MAST 1200

INTRODUCTION TO MARITIME CULTURE

A study of history and literature to understand the international maritime culture that links peoples, nations, economies, environments, and cultural aesthetics

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Texts: The primary text is Longitude (Dava Sobel 1996, 2007, Walker & Company, New York, ISBN-10: 080271529X). Students are also assigned excerpts from numerous other texts, as described below

Course Description
Throughout history, the sea has served as a highway, a source of food, an arena for warfare, and a stage for discovery. The Atlantic both divides and connects the lands that surround it. The Pacific served as a blank slate for European imperialists while harboring ancient maritime societies. Through this course, students will consider the ocean itself as a natural environment whose fate is entwined with that of the human actors we will study. These actors have included sailors, whalers, slaves, pirates, fishermen, shore side residents, naval officers, merchants, politicians, novelists, scientists, and policy-makers. Humans have responded to the ocean, the largest object on earth, with a mixture of emotions: wonder, fear, comfort, terror, spirituality, practicality, playfulness, absolute seriousness, foreboding, a sense of inadequacy, great joy. Their response to what Herman Melville calls the “watery part of the world” was often written down, for humans are driven to put their experience of the ocean into words.

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- technology and the effects of technological change
- nautical language, archetypes, and superstition
- social history: the role of class, race, and gender in maritime history
- naval strategy, policy, and action
- exploration and imperialism
- the balance of recreation and work
- the experience of seafarers-coming of age, or the exploration of the individual-the imagination
- ethics of survival
Course Requirements

This course is built upon readings, including a mixture of primary documents, literature, and secondary material, and film. The course will be centered around the discussion of assigned readings and maritime films. Writing assignments include the following:

- Response papers such as relating sea music to themes previously covered in class
- Short research paper such as an investigation of the definition, etymology, and lore of a maritime term
- An aesthetic response such as a poem, dramatic production, or personal essay

Assessment

Grades will be determined on the basis of class participation, completed reading, exams, and writing assignments. The grade breakdown follows:

- 20% class participation and completed reading
- 5% quizzes given during regular class time
- 10% response papers
- 10% short research paper
- 5% aesthetic response
- 20% midterm (40% short answer; 60% essay)
- 30% final (40% short answer; 60% essay)

Topics and Associated Readings

Introduction, Exploration and Imagination

- James Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* Chapter 2 “Imagining the Other”
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”
- The Story of Jonah

The Atlantic Ocean: Exploration, Imperialism, and Trade

- Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* Chapter 2 “Production”
- Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen* Chapter 4 Fishermen 1675-1775

The Atlantic Ocean as Moat and Bridge

- Benjamin Labaree, "The Atlantic Paradox," article in *The Atlantic World of Robert G. Albion*
- Dava Sobel, *Longitude* Chapters 1 - 6

Whaling

- Richard Ellis, *Men and Whales*, Bay Whaling in Australia and New Zealand & Sperm Whaling
- Nathaniel Philbrick, *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whale Ship Essex* Preface and Chapter 1
Fisheries
- Rudyard Kipling, Captains Courageous Chapters 1-5
- Mark Kurlansky, Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World Chapters 3-4

Life at Sea, or Coming of Age and the Exploration of the Individual
- Rudyard Kipling, Captains Courageous Chapters 6-10 (finish the book)
- Bolster, W. Jeffrey. Black Jacks : African American Seamen in the Age of Sail, Chapter 3 - The Way of A Ship
- Margaret Creighton and Lisa Norling, eds., Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920 Chapter 1, Liberty beneath the Jolly Roger: the Lives of Anne Bonny and Mary Read, Pirates

Ports and Coastal Seafaring Communities
- Sara Orne Jewett, The Country of the Pointed Firs Chapters 1-5
- John Millington Synge, “Riders to the Sea,” The Aran Islands, Part I
- Lisa Norling, Captain Ahab Had a Wife : New England Women & the Whalefishery, 1720-1870 Chapter 2

Maritime Frontier and Maritime Encounters Overseas
- James Butler, Sailing on Friday: The Perilous Journey of America's Merchant Marine Chapter 8
- Somerset Maugham, “Vessel of Wrath”
- Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783 Preface and Introductory

Sail to Steam
- Eugene O’Neill, “The Hairy Ape”

Development of Ocean Science and the Oceans as Global Commons
- Margaret Deacon, Scientists and the Sea, 1650-1900: A Study of Marine Science Chapters 9 & 10
- Helen Rozwadowski, The Sea Knows No Boundaries : A Century of Marine Science under Ices Introduction and Chapter 1

Ethics of survival
- Stephen Crane, “The Open Boat”

Summary/Poetry
- Yann Martel, Life of Pi