HH 3018
The Environmental History of Oceans

Instructor: Associate Professor Miles Powell
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Office: HSS-05-24
Office hours: By appointment

Pre-requisites: None
Academic Units: 3
Meeting time: Tuesdays, 9:30-12:30
Venue: LHS-TR+43

Course Aims

Aimed at history students but also suitable for anyone with an interest in the oceans’ past, this elective course will provide you with a general overview of the key themes and debates within the field of marine environmental history. Upon completion of this course, you will have a better understanding of how humans have shaped ocean environments historically, and how oceans have shaped the course of human history. You will additionally be stronger writers and thinkers.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Investigate and explain** how humans have shaped ocean environments historically, and how these modified environments have shaped the course of human history.
2. **Compare and contrast** the major approaches and theories within marine environmental history.
3. **Analyze and interpret** primary and secondary historical sources relating to marine environmental history.
4. **Formulate** compelling historical arguments about marine environmental history that effectively deploy primary and secondary source evidence.
5. **Present** historical ideas and evidence concerning marine environmental history to a specialist audience

Course Content
In this class, students will explore the innovative field of marine environmental history. They will discover that, although oceans may appear pristine and timeless, human societies have been modifying marine environments for centuries. In turn, these modified environments have shaped the course of human history. Students will examine how numerous societies around the world and through time have developed relationships with the sea, some of them sustainable and some of them not. Students will also learn about the complex systems of international cooperation that have emerged to facilitate the conservation of mobile marine species. Finally, students will learn how perceptions of oceans and oceanic creatures have changed in response to cultural and scientific developments.

Required Books:

This course has no textbook. Course readings will be available in PDF form on the iNTULearn course site.

Student Assessment:

In-Class Participation: 10%
In-Class Quizzes: 20%
Found Object Presentation: 10%
Found Object Essay: 20%
Term Paper: 40%

In-Class Participation:

Students must attend every tutorial prepared to discuss that week’s assigned readings. Outstanding participants will demonstrate a thorough and critical understanding of the assigned material by offering perceptive comments and asking informed questions.

In-Class Quizzes:

Students can expect five brief in-class “pop quizzes” ensuring that they have arrived to seminar with all of the assigned readings completed. I will grade each quiz out of five, and throw out each student’s lowest mark. This course will not have a final exam, because the emphasis will be on engaging with course material and developing critical thinking, rather than rote memorization.

Found Object Presentation:

Each student will sign up to present a “found object” on a week of their choosing. Students may select anything they like, from a sushi roll to a tourism brochure, but they
must connect that object to the week’s themes in a meaningful and insightful manner. They will present their object for ten minutes, and then field questions from their peers (detailed assignment instructions found below, after course outline).

**Found Object Essay:**

The week following their found object presentation, students will submit a brief (800-1,000 word) essay that builds on their presentation by addressing their peers’ concerns. Due to the page restriction, I advise you to limit discussion to a single course theme (detailed assignment instructions found below, after course outline).

**Term Paper:**

At the last seminar, students will submit an 1800 to 2400 page essay on a marine environmental history topic of their choosing. If you are having difficulty selecting a topic, I will assist you. Your paper can address any period and region, but be sure to choose a subject for which you will be able to locate primary sources. Your paper must draw on properly-cited primary and secondary sources to make a forceful argument (detailed assignment instructions found below, after course outline).

**Course Outline and Readings:**

Week I (14/01): Introduction

No Readings:

***Writing workshop in seminar***

Week II (21/01): Indigenous Fisheries

Readings:


Week III (28/01): The Unnatural Sea

Readings:


Week IV (04/02): Declension Narratives

Readings:


Week V (11/02): Marine Space

Readings:


Lissa Wadewitz, “Pirates of the Salish Sea: Labor, Mobility, and Environment in the Transnational West” PHR 75(4) (Nov 2006): 587-627.

Week VI (18/02): Littoral Histories

Readings:


Week VII (25/02): Competition


***Recess Week***

Week VIII (10/03): International Cooperation

Readings:


Week IX (17/03): Management Regimes

Readings:


Week X (24/03): Marine Science

Readings:


Week XI (31/03): Recreation and Tourism

Readings:


Week XII (07/04): The Blue Revolution

Readings:


Week XIII (14/04): Wrap Up

Readings:

No assigned readings.

***Term Paper Due***

**Assignment Instructions**

**Found Object Presentation:**

Your presentation should last around ten minutes (I'll allow up to fifteen minutes, if you like), and then you will field questions from the class for another ten minutes.
Your found object should ideally be a real object that you've encountered in your day-to-day lives, that is to say not something you just found with a quick search on Google images. If the object is too large to bring to class, you may of course bring a photo.

In your presentation, you must connect your found object to your chosen week's theme. For instance, Week IV's presenters will need to relate their object to the theme of declension narratives. To demonstrate a strong understanding of your chosen theme, you should include insights from the assigned readings in your presentation.

You do not need to submit any write up of your presentation.

I will assess you on the following basis (out of a total 10 pts):

Strength of analysis (4 pts): Does the student show a strong understanding of their chosen week's theme, as presented in the assigned readings? Does the student link their found object to this theme in an insightful way that promotes new ways of thinking about this subject?
Class engagement (4 pts): Does the student present their found object in a manner that will encourage class discussion (in the form of questions and comments) of the object, and its relationship to the week's theme? Does the student thoughtfully respond to queries and comments from the class?
Presentation basics (2 pts): Does the student clearly present their found object and its relationship to the relevant course theme, using visual aids if necessary? Does the student adhere to time requirements?

Found Object Essay:

In these essays, you will explain how your found object helps us to better understand the course theme from your selected week. This is in effect your thesis (i.e. argument). To support this claim, you should draw on the assigned readings from your week. You may do additional research, but this is not required. You should also incorporate insights that arose during the class discussion that followed your presentation.

Your assignment should be 800 to 1,000 words, including footnote citations. A bibliography is not necessary.

I will grade your paper on the following criteria (out of a total 20 points):
Argument and Analysis (10 pts): Has the student clearly demonstrated how their found object helps us to better understand their week's theme? Have they presented this point as a clear and forceful argument supported by sophisticated and intelligent analysis that incorporates key concepts from the readings? Have they further refined their analysis by drawing on insights from their peers?
Writing (6 pts): Is the prose clear and concise? Is the tone appropriately academic (no contractions or casual slang)? Are all words spelled correctly (and appropriately used)? Does the paper use correct grammar and punctuation? Does it have a logical organization with an introduction, and complete paragraphs that include topic sentences? Does the paper maintain the correct verb tense?

Citation (4 pts): Has the student used quotation marks to clearly identify direct quotes? Have they adequately paraphrased other passages that draw on other people’s ideas? In both instances, have they provided correct footnote citation for this material?

**Term Paper:**

In this research essay, you must make an argument about a marine environmental history topic of your choosing. Your paper should be 1800 - 2400 words long. It should draw on primary and secondary sources (the assigned readings will be a good start), and these should be appropriately cited using footnotes (a bibliography is not necessary).

I will grade you according to the following criteria (each weighed equally):

**Argument:** Has the student presented a clear and forceful central argument? Has s/he supported this argument with intelligent, sophisticated analysis? Has the student considered opposing viewpoints (and explained why his or her argument remains compelling?) Does the essay remain argument-driven, instead of becoming overly descriptive or meandering?

**Evidence:** Has the student made good use of primary and secondary sources? Has s/he incorporated short quotes from these sources where appropriate? Has s/he provided adequate citations?

**Writing:** Is the paper written in proper academic English with minimal typographic or grammatical errors? Is the essay well organized with an introduction, body, and conclusion? Does each paragraph include a topic sentence and a transition sentence?

**Course Policies and Student Responsibilities**

Your Responsibilities: You are responsible for making yourself aware of all the information in this document. Familiarize yourself with due dates, times, and so on. It is also your responsibility to come to class prepared to participate. This means having completed the reading assignments, and having something to take notes with (either pen and paper or a laptop computer or tablet).

Medical Certificates: Medical Certificates (MCs) are not “get out of jail free” cards. The presentation of a medical certificate does not automatically excuse an absence or late work.
Depending on the circumstances, I will usually ask for you to complete additional work in order to “make up” for missed classes.

Late Policy: I will penalize late work at the rate of 10% of the maximum grade per 24-hour period overdue. For example, work that is 2 hours late will receive a 10% penalty, work that is 26 hours late a 20% penalty, work that is 55 hours late a 30% penalty, and so on. I may grant extensions in some special cases. However, I will not grant extensions within one week of the deadline (in other words, if you think you need an extension, ask early).

Plagiarism and Cheating: Universities consider using the works of others without properly acknowledging that use (that is, copying) to be “cheating.” In this course, such behavior will result in a score of zero on the assignment in question. In accordance with school policy, I will also report especially egregious cases to the university to be placed on record in your academic file. Learn how to cite the work of others properly. Do not ever copy. If in doubt, ask.

**Academic Integrity**

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU’s shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the academic integrity website for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.