Teaching and Learning

1. Explain the rationale for choosing the course(s) and how the proposed location will impact teaching and student learning.

The *FAMU Study Abroad: Cuba Program* (FSACP) is a collaborative, interdisciplinary project between the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities and the Sustainability Institute. It is an extension of Dr. Kwasi Densu's *CPO 2002*

Comparative Politics and tentatively CPO 592 Study Abroad Both classes are taught as special topics courses on the *Study of Cuban Politics, Culture and History Through the Lens of Afro Cuba and Sustainability*. As the United States and Cuba have moved closer to the normalization of diplomatic relations Cuban history, culture and society have reemerged center stage within academic institutions across the United States. FSACP seeks to expose students to a critical understanding of the historical development and complexities of contemporary Cuban life through the experiences of Afro-Cuban communities and sustainability. The term *resolver* is a colloquial term that emerged following the onset of the Special Period (1989). Because of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the United States led embargo, Cuba experienced a sharp decline in its economy and greater isolation from the international community. The term *resolver* developed as a response to the Special Period. It emphasized the need for Cuban people to use local ingenuity, knowledge, material and cultural resources to develop the island. Out of the Special Period materialized a unique set of socioeconomic, technological, artistic, scientific and political problems and sensibilities, which have had an indelible impact on contemporary Cuban society. This program seeks to acquaint students and faculty with these issues with a specific emphasis on Afro Cuba and the environment.



2. What are the learning goals for this program?

The ***Spring Break Immersion Program (March 5^t-12th 2017)*** will introduce students to various aspects of Cuban history, culture and society through the experiences of Afro Cuban communities and sustainability. The program will explore eight specific subject areas (1) Cuban History (2) Cuban Political Economy (3) the Cuban Healthcare System (4) the Cuban Environment and Food System (5) Cuban Art and Humanities (6) Afro Cuban History, Culture and Social Movements (7) Cuban International Relations and (8) Energy and the Cuban Built Environment. During the eight day *Spring Break Immersion Program* each subject area will be covered over the course of a day. Each day will begin with a lecture/dialogue led by a University of Havana professor and/or Cuban subject matter expert. Following the dialogue students will participate in field experiences that will acquaint them with the subject matter within the context of contemporary Cuban society.

3. How does this program support the goals of the college, school, department and university of providing global experiences for students?

FSACP seeks to reverse the trend of the dearth of African-American and low income students involved in international education and study abroad programs. Although US students studying abroad is at an all time high (289,00, 2012/13, 2% increase) African-Americans are underrepresented comprising only 5.3% of U.S. study abroad students. Many factors contribute to this problem. Chief among them are financial accessibility, fear due to the lack of international travel experience within a student's family, the absence of faculty mentorship and the cultural orientation of most study abroad programs. FSACP offers a study abroad experience that speaks to the culture, history, environmental and unique socioeconomic problems of FAMU students and the Global South. This approach is consistent with FAMU's commitment to sustainability and internationalization.



4. How will you connect students to the local culture?

The *Spring Break Immersion Program* will explore 8 core areas of Cuban culture and contemporary society.

- a. Cuban History
- b. Cuban Political Economy
- c. Cuban Healthcare System
- d. Cuban Environment and Food System
- e. Cuban Art and Humanities
- f. Afro Cuban History, Culture and Social Movements
- g. Cuban International Relations
- h. Energy and the Cuban Built Environment



During the *Spring Break Immersion Program* each full day (excluding Sunday, March 5th and Sunday March 12th) will begin with a lecture and discussion facilitated by a Cuban scholar and/or Cuban subject matter expert. The discussions will be consistent with the core themes listed above. Following each discussion will be a field experience. Each field experience will include relevant sites, and collaborative exchanges with Cuban communities, academics, artist, workers and students. Geographically speaking the program will limit its reach to the western region of Cuba specifically the provinces of Havana, Pinar del Rio and Matanzas. Additionally students will participate in a “grounding” session with Cuban students to discuss contemporary issues related to changes taking place in Cuban society and normalization of relationships with the United States.

Health and Safety

1. Are there any health, safety or security concerns related to the country or location where you are proposing a program? You may wish to review resources available through the U.S. Department of State, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or International SOS.

No major health, safety or security concerns seem to be associated with Cuba. Participants are encouraged to obtain health insurance. To enter Cuba you are required to have travel medical insurance. This is typically included in the cost



of a plane ticket purchased from an official charter company. FSACP will be using *Cuba Travel* to purchase tickets, visas, etc. The US State Department describes the security environment in Cuba as relatively stable.

2. What means of transportation will be used in country for proposed excursions? Please address any transportation related safety concerns.

During the course of our stay in Cuba we will use three sources for our transportation needs. (1) *Maquina*- privately owned taxis running on fixed, long-distance routes (2) *House Vans*- vans owned and operated by the owners of *casa particulares* (private, home-based, lodging) and (3) *Havana Tour Company*- a Cuban, state owned bus/tour company.

Recruitment and Program Preparation

1. Which group of students will this program target and why will this program appeal to those students? How large is this target population?

We are attempting to recruit students across disciplines at FAMU by linking academic units to specific subject areas related to sustainability and Afro Cuban communities. We will take a **maximum of 15 students**. We want to recruit students interested in exploring how the Cuban experience can give deeper insight into the problems faced by low income, underserved, communities of color in the United States.

Recruitment for FSACP will begin in November 2016. We will use several strategies:

- ☐ A video documentary series on Cuban history, culture and society.
- ☐ Participation in FAMU's Office of International Education and Development's Study Abroad Fair November 18, 2016.
- ☐ Dissemination of program pamphlets throughout the university.



Previous Experience

1. Please detail your previous experience teaching this course or similar courses at FAMU or other institutions.

FSCAP is an outgrowth of a Comparative Politics: A Study of Cuban Culture, Politics and History Through Afro Cuban Eyes and Sustainability. The course seeks to contextualize and critically analyze Cuba by exploring the environmental history and politics of the island, as well as the historical and political development of Afro Cuban communities.

2. What is your previous experience with the proposed country or location for this program? When was the last time you visited the location and for how long? Do you speak the local language?

In 2012-13 I first visited Cuba to pursue research on the food system and to study the experiences of African-American students attending Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina (ELAM). In addition, I was on a fact-finding mission to determine the feasibility of developing a Cuba study abroad program for FAMU.



The research trip was extremely productive on multiple levels. I was able to make contacts with representatives of the Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Humanity as well as visit multiple sites associated with the Cuban food system in the provinces of Havana and Pinar del Rio. Studying the experiences of African-American students attending Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina (ELAM) was also fruitful. I had an opportunity to visit ELAM as well as tour Cuban medical institutions in the municipality of Cerro, Havana. In addition, I was able to conduct a number of personal interviews and focus groups with ELAM students and alumni. Unfortunately my attempts to create linkages to initiate a Cubastudy abroad program were not as successful. Given the unique political situation in Florida, public universities could not use public funds to travel to Cuba. This meant two things. First, any research conducted by faculty could not use public institutions as fiscal agents. Second, university based financial support for faculty research and student study abroad opportunities in Cuba did not exist. Because of these conditions I was not able to formally develop relationships

with academic colleagues in Cuba and non-university based academic institutions conducting study abroad programs. Since President Obama's December 2014 announcement to normalize diplomatic relationships things have changed dramatically. In July of 2015 I presented a paper at the X International Convention on the Environment and Development in Havana, Cuba. The paper was entitled *Ecological Rationality vs. Capital Accumulation: Envisioning Sustainable Development Through Indigenous Eyes*. During this time I made contacts with Barbara Vinet Hernandez and Teresa Rubio Sarmiento of the Cuban Environmental Agency. In addition, with the help of Dr. Jan De Cosmo I developed linkages with Dr. Samuel Fure, Professor of English, University of Havana and Ms. Carmen Castillo, US Relations Officer, International Relations Office of the University of Havana (IRUH). On September 17, 2016 I submitted a proposal (see attachment) to Ms. Castillo's office outlining the goals and objectives of FSCAP. To date the proposal was approved by IRUH however, we are awaiting final approval from higher levels of the Cuban state. I will be traveling to Cuba December 30th-January 17th 2016 to participate in the Council of International Education and Exchange's (CIEE) International Faculty Development Seminar Program. The seminar is entitled *Contemporary Cuban Transformations: Social Inequalities and Social Policy*. During Spring Break 2017 we conducted our first FAMU Cuba Study Abroad experience. It was a resounding success. We took nine undergraduate and graduate students from multiple majors including Environmental Science, History, Political Science and Education. In addition, the students constructed a final video project to document their experiences. The documentary was shared with the campus and community upon their return. We expect the 2017 experience to be as thought provoking and productive.

Program Itinerary Spring Break Immersion Program 2017

Please complete the itinerary, include the location, city and country, and all activities planned for each day, lectures, museum visits, site visits, tours, etc.

	Date	Location	Activiti
Day 1	3/5/17	Departure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Travel to Tampa, Florida 4am ☐ Depart from Tampa, Florida to Havana, Cuba 11:20am. <li style="padding-left: 40px;">Arrive in Havana, Cuba at 12:40pm. ☐ Travel to MariJose Casa Particular ☐ Orientation/ Lunch
Day 2	3/6/17	Havana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ 9-10:30 am Dialogue- Race Cuba and Afro Cuban Social Movements ☐ 10:30-12 noon Casa de Africa ☐ 12-1:30 Lunch ☐ 2-4:30 Antonia Sugar Plantations
Day 3	3/7/17	Havana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ 9-10:30 am Dialogue- Building a Culture of Nature: Sustainability and Environmental Protection in Cuba ☐ 10:30- 12noon Antonio Nunez Jimenez Foundation for Nature and Humanity ☐ 12-1:30 Lunch ☐ 2-4:30 Organoponico Vivero Alamar
Day 4	3/8/17	Matanzas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ 8am-10 am travel to Matanzas, Cuba ☐ 10-11 Dialogue Cuban Economy, Tourism and Sustainability ☐ 11-3 Varadero, Cuba coastal experience/Lunch ☐ 3-4 travel to city of Matanzas
Day 5	3/9/17	Havana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ 9-10:30 am Dialogue- Cuban Economic History and Contemporary Transformations in the Cuban Economy ☐ 12-1:30 Lunch ☐ 2-5 Plaza de la Revolucion, Jose Marti Memorial Museum, Museum of the
Day 6	3/10/17	Pinar del Rio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ 7am Depart for Pinar ☐ 9am-11:30am Parque Nacional de Vinales (eco tour, tobacco farms, horseback trail ride, Las Terrazas eco-village)

			<p>Maroon museum), La Cueva del Indio (Native American Maroon museum), Jardin Botanico, Vinales city tour,</p> <p>☒ 6-8pm- Dinner</p>
Day 7	3/11/17	Havana	<p>☒ 9-10:30 am Dialogue- Health, Wellness and Healthcare</p> <p>Diplomacy: The Cuban Model</p> <p>IZ 12-1:30 Lunch</p>
Day 8	3/12/17	Departure	<p>☒ Travel to Tampa, Florida.</p> <p>☒ Depart from Havana, Cuba to Tampa, Florida 9:40am. Arrive in Tampa, Florida 11:00am.</p> <p>☒ Travel from Tampa to Tallahassee, Florida</p>