HIST/MAST 2210  History of the Ocean
Professor Helen M. Rozwadowski
Spring 2015

Class hours: MW 8:00-9:15 a.m.
Location: Avery Point, ACD Room ___
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Catalog description:
Cultural, environmental and geopolitical history of the ocean from prehistory to the present. Examines the impact of migration, industrialization, modernization, and globalization on the relationships between people and oceans.

Informed by environmental history and cultural history, the course
• establishes human connections with the ocean from prehistory to the present;
• explores how industrialization and modernization dramatically expanded use of oceanic space and resources in step with globalization; and
• reflects on how knowledge and use of the sea has contributed to the mutual influence of people on oceans and oceans on people.

This course has three threads that are interwoven through the topics covered throughout the semester.

The first thread, “A Long Story,” establishes that the story of the human relationship with the sea dates back to evolutionary time, reflecting recent scholarship that finds evidence of human reliance on the sea for food and engagement in long-distance voyaging for global migrations since the emergence of Homo sapiens. Since prehistoric times, people have used the ocean not only for transportation and food resources, but also as a source of myth and culture. Use of the sea promoted relationships between groups of people along coasts and across seas, establishing patterns of movement and goods that affected not only coastal people but those far inland as well. People reshaped marine environments since they began using resources from the seas. Experience of voyaging has inspired art and literature, but even inland peoples have felt connections to the sea. The take-home message of this thread is that people have been deeply involved, both physically and culturally, with oceans for millennia.

The second thread, “Tightening the Connection,” chronicles the deepening interrelationship between people and oceans over time, exploring the changes wrought by initially by trade, and later on a dramatically greater scale by industrialization and modernization, which have increased the pace and intensity of the human relationship with the ocean. This segment includes study of fisheries and an understanding of how the oceans were known through work and, later, also through play. Industrial-scale use of natural resources had similar impacts on sea as on land, but these impacts were generally not as easily recognized or acknowledged. The economic and political importance of ocean resources and other uses of the oceans rendered the sea an important site for global geopolitics. The take-home message of this thread is that
connections between people and oceans have tightened over time and extend to every aspect of our lives and our globe.

The third thread, “Knowing the Ocean,” analyzes how people have gained knowledge about the ocean and employed technology to mediate their use of the ocean and its resources. Knowledge has helped people exploit marine resources, control ocean space, extend imperial or national power, and attempt to refashion the sea into a more tractable place. That knowledge has derived not only from modern science but equally from other kinds of experience with the sea, such as prehistoric navigation techniques, knowledge of offshore banks gained by fishermen, or explorations of recreational scuba divers. The Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment, among their myriad effects, forged a link between the ocean and modern science that has not been adequately recognized by historians. The first government-funded science in western nations centered around navigation and charting. Since the late 18th century, science has continued to be a powerful agent in mediating the human relationship with the ocean. At the same time, knowledge of the sea also continues to be expressed and explored through the arts, through imagination and, importantly, through desire.

Academic Integrity
As a student at the University of Connecticut, you act in accordance with its guidelines for academic integrity, available at http://www.dosa.uconn.edu under the Office of Student Services and Advocacy. Cheating, plagiarizing, or otherwise taking credit for work not your own constitutes academic misconduct, and in this class I will prosecute it with consequences that include, but are not limited to, a zero on the assignment or failure in the course. If you have any questions about whether a particular behavior constitutes cheating, please come see me or one of the tutoring or administrative staff in the Academic Center.

Requirements

30% Class Participation, including Discussion, Quizzes, In-class work, and occasional one-page written responses
20% Midterm Exam
30% Essays, 4 -- based on course readings (lowest grade dropped but you must do all 4)
20% Final Exam

Grade conversions are as follows:
A  93-100
A-  90-92
B+  87-89
B   83-86
B-  80-82
C+  77-79
C   73-76
C-  70-72
D+  67-69
D   63-66
D-  60-62
F   59 and lower
Students with disabilities:
If you have a documented disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact your instructor and Student Services Director, Trudy Flanery, as soon as possible.

For help with technical and computer-related issues, including HuskyCT, see:
http://averypoint.uconn.edu/Learning_Commons.htm

Week 1
Introduction/Overview
Activity: Brainstorming session to explore the many uses that people make of the sea, including its surface and depths, its living and non-living resources.

Natural history of the ocean
Reading:

Week 2
Prehistoric voyaging: Island of Flores (Indonesia) case study
Reading:

Prehistoric use of marine resources: Mossel Bay, South Africa, and Channel Islands, California case studies
Reading:

Week 3
Kelp Highway
Reading:

*Early Human Impacts on Oceans?*
Reading:

**Week 4**
*Prehistoric Navigation and Oceania*
Reading:

*Different Seas*
Reading:

**Week 5**
*European Discovery of the Sea in the 15th and 16th centuries*
Reading:

*Midterm Exam*

**Week 6**
*Imperialism, Freedom of the Seas, and Knowledge of the Ocean*
Reading:


Pacific World
Reading:


Week 7
Submarine Telegraphy and the Discovery of the Depths
Reading:


Excerpts from John Gordon Steele, A Thread Across the Ocean: The Heroic Story of the Transatlantic Cable (Walter & Company, 2002).

Industrialization of Fisheries
Reading:


Week 8
Monsters in the Sea
Reading:


Excerpts from Wayne Soini, Gloucester’s Sea Serpent (Charleston & London: The History Press, 2010).
Domesticating the Ocean
Reading:

Week 9
20th century Whaling and Guano Industries
Reading:

World War and Oceans
Reading:

Week 10
Cold War Ocean
Reading:

Role of Scientists and Consumers in Fisheries
Reading:
Carmel Finley, chapter 5, “Shaping Fisheries Science,” in All the Fish in the Sea: Maximum Sustainable Yield and the Failure of Fisheries Management (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 82-99.

Week 11
Undersea Frontier
Reading:

Offshore Oil and Inner Space

Week 12
Whales and the Environmental Movement

Women and (Science of) the Sea
Reading:

**Week 13**  
*Shifting Baselines*  
Reading:  

*The Whole Ocean and All Its Parts*  
Reading:  

**Week 14**  
*Alien Ocean*  
Reading:  

*The Sea Without Us?*  
Reading:  

**Final Exam** - TBD