



Marine Environmental History

CAS NS 323 (4 credits)

Course Catalog Description:

Employ methods and sources of historians and social scientists. Examine the role of human societies in coastal and open ocean environmental change. Issues include resource conservation, overfishing, pollution, environmental justice, invasive species, and climate change.

Instructor: SEA Faculty

Guest Lecturers and Caribbean Island Faculty

Location: SEA campus in Woods Hole, MA; fieldwork sites throughout the Caribbean.

Prerequisites: Admission to SEA Education Association. Sophomore standing or consent of instructor.

Course Philosophy and Approach:

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.

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.

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.

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](#).

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.

Please also see [SEA's statements prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion](#).

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 ever something about the classroom environment that hinders your participation, please come see me or any member of the SEA Faculty for assistance.

Course Calendar:

| Class Sessions and Topics | Readings/Assignments Due |
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| <i>Week 1 Peoples of the Atlantic</i> | |
| Session 1: Introduction | (1) In Class Readings |
| Session 2: Environmental Justice and Social Justice | (2) Weaver: <i>Introduction</i> ; Brooks: <i>Selections</i> |
| Session 3: New England and Caribbean Cultural Contexts | (3) Scott: <i>Selections</i> ; Gilroy: <i>Selections</i> ; Dawson: <i>Selections</i> |
| Session 4: Project Discussion | (4) None |
| <i>Week 2 Atlantic Economies</i> | |
| Session 1: Land and Labor Theft | (1) Williams: <i>Selections</i> |
| Session 2: WBNERR Field Trip | (2) Mashpee Wampanoag Documents |
| Session 3: Urban Crucibles | (3) Rediker: <i>Devil</i> , Intro; Nash: <i>Selections</i> |
| Session 4: Seafaring and Identity | (4) Norling: <i>Selections</i> |
| <i>Week 3 Struggles with Colonialism</i> | |

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| Session 1: Field Trip to New Bedford Whaling Museum | (1) Weaver: Selections |
| Session 2: Atlantic Reckonings | (2) Landers: Selections |
| Session 3: Atlantic Reckoning Part 2 | (3) Morgan: Selections |
| Session 4: American Imperialism | (4) TBD & Library of Congress Summary |
| Session 5: Migrations | (5) Palmie & Scarano: Selection |
| <i>Week 4 Global Economy</i> | |
| Session 1: Global Economy | (1) Palmie & Scarano: Selections |
| Session 2: Global Economy Part 2 | (2) Labaree: Selection |
| Session 3: Civil Rights and the Atlantic | (3) Troper: Selections |
| Session 4: Civil Rights and the Atlantic Part 2 | (4) Troper: Selections |
| <i>Week 5 Blue Humanities and Environmental History of the Sea</i> | |
| Session 1: Blue Humanities and Marine Environmental History | (1) Walcott: Selections; Demuth: Selections; Pastore: Selections; Bolster: Selection |
| Session 2: Climate Resiliency and Communicating Climate Crisis | (2) Demuth: Selections; |
| <i>Week 6 Presentations and Woods Hole Wrap Up</i> | |
| Session 1: Politics and Atlantic Worlds | (1) "Lobster Trap"; "200 Years of Forgetting..." (2) None |
| Session 2: Presentations | (3) None |
| Session 3: Presentations | (4) None |
| Session 4: Summary and Sea Component Discussion | |

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| <i>Week 7 Caribbean Field Work: St. Croix</i> | |
| Session 1: Introduction by Local Experts | (1) TBD |
| Session 2: Field Experience | (2) TBD |
| Session 3: Field Experience | (3) TBD |

| Week 8 Caribbean Field Work: St. Croix and Anguilla | |
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| Session 1: Introduction by Local Experts | (1) TBD |
| Session 2: Field Experience | (2) TBD |
| Session 3: Field Experience | (3) TBD |

| Week 9 Caribbean Field Work: Anguilla and Dominica | |
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| Session 1: Introduction by Local Experts | (1) TBD |
| Session 2: Field Experience | (2) TBD |
| Session 3: Field Experience | (3) TBD |

| Week 10 Caribbean Field Work: Dominica | |
|---|---------|
| Session 1: Introduction by Local Experts | (1) TBD |
| Session 2: Field Experience | (2) TBD |
| Session 3: Field Experience | (3) TBD |

| Week 11 Caribbean Field Work: Dominica and Barbados | |
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| Session 1: Introduction by Local Experts | (1) TBD |
| Session 2: Field Experience | (2) TBD |
| Session 3: Field Experience | (3) TBD |

| Week 12 Caribbean Field Work: Barbados | |
|---|---------|
| Session 1: Introduction by Local Experts | (1) TBD |
| Session 2: Field Experience | (2) TBD |
| Session 3: Field Experience | (3) TBD |

Evaluation:

- Class Participation/Journaling 25%
- Week 6 Essay 25%
- Annotated Bibliography and Presentation 25%
- Week 12 Summary Presentation 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.

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 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, quoted below, will be strictly followed in this class.

The paper and other written and verbal work that you submit 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 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 cite. Your annotation should include the name of the author or organization originizing any material that you reference. If you can’t identify the source, don’t use it!

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, *Wordplanning*, 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.

Scofield, 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.