THE HISTORY OF THE OCEANS
University of California, Santa Barbara
Winter 2011

Instructor: Peter Alagona
Office Hours: HSSB 4231, TBA
Email: alagona@history.ucsb.edu

Course Number: History 102HO & Environmental Studies 193HO
Time: M/W 3:30-4:45 PM
Place: Phelps 1425
Course Web site: GauchoSpace

OVERVIEW
This course will explore the field of marine environmental history. Environmental history is the study of how humans have interacted with their environments over time through science, technology, politics, law, culture, and material biophysical relationships. This quarter we will ask what environmental history can tell us about how people have experienced, understood, and transformed the world’s oceans throughout human history.

Studying the history of the oceans may seem like a daunting task. And indeed it is. Marine environmental history is a diverse endeavor that encompasses a huge range of topics. Over the next ten weeks, we will read books and articles from more than a dozen disciplines in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. We will also examine primary sources, from documents, to films, to material artifacts. It is important to remember, though, that the history of the oceans is still a new, growing, and incomplete field. Only a few universities offer courses in the subject, and there is no established canon of literature or preexisting template for what we should cover. It will be up to us to define the field as we study it by articulating its key methods, theories, insights, and implications—of which there are many.

The goals of this course are for you to:

(1) Gain a broad understanding of how people have experienced, understood, and transformed the world’s ocean environments throughout human history

(2) Develop an interdisciplinary repertoire of methods and theories for documenting and understanding changes in marine environments and the societies that use them

(3) Acquire an appreciation for how history can inform current policy and management debates that will shape the future of the oceans

REQUIREMENTS
Readings: If you don’t like reading, don’t take this class. This course will include extensive readings. You should complete all of the assigned readings before each meeting, and you will be expected to discuss them in class. A complete list of the required readings and assignments begins on page 4 of this syllabus. You can purchase the reader at Grafikart, 6550 Pardall Road, in Isla Vista. You will need 4 additional books for this class, all of which are available for purchase at the UCen bookstore.
Lectures: Most class meetings will include (a) a brief update of administrative and logistical issues, (b) a 10 to 15-minute written or group exercise, and (c) a lecture and discussion period, which will usually last for no more than 45 minutes. On February 23rd, we will have a guest lecture. A schedule of topics appears on page 3 of this syllabus.

Seminars: During the quarter, we will have four “seminars” during regularly scheduled class periods. On seminar days, we will break up into small groups and discuss a book that we all have read beforehand. You must have completed the assigned book in order to participate in the seminar. I will provide you with a structure and set of tasks for the seminar discussions, and I will circulate throughout the room to answer questions and provide feedback.

Seminar Reports: 40% of the final grade. After each seminar, you will complete a take-home assignment based on the book and discussion, which will be due at the beginning of the next class meeting. Each of the 4 reports will be worth 10% of your final grade. To receive full credit, you must (a) read the book, (b) attend and participate in the seminar, and (c) complete and submit a high-quality write-up.

Daily Exercises: 20% of the final grade. During most class meetings, you will complete a short exercise worth 2 points of your final grade. The exercises will take 10 to 15 minutes, and your answers should be written on 3x5 note cards (please purchase a small package or make arrangements to share with someone else). The exercises may come at any point in the class period, and they may be individual or group based. To receive credit, you must give thoughtful, coherent, and legible responses to the questions provided, and your answers must draw from the assigned readings.

Final Exam: 40% of the final grade. The final will be an in-class exam. I will provide you with more details about its structure and content as we approach the end of the quarter. The final exam is scheduled through the registrar’s office for the afternoon of Saturday, March 19th. That encroaches on the beginning of spring break, and I’m sure none of us want to wait until then. Therefore, I have rescheduled the exam for Saturday, March 12th, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, in the normal Phelps room. Please make arrangements to attend.

Holidays: During the winter quarter, we will have two Monday holidays, Martin Luther King Day (January 17th) and President’s Day (February 21st). Class will be cancelled on both days.

Policies

Attendance: If you need to miss class for personal, health, or religious reasons, you must make arrangements with me ahead of time. You will not be allowed to make up the daily writing exercise if you miss class without prior approval.

Late Assignments: You must make arrangements with me ahead of time if you need an extension for a seminar report or if you need an alternative time for the final exam.

Academic Dishonesty: I maintain a zero-tolerance policy for cheating and plagiarism.

Email: I welcome all of your questions, comments, and suggestions. But I prefer not to receive emails asking about the course content or logistics. I would much rather answer your questions in person, either in class or during my office hours. Please contact me by email only if you absolutely need to do so, such as if you are sick and cannot attend class.
# Schedule

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/5</td>
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<td>What is marine environmental history?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Theories, Methods, &amp; Narratives</td>
<td>Daily Exercise #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Seminar I: <em>Monsters of the Sea</em></td>
<td>Seminar I, Report due 1/19</td>
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<td>1/17</td>
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<td>*Martin Luther King Day: No Class</td>
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## Part One: Conceptualizing the Oceans

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<tr>
<td>1/19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ancient Impacts &amp; Interactions</td>
<td>Daily Exercise #2</td>
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<td>The Era of Inexhaustible Resources</td>
<td>Daily Exercise #3</td>
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<td>The Fisherman’s Problem</td>
<td>Daily Exercise #4</td>
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<td>Farming the Ocean</td>
<td>Daily Exercise #5</td>
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<td>Seminar II: <em>The Unnatural History of the Sea</em></td>
<td>Seminar II, Report due 2/7</td>
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## Part Two: Exploiting the Oceans

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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>The History of Oceanography</td>
<td>Daily Exercise #6</td>
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<td>Guest Lecture: “Engendering Ghana’s Seascape”</td>
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<td>Mapping the Deep</td>
<td>Daily Exercise #8</td>
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<td>Seminar III: America’s Ocean Wilderness</td>
<td>Seminar III, Report due 2/23</td>
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## Part Three: Knowing the Oceans

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<td>The Laws of the Sea</td>
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<td>Marine Conservation</td>
<td>Daily Exercise #10</td>
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<td>Seminar IV: Blowout in the Gulf</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Conclusions &amp; Review</td>
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*The Final Exam will take place on Saturday, March 12th, from 9AM-12PM, in Phelps 1425.*

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REQUIRED READINGS

• The course reader is available for purchase at Grafikart, 6550 Pardall Road, in Isla Vista.

• You will need four additional books, all of which are available at the UCen bookstore:


READING ASSIGNMENTS

Part One: Conceptualizing the Oceans

January 3. Introduction

No reading.

January 5. What is marine environmental history?


January 10. Theories, Methods, & Narratives


January 12. Seminar I: *Monsters of the Sea*


January 17. Martin Luther King Day: Class Cancelled

No reading.

Part Two: Exploiting the Oceans

January 19. Ancient Impacts & Interactions

January 24. The Era of Inexhaustible Resources


January 26. The Fisherman’s Problem


January 31. Farming the Ocean


February 2. Seminar II: The Unnatural History of the Sea


Part Three: Knowing the Oceans

February 7. Guest Lecture: Engendering Ghana’s Seascape


February 9. The History of Oceanography


February 14. Mapping the Deep


February 16. Seminar III: America’s Ocean Wilderness


February 21. Presidents’ Day: Class Cancelled

No reading.
Part Four: Governing the Oceans

February 23. The Laws of the Sea


February 28. Marine Conservation


March 2. Scenarios for Our Future Oceans


March 7. Seminar IV: *Blowout in the Gulf*


March 9. Conclusions & Review

No reading.

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