

# HH 3018

## The Environmental History of Oceans

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

Pre-requisites: None  
Academic Units: 3  
Meeting time: Thursdays, 9:30-12:30  
Venue: LHS-TR+4I

### 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 responding to a prompt of their choosing. Students will have the choice of: 1) comparing two historical societies' relationships to the sea and assessing which was more sustainable; 2) describing how attitudes towards oceans have changed in response to cultural and scientific developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; 3) describing the most effective historical strategies for conserving marine species that transcend national borders; 4) developing their own research project, which they must OK with me by week 4 (detailed assignment instructions found below, after course outline).

### **Course Outline and Readings:**

#### Week I (17/01): Introduction

No Readings:

\*\*\*Writing workshop in seminar\*\*\*

#### Week II (24/01): Indigenous Fisheries

Readings:

Fikret Berkes, "Fishery Resource Use in a Subarctic Indian Community," *Human Ecology* 4(4) (1977): 289-307.

Miles Powell, "Divided Waters: Heiltsuk Spatial Management of Herring Fisheries and the Politics of Native Sovereignty" *Western Historical Quarterly* 43(4) (Winter 2012): 463-484.

Joseph E. Taylor III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), "1: Dependence, Respect, and Moderation."

#### Week III (31/01): The Unnatural Sea

Readings:

April M. H. Blakeslee, "Invasive or Native? The Case History of the Common Periwinkle Snail (*Littorina littorea*) in Northeast North America" in David J. Starkey, Poul Holm, Michaela Barnard, eds., *Oceans Past: Management Insights from the History of Marine Animal Populations* (London: Earthscan, 2008): 7-24.

W. Jeffrey Bolster, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), "Prologue."

Callum Roberts, *The Unnatural History of the Sea* (Washington: Shearwater Books, 2007), "1: The End of Innocence"; "2: The Origin of Intensive Fishing."

#### Week IV (07/02): Declension Narratives

##### Readings:

Dean Bavington, *Managed Annihilation: An Unnatural History of the Atlantic Cod Collapse* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); "Preface"; "2: The Birth and Development of Cod Fisheries Management"; "3: Success through Failure: The Expansion of Management after the Moratorium."

W. Jeffrey Bolster, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), "5: Waves in a Troubled Sea."

John G. Butcher, *The Closing of the Frontier: A History of the Marine Fisheries of Southeast Asia, c. 1850-2000* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), "Introduction"; "4: Catching More with the Same Technology"

#### Week V (14/02): Marine Space

##### Readings:

Miles Powell, "A World of Fins and Fences: Australian and South African Shark Management in the Transoceanic South" *International Review of Environmental History* 3(2) (2017)

Josh Reid, *The Sea is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), "1: The Power of Wickaninnish Ends Here"; "2: Inveterate Wars and Petty Pilferings."

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

#### Week VI (21/02): Littoral Histories

##### Readings:

Michael Adas, "Continuity and Transformation: Colonial Rice Frontiers and Their Environmental Impact on the Great River Deltas of Mainland Southeast Asia" in *The Environment and World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): 191-208.

Christopher L. Pastore, *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2014), “Prologue: From Sweetwater to Seawater”; “5: Improving Coastal Space during a Century of War”; “6: Carving the Industrial Coastline.”

#### Week VII (28/02): Competition

John G. Butcher, *The Closing of the Frontier: A History of the Marine Fisheries of Southeast Asia, c. 1850-2000* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), “6: The Great Fish Race.”

Mathew Evenden, *Fish versus Power: An Environmental History of the Fraser River* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), “6: Fish versus Power.”

Loren McClenachan, “Social Conflict, Over-Fishing and Disease in the Florida Sponge Fishery, 1849-1939” in David J. Starkey, Poul Holm, Michaela Barnard, eds., *Oceans Past: Management Insights from the History of Marine Animal Populations* (London: Earthscan, 2008): 25-46.

#### \*\*\*Recess Week\*\*\*

#### Week VIII (14/03): International Cooperation

##### Readings:

Kurkpatrick Dorsey, *The Dawn of Conservation Diplomacy: U.S.-Canadian Wildlife Protection Treaties in the Progressive Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), “Introduction”; “4: Conflict in the Bearing Sea”; “5: Conciliation and Conservation.”

Kurkpatrick Dorsey, *Whales and Nations: Environmental Diplomacy on the High Seas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), “Introduction”; “4: Cheaters Sometimes Prosper”; “6: Save the Whales for Later.”

#### Week IX (21/03): Management Regimes

##### Readings:

Carmel Finley, “II: A Political History of Maximum Sustained Yield, 1945-1955” in David J. Starkey, Poul Holm, Michaela Barnard, eds., *Oceans Past: Management Insights from the History of Marine Animal Populations* (London: Earthscan, 2008): 189-203.

Arthur F. McEvoy, "Toward an Interactive Theory of Nature and Culture: Ecology, Production, and Cognition in the California Fishing Industry" in Ed. Donald Worster, *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

#### Week X (28/03): Marine Science

##### Readings:

Stephen Bocking, *Ecologists and Environmental Politics: A History of Contemporary Ecology* (London: Yale University Press, 1997), "7: Ecology and the Ontario Fisheries."

Rozwadowski, Helen M. *The Sea Knows No Boundaries: A Century of Marine Science Under the ICES* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), "Introduction"; "1: Forging International Science of the Sea"; "6: Which Master to Serve?"

Joseph E. Taylor, "El Niño and Vanishing Salmon: Culture, Nature, History, and the Politics of Blame," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1998), 437-57.

#### Week XI (04/04): Recreation and Tourism

##### Readings:

Susan G. Davis, *Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), "Introduction"; "1: Another World"; "2: The Park and the City."

Loren McClenachan, "Recreation and the 'Right to Fish' Movement: Anglers and Ecological Degradation in the Florida Keys" *Environmental History* 18(1) (1 January 2013): 76-87.

#### Week XII (11/04): The Blue Revolution

##### Readings:

Stephen Bocking, "Science, Salmon, and Sea Lice: Constructing Practice and Place in an Environmental Controversy" *Journal of the History of Biology* 45(4) (Winter 2012): 681-716.

Darin Kinsey, "'Seeding the Water as the Earth': The Epicenter and Peripheries of a Western Aquacultural Revolution" *Environmental History* 11(3) (Jul., 2006): 527-566.

John Soluri, "Something Fishy: Chile's Blue Revolution, Commodity Diseases, and the Problem of Sustainability" *Latin American Research Review* 46 (2011): 55-81.

Week XIII (18/04): 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 that addresses one of the provided prompts. You may choose an alternative topic, but you must OK it with me first, and your paper will still require a central argument (a thesis). 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

### (1) General

Students are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities, attend all seminar classes punctually and take all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates. Students are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments and course related announcements for seminar sessions they have missed. Students are expected to participate in all seminar discussions and activities.

### (2) Absenteeism

Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies.

If you must miss a lecture, you should inform the course instructor via email prior to the start of the class.

### 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. **Serious cases of any of the above will be reported to administrators and result in an automatic score of zero for the assignment in question.** 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.