

Marine Environmental History

SEA 3023 (4 credit hours)

~68 contact hours

Course Overview

Marine Environmental History (MEH) is a four-credit course that begins in Woods Hole and continues at fieldwork sites throughout the Caribbean. We will begin by exploring the links between indigenous and colonial historical trends that span the Atlantic. Our work will continue with consideration of the extractive nature of colonial endeavors and the human responses to the environmental impacts of increasingly limited access to resources. In addition, we will trace the development of Environmental History, Environmental Science, and the rise of Environmental Justice movements in their marine contexts.

Course Instructor

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 Environmental History
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Contact me anytime to discuss your
 progress in class, ways to improve
 learning, or other topics!

Course Footprint

Component	Duration	Location
Shore	Jan 5 – Feb 18	Woods Hole, MA
Sea	Feb 18 – Mar 29	<i>SSV Corwith Cramer</i> with port stops in St. Croix, Dominica, and Anguilla

Land Acknowledgement

We see that we in Falmouth are on the traditional homeland of the Wampanoag people who live and continue to thrive here after thousands of years of residence. We also acknowledge the painful history of Colonization that has enacted forced assimilation, slavery, genocide, and efforts by many to eliminate the Wampanoag people along with their culture. We respect and honor the indigenous people still connected to this land and are willing to learn from the Wampanoag way of life. We recognize that these words are not enough and need to be followed with action steps. Whose Land Are You On? Check out [Native Land](#).

Course Philosophy and Approach

Over the six-week Woods Hole component, this course introduces and calls for the analysis of secondary and some primary readings that range from accounts of early interactions in the Americas to the forced and free circulation of people and ideas throughout the Atlantic. From revolutions on the mainland and islands of the Americas, particularly the one in Haiti, to the development of modern high-capacity cargo and passenger ships, class discussions will center on

people from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. As these people engaged in activities connected to migration, trade, and navigation, they helped shape the history of the Eastern Seaboard of the United States, the Caribbean islands and, along the way, the broader Atlantic and global developments from the 15th century to today. Much of that history involved enormous amounts of exploitation of human and material resources. In this class, we will highlight and discuss how this exploitation shaped, and continues to shape, calls for environmental and social justice in the Atlantic World.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the complex interplay of the environment, societal developments, and historical events in New England and the Caribbean over time.
2. Trace the impact and influences of maritime culture and policy through literature, oral traditions, art, artifacts, legal documents, and the physical environment.
3. Apply interdisciplinary techniques and approaches to environmental studies.
4. Develop and support a thesis based on work with primary and secondary materials.
5. Contribute to a collaborative research and writing environment: present ideas for group feedback and offer and exchange constructive critiques of written work in a peer revision process.
6. Interrogate and evaluate arguments and conclusions developed during Woods Hole research through in situ learning with local experts throughout island visits.
7. Learn or hone skills in critical reading and writing of history.

Instructor's Responsibilities: I would like to express, first and foremost, my longstanding commitment to supporting belonging, accessibility, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (BAJEDI) through all my teaching and program partnerships. In keeping with this commitment, I consider it my responsibility to create and maintain a learning environment that is equitable, accessible, inclusive, respectful, and comfortable for all students. I encourage questions and comments at any time during class, and I will be available either in person or via e-mail outside of class and will respond promptly to any of your questions or concerns. In addition, all graded assignments will be clearly explained, assessed objectively, and returned promptly so that every student has a clear sense of their progress in the class.

Students' Responsibilities: First, in a class devoted to extensive discussion, you must respect your classmates' interpretations of course readings and materials as well as their right to present and support those interpretations. Debates and disagreements are expected, but they must be respectful, and any opinions expressed must be supported by evidence.

Second, you must attend all sessions and complete all assignments. If circumstances outside of your control, such as medical emergencies, make it impossible for you to attend class or complete an assignment(s), you must contact me ahead of time, if practicable, or as soon as possible afterwards. We will work together on an equitable plan for making up the work or participation.

Succeeding in this course: In addition to the responsibilities for students listed above, achieving success in this course is contingent upon your willingness to actively participate in class, and engage with

readings and other course materials. By this, I mean you need to take notes, both in class and while reading, ask questions that you may have from readings or lectures, and be willing to periodically interject with your own views and interpretations in class discussion sessions. If this last expectation is a challenge for you, please meet with me outside of class to discuss other options for active participation.

If there is something about the classroom environment, at any point throughout the semester, that hinders your participation, please come see me or any member of the SEA Faculty for assistance.

How Learning will be Assessed:

Assignment	Goal of Assignment	Course Goal	% of Grade
Shore Component/Full Semester			
Active Participation	Demonstrate engagement with course themes and readings (see “Succeeding in this Course” above).	1, 2 5-7	15
Journaling	Synthesize and make connections between class themes and readings.	1-7	10
Essay	Develop and support a thesis. Make use of historical sources drawn from class and independent research.	1-4, 7	25
Group Project and Presentation	Identify and examine environmental history issues and connect them to modern efforts related to conservation and development.	1-4 5, 7	25
Sea Component			
Summary Presentation	Based on time in the Caribbean, re-examine and re-assess the impact of historical trends on modern environmental issues.	2, 5, 6	25

Assignments:

You will be required to write an argument-driven essay (7-10 pages), complete a group research project and presentation during the Woods Hole component, and make a final presentation summarizing your time in the Caribbean.

Journaling—Three reflective, one-page journal entries, focused on a class theme, are due at the end of each week of the program. A rubric will be provided.

Essay –Cultural Interactions of the Early Modern Atlantic: This essay of 7-10 double-spaced pages is due at the end of week 5. This is worth 25% of your overall grade. A rubric will be provided.

Group Project and Presentation – Environmental Issues in Coastal Communities: An annotated bibliography. A brief summary of the research process and findings and a presentation are due near the end of week 8. This is worth 25% of your overall grade. A rubric will be provided.

Summary Presentation – At the end of our time in the Caribbean. This is worth 25% of your overall grade. A rubric will be provided.

Expectations and Requirements:

Punctual **attendance** is **required** at every class meeting.

Active participation in class discussion is expected.

Late assignment submissions are not accepted without prior approval.

The policy on academic accuracy, listed below, will be strictly followed in this class.

The essay and other written and verbal work that you submit/present in this course must all be **your original work**. You must take care to distinguish your own ideas and knowledge from wording or substantive information that you derive from one or more of your sources. The term “sources” includes not only published primary and secondary material, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people, AI tools, and text that you consult or use from any site on the Internet.

The responsibility for learning the proper forms of citation lies with you. Quotations must be placed properly within quotation marks and must be cited fully. In addition, all paraphrased material must be acknowledged completely. Whenever ideas or facts are derived from your reading and research, the sources must be indicated. (choose and conform to a particular style of citation. Consult your home institution’s library or speak to me for guidance.)

Considerations for use of internet sources:

As you browse websites, assess their usefulness very critically. Who posted the information and why? Can you trust them to be correct? Authoritative? Unbiased? (It’s okay to use a biased source as long as you incorporate it knowingly and transparently into your own work.) Keep track of good sources that might be useful for subsequent assignments, and annotate in your bibliography any sites you use. Your annotation should include the name of the author or organization originating any material that you reference. If you can’t identify the source, don’t use it!

Course Calendar for Shore and Sea Components

The next two pages contain our proposed course calendar which is subject to change in response to our learning pace, class cancellations due to weather, etc. Any changes in the course calendar, including due dates for assignments, will be announced verbally in class, written on the whiteboard in the class, and posted on Blackbaud.

Required readings should be completed before class in order to get the most out of the class lectures, discussions, and activities.

SHORE COMPONENT IN WOODS HOLE					
Day	Date	Time	Topic	Required Readings	Assignment Due Dates
Weds	Jan 7	1330-1430	Intro to Marine Environmental History Class	MEH Syllabus	
Fri	Jan 9	0900-0950	Indigenous Atlantic	Brooks	Essay thesis and outline due by 2100 on Jan 16.
Mon	Jan 12	1030-1145	Indigenous Atlantic (Part 2)	Weaver	
Thu	Jan 15	1330-1600	Black Atlantic	Gilroy	
Fri	Jan 16	0900-0950	Project Discussion		
Mon	Jan 19	MLK Day – No Classes			Submit Reflective Journal entries for review and feedback by 1600 on Jan 22.
Thu	Jan 22	1330-1600	Black Atlantic (Part 2)	Scott, Dawson	
Fri	Jan 23	0900-0950	Seafaring and Identity	Norling	
Mon	Jan 26	1030-1145	Plantation Complex	Williams	Detailed essay outline and bibliography due by 2100 Jan 30.
Thu	Jan 29	0900-1015	Urban Crucibles	Rediker; Nash	
		1030-1145	Atlantic Reckonings		
Fri	Jan 30	0900-0950	Atlantic Reckonings (Part 2)	Landers	
Mon	Feb 2	1030-1145	American Imperialism	Primary Documents	Full essay draft due by 2100 on Feb 6.
Thu	Feb 5	0900-1015	Emancipation in the Caribbean	Williams	
Fri	Feb 6	0900-0950	Rise of Tourism	Kincaid	
Mon	Feb 9	1030-1145	CARICOM	Pamphlets	
Thu	Feb 12	1330-1600	Presentations		
Fri	Feb 13	0900-0950	Sea Component Discussion		Final Essay Due by 2100 on Feb 14

SEA COMPONENT ABOARD SSV CORWITH CRAMER

Date(s)	Assignment Due Dates
Feb. 18	Travel to St. Croix and board <i>Cramer</i> . Ship orientation begins.
Feb. 19 - 25	Meet local cultural and coral reef conservation practitioners in St. Croix.
Feb. 26 – Mar. 2	Watch-by-watch discussion sessions. Review of Reflective Journal entries (3 per week).
Mar. 3 – Mar. 12	Meet local cultural and coral reef conservation practitioners in Dominica.
Mar. 13 – Mar. 16	Watch-by-watch discussion sessions. Review of Reflective Journal entries (3 per week).
Mar. 16 – Mar. 22	Meet local cultural and coral reef conservation practitioners in Anguilla. Summary Presentations Completed.
Mar. 23 - 24	Watch-by-watch discussion sessions. Review of Reflective Journal entries (3 per week).

Readings and Course Material Selected from the Following:

Bolster, W. Jeffrey, *The Mortal Sea*, 2012.

Brooks, Lisa, *Our Beloved Kin*, 2019.

Chiang, Connie, *Shaping the Shoreline*, 2011.

Cumbler, John, *Cape Cod*, 2014.

Dawson, Kevin, *Undercurrents of Power*, 2018.

Demuth, Bathsheba, *The Floating Coast*, 2019.

Hippolyte, Kendel, *Wordplanting*, 2019.

Kincaid, Jamaica, *A Small Place*, 1988

Labaree, Benjamin, *America and the Sea*, 1998.

Landers, Jane, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 1998.

Morgan, Edmund, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 1975.

Mustakeem, Sowande', *Slavery at Sea*, 2016.

Nash, Gary, *The Urban Crucible*, 1979.

Norling, Lisa, *Captain Ahab Had a Wife*, 2000.

Palmie, Stephan and Francisco Scarano, *The Caribbean*, 2011.

Pastore, Christopher, *Between Land and Sea*, 2014.

Rediker, Marcus, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 1989.

Scott, Julius, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*, 2018.

Trotter, Joe, *The African American Experience*, 2000.

Walcott, Derek, "The Sea is History," 1978.

Weaver, Jace, *The Red Atlantic*, 2017.

Williams, Eric, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 1944; 1994.