Introduction: How can something that seems as infinite and timeless as the ocean have a history? Over the quarter, we will explore the different ways that historians and other researchers have attempted to answer that question. Marine environmental history is a new interdisciplinary field that explores the relationships between people and the oceans over time. One of the field’s central arguments is that the oceans—who we once considered unknowable and unchanging—have histories as complicated and rich as the histories of terrestrial places. The oceans cover 71 percent of the Earth’s surface and play a fundamental role in our lives in terms of ecology, economics, culture, law, and social relations. It is time that we begin to untangle these histories.

ES 108O has three themes:

1) what counts as knowing the oceans has deep disciplinary roots—in history, science, culture, and law—that in turn shape the kinds of stories that people tell about the oceans’ past, present, and future;
2) the boundaries that we draw between work and play in the oceans are also historical and cultural constructs;
3) and, finally, issues of power are deeply intertwined with how some people speak for their particular visions of the oceans and what constitutes appropriate activity there.

To make these themes as concrete as possible, we will employ a variety of learning methods. We will analyze the past using a historian’s skill set: gather evidence, look for patterns or discontinuities, develop explanations about context, causes, and consequences, write and revise our ideas, engage others, refine our arguments—although not necessarily in that order. These steps frequently overlap as we will learn over the quarter. One of this course’s main goals is for you to develop and practice these skills by participating in class and completing the required readings and assignments. At the end of the course, you should walk out of the classroom ready to explain how the oceans have histories and how those histories might help us respond to contemporary problems with a historian’s insights into the past.

Course goals include:

1) recognize the range of disciplinary methods and genres of evidence that will help us tell compelling stories about the oceans;
2) develop a broad understanding of the dynamics between people and the oceans over time;
3) practice the analytical and narrative skills of a historian to tell meaningful stories about the oceans’ past, present, and future.

Readings: You should complete all of the assigned readings before each class meeting. Please bring your copy of that day’s reading and/or notes to class, so that we can discuss the text together. I have limited the reading assignments to three books, selected articles, and web pages available on GauchoSpace in an effort to reduce costs for students. The first half of the course is more reading intensive. In the second half, you will have more time to focus on your final project. Please refer to the course schedule below for the assigned readings. The following books are on reserve in the ES Library.

Callum Roberts, The Ocean of Life: The Fate of Man and the Sea
Matthew Morse Booker, Down By The Bay: San Francisco’s History Between the Tides
Connie Chiang, Shaping the Shoreline: Fisheries and Tourism on the Monterey Coast
Assignments and Grades

Grade Breakdown

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Review Essay 1</td>
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<td>Review Essay 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project - Proposal</td>
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<td>Final Project - Primary Source Reflection Essay</td>
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<td>Final Project - Response Essay</td>
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***For every 24 hours that any assignment is late, the grade will drop by one letter. That means, for example, an A paper turned in 25 hours late will become a C paper.***

Participation: The success of this course depends on your good-faith participation. This means coming to every class prepared to contribute. Most classes will have a mixture of short lectures, discussions, informal in-class writings, and other exercises, so there will be a number of different ways for you to participate. Participation can mean something as simple as asking a question in person or over email or posting a relevant article on the course Gauchospace page! Almost everyday I will ask for short, informal written responses about that day’s readings in order to encourage you to keep up with the readings and to evaluate how well you understand the course’s content and themes. If you need to miss a class for a personal, medical, or religious reason, you must notify me in advance. Please check your email regularly. Please do not use your electronic devices during class for any reason except for note-taking. If your head is buried in a laptop when someone is talking and you are not looking up or taking any notes, I will assume that you are not paying attention. Your participation grade for that day will reflect this behavior.

Review Essay 1 and 2:
You will write two review essays (6 pages, proofread, with page numbers, 12-point font, double-spaced, with polished prose) based on two out of the three assigned books: The Ocean of Life, Down By The Bay, or Shaping the Shoreline. You can write in the style of a letter to the author, a creative non-fiction essay, or a formal review. You can use first person pronouns like “I” or “We,” but your essay must be well-written, proofread, and must demonstrate your critical response to the book’s author. Your review essay will have three parts: a personal reflection, an evaluation, and a source reflection. Each part will be about two pages.

First, you will describe how the book engaged you on a personal level. Tell the author about one experience you had with a similar research topic, issue, theme, group of people, or place analyzed in the book. Use your imagination to reflect on something concrete in the real world. Be specific and descriptive. Give the author a sense of what it felt like for you to live through that experience. Remember to narrative the beginning, middle, and end of the experience. Think about individuals, cultural traditions, communities, and the state.

Second, you will tell her how well she made her argument about the history of the oceans. In other words, you will review the book. A well-written review is not the same thing as a book summary. A good review not only summarizes what the author wrote, but a good review evaluates how well the author accomplished her goals AND explains whether the book matters in some kind of larger sense. Name two things that the author does well and two things that she might have done differently. What did she do less well and how might she have done those things differently? Here is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your skills in constructive feedback, because it is not only about what you say, but how you say it.

Third, you will address specifically her use of sources. Choose ONE of the sources listed in the footnotes or bibliography, read that source carefully, and evaluate how well (or not) the author used that source to make her larger argument. Describe the source itself and reflect on how the author summarized the source. How does this source fit into the range of sources that the author uses for her evidence? How does she move between synthesizing sources and reflecting on implications? We will discuss finding and evaluating sources in greater detail. You can use whatever citation style you prefer as long as you are consistent throughout your essay. Don’t forget to include an introduction and conclusion that bring all three parts together.
Final Project:
You will create one of the following final projects: 1) a written essay (9-10 pages, double-spaced, paginated, with polished prose); 2) a web-based exhibition (5 “primary-source objects” with introduction and conclusion pages); 3) a video essay (10-12 minutes); 4) a class presentation (25 minutes). I am open to other kinds of possible “products” for your final project, but you need my permission before you start. Think about what kinds of communication skills that you want to practice and why. In the pasts, students have created projects about the Great Oxygenation Event, surfing in IV, the 1900 Galveston hurricane, oil extraction along the California coast, piracy off the Somali coast, Sea World, ocean acidification, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch App.

If one of the major points of the course is the contention that oceans have histories even if those histories may be difficult to recognize at first glance, your final project should help make some part of that history visible to someone who did not take this course. Another important point is that our “sources” and disciplinary conventions shape the kinds of analysis and narratives we create. Your final project must deal with something historical about the oceans even if your approach is interdisciplinary. Historians use what are called primary sources. A primary source is any kind of artifact (a newspaper advertisement, a map, a letter, a text of a speech, a painting, a dataset, etc.) produced at the time that tells us something about what life was like and how people understood their world.

To that end, your final project must: address a historical question and tell a story that explains some change over time; engage with one of the course’s questions, themes, or topics; use at least three primary sources and at least five secondary sources from course readings or other readings. These sources need to “speak to each other” and should NOT feel like a random assembly of stuff. Think about how to tell an audience about what you have learned and its implications for the wider world. Think about commonalities and juxtapositions. Think about what makes an analysis convincing. Your style can be personal or formal. Materials from GauchoSpace, course books, articles, films, student comments, or lectures are fair game as secondary sources long as they are cited properly. But you are required to go on the hunt for at least one unexpected or hard-to-find primary source. This source should be older than you are. I will post a grading rubric to GauchoSpace and the final project will receive a letter grade.

Proposal: You will write a 2 page proposal that outlines the topic or question of your final project, the format—paper, web site, video, etc.—you want to use, and at least two sources that you are considering. You will also need to check out a physical book from Davidson library on your topic, read the introduction, conclusion, and table of contents of that book, and bring the physical book to Workshop 1. No e-books allowed. Your proposal is not written in stone, but I will give you feedback and suggestions that you should use for your final project. The proposal will receive either 0, 1, 2, or 3 points.

Primary Source Reflection Essay: Each student will find one primary source online or from one of the UCSB libraries about a topic, person or group, place, or event that illustrates one of the course themes. You can (and should try to) use this primary source for your final project. Each student will post his or her primary source’s durable url or image to the course’s GauchoSpace site. Then each student will write an essay to accompany his or her primary source. This essay must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, at least 600 words (3 pages), proofread, and grammatically correct. Each student will post an electronic copy of the essay to GauchoSpace AND give me a hard copy upon which I will make comments and suggestions. I am happy to discuss and review drafts before you post to GauchoSpace.

Once a student posts his or her source url to GauchoSpace, other students must find a different primary source to post. We want to have a diversity of primary sources. I will post an example of the assignment as a model to help you write your own primary source paper. I will also post a grading rubric for the assignment on GauchoSpace. The assignment will receive a letter grade.

This essay’s first section should describe the primary source as completely as possible. What is the primary source’s contents? Who produced it and when? How was it produced? For what possible reason? Where? These questions might prove difficult, but answer them to the best of your ability. The second section should explain how this primary source addresses one of the course themes and what questions the primary source raises in your mind. Does the source confirm an argument from lecture, readings, or discussion? Or does the source suggest a different interpretation of what life was like in the past? What do you want to know more about? The last section should offer a reflection on how you might move forward to answer the questions and conclude with an argument about the primary source.
Response Paper: Each student will write an essay of 600 words (with the same requirements as the primary source paper) that responds to any one of the primary sources posted by another student on GauchoSpace page. Please note that you are not posting this essay to GauchoSpace. Instead, you will turn in two hard copies: one for the instructor and the other for the original poster. You must read the other student’s primary source before responding. Then you may answer one of the original questions, agree or disagree with the reflections, raise different questions, or connect to different course themes or primary sources. This is a chance to engage in a dialogue as well as to be thoughtfully creative. The response paper will receive either 0, 1, 2, or 3 points.

Final Projects are due on Tuesday, March 21, at 5 pm in 4011 Bren. Written essays must be submitted in hard copy. Web-based exhibitions and video essays need durable urls. Youtube, Vimeo, Weebly are all acceptable. If you want to use some other service, that is fine too. You may turn in your final project earlier if you wish.

Other policies:

Crashing: If you are not yet registered, then during week one you should attend and sign the waiting list.

Gender and Sex Discrimination Policy and Student Support: Under Title IX, university students are protected from harassment and discrimination based on gender and sex. If a student feels uncomfortable or in need of support at any time related to gender, sex, and/or sexual orientation, please contact me immediately. UCSB’s Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity is an outstanding resource to advocate and support students. Please see http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu/RCSGD/home.

Equal Access for All Students: If you have any learning or medical condition that requires accommodation to complete the course work, please ensure that the Disabled Students Program (DSP) is aware of your disability and that you are familiar with your DSP responsibilities. See http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/Index.aspx. I will work with you and DSP to find the appropriate accommodation. Please fill out the appropriate forms as soon as you can.

Plagiarism: UCSB takes plagiarism and other academic misconduct very seriously. If you turn in any work that fails to acknowledge the contributions of others, it may result in failure of the assignment or the course itself. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. We will discuss plagiarism in detail.

Extra-Credit: There may some extra credit opportunities over the quarter. Stay tuned!

Incomplete Grades: Incompletes will not be given for this class, except in the most extreme circumstances, such as a debilitating illness or death in the immediate family.

Copyright: All of the materials you receive through this course are subject to federal copyright laws and university policies. Distribution of these materials, such as posting them online or selling them to third party businesses, are strictly prohibited.

Schedule:

Week 1. Class 1 W, Jan. 11: Introductions

1. Knowing the oceans in time: Disciplines and evidence

1.2 F, Jan. 13: Reconstructing the oceans’ past I: Deep time of oceanography and archaeology

2.3 W, Jan. 18: Reconstructing the oceans’ past II: Historical Ecology


2.4 F, Jan. 20: Reconstructing the oceans’ past III: Critical Histories

Readings: 1) Joseph Taylor, “Knowing the Black Box: Methodological Challenges in Marine Environmental History,” Environmental History 18 (2013): 60-75. 2) Roberts, The Ocean of Life, 105-197 (ch. 7-12).

3.5 W, Jan. 25: Reconstructing the oceans’ past IV: Cultural approaches


3.6 F, Jan. 27: Untangling disciplinary approaches and evidence: The Ocean of Life discussion

Reading: Finish Roberts, The Ocean of Life.

Review Essay on Roberts, The Ocean of Life due today

2. Work and play in the oceans

4.7 W, Feb. 1: Voyaging and ship life


4.8 F, Feb. 3: Workshop 1: Final Project Proposal Activity

Reading: Booker, Down By the Bay, 1-68 (Introduction- ch. 2).

Final project’s proposal due today

5.9 W, Feb. 8: Observing Science, Representing Science


5.10 F, Feb. 10: Warfare

6.11 W, Feb. 15: Uses of historical context for problem-solving: Down by the Bay discussion

Reading: Finish Booker, Down By the Bay.

Review Essay on Booker’s Down by the Bay due today

6.12 F, Feb. 17: Energy


7.13 W, Feb. 22: Displaying the oceans


Wed., Feb. 22, 6:30 pm, Bren 4016 (Big Conference Room) Evening Presentation of The Forgotten Space

7.14 F, Feb. 24: Trade and transportation

Final project’s primary source reflection due today

8.15 W, March 1: Workshop 2: Finding connections among primary sources

Reading: Chiang, Shaping the Shoreline, 102-55 (ch. 5-ch 6).

8.16 F, March 3: Bringing Work and Play Together: Shaping the Shoreline discussion

Reading: Finish Chiang’s Shaping the Shoreline.

Review essay on Chiang’s Shaping the Shoreline due today

3. How can we use history to navigate today’s issues?

9.17 W, March 8: Workshop 3: Zero drafts and next steps for revisions

9.18 F, March 10: Marine conservation

10.19 W, March 15: Workshop 4: Peer feedback

10.20 F, March 17: Conclusions

Final project due on Tuesday, March 21, 5 pm, 4011 Bren