Comparative Education in the Caribbean
REF 820/HE 791 - 4 credit hours
Prof. Tom O’Brien – thomas.obrien@usm.edu or 601.266.6093

This foundations course, compares and contrasts the origins, philosophies and current trends in Jamaican and US education. The course begins with an examination of informal learning and education in both societies. It then moves into public and private formal education (schooling), from pre-school through the postsecondary system. Students will have opportunities to learn about past, current, and future goals of education and schooling in these two societies. The roles the government and the structure of the two systems will be compared. Additionally, economic, industrial, and community interests in relation to race, culture, class, gender will be studied through the lens of education. Students will have opportunities to visit the Ministry of Education, the University of the West Indies, speak with Jamaican professors, teachers, administrators, and students, and compare and contrast the challenges of providing modern education in two different contexts. The course is designed for graduate students of education with any specialty interest - adult and higher education, K-12 education, special/gifted education, and educational research. The course may also be relevant to any graduate student with a critical interest in education who comes from other fields - history, sociology, economic, gender/women/cultural studies, political science, etc. It is offered for graduate credit only.