

## Contact

Jacqueline Sample  
Nehesi@sintmaarten.net

P.O. Box 460  
Philipsburg, St. Martin  
Caribbean  
Tel (721) 554-7089  
E-mail: [Offshoreediting@gmail.com](mailto:Offshoreediting@gmail.com)

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# News Release

## St. Martin literature studied in Italy at University of Trieste

*Prof. Calderaro: "Caribbean Literature needs to help build a larger reading public at home"*

**GREAT BAY, St. Martin (March 11, 2014)**—This year the English Literature course at the University of Trieste, Italy, is focusing on "Caribbean Short Stories: Language, Politics, Family, Myths," said Dr. Michela A. Calderaro, professor of English at the Department of Humanities.

"In the last few years I have been focusing on Caribbean Literature, teaching prose and poetry; this year it was short stories, and I thought that a writer such as Lasana Sekou deserved to be introduced to Italian students," said Prof. Calderaro.

"Since I began the course talking about the Middle Passage, I thought it was fitting to first discuss 'A Salting' from *Brotherhood of The Spurs*. Water is always a fascinating subject, and we closed with 'New Year's Eve Birth' from *Love Songs Make You Cry*," said Prof. Calderaro. Both books of St. Martin short fictions are by Sekou. The first semester of the 2013-2014 academic year ran from September to December 2013.

Prof. Calderaro said in an interview last week that, "What the students noticed most was the way society was described, how 'social' life was impossible to be separated from 'private' life, and the importance, in the stories, of political themes."

"Further, the discussion of Caribbean political themes roused the students' curiosity to learn more about the current situation of other islands besides St. Martin. Students also enjoyed the richness of language and the use of figures of speech and metaphors," which Sekou is known for in his poetry, said Prof. Calderaro.

The professor recalled one of her students recently discussing his term paper with her. "He said that he was struck by Sekou's language, a language so powerful that it drew him into the story, making it easy to identify with the characters and understand their plight, though they seem so different from him and live far away, on an island on the other side of the world," said Dr. Calderaro.

The encounter of students with Caribbean Literature at the University of Trieste is probably right in line with the institution's high learning drive. The mid-size university is known for its intensive academics, high-level research activity and international connections, and has ranked as 'the best Italian university' by Times Higher Education World University Rankings (2010).

Calderaro is herself a critical scholar and has written extensive papers on English Literature, Caribbean Studies, Literature and Philosophy, and on writers such as Lord Byron and Lorna Goodison. "To me, the major challenge for Caribbean Literature today is twofold: on the one hand it needs to go beyond the borders of the Caribbean and be better known worldwide, without losing its local roots; on the other hand, it needs to help build a larger reading public at home."

University of Trieste and the University of the West Indies (Trinidad) are both teaching *Brotherhood of the Spurs* for the 2013-2014 academic year, said Jacqueline Sample, president of House of Nehesi (HNP), the book's publisher.

**Photo caption1:** Dr. Michela A. Calderaro, Professor of English, Dept. of Humanities, University of Trieste, Italy. (Photo courtesy M. Calderaro)