Seminar in American Studies  
01:050:488:01  
Maritime Culture

"It's no fish ye're buying; it's men's lives."  
(Fishmonger to a customer haggling over the price of a haddock.)  
--Sir Walter Scott, 1816

"The country is democratic; the Navy is not."  
--attributed to John Paul Jones

"The Coast Guard is the small elite organization  
around which the Navy forms in time of war."  
--anonymous old saying

Office location: Ruth Adams Building 024  
Douglass College

Office Hours:  
Mondays 4:00 to 5:00 pm  
Wednesdays 4:00 to 5:00 pm  
And by appointment

Complete Syllabus Available:  
www.amerstudies.rutgers.edu

Introduction to the Course

An interdisciplinary course for students with a strong academic and personal interest in the sea.  
No maritime experience is necessary. We use a number of disciplines to explore the influence of the sea on  
American life. Readings and classroom discussions may come to life with a field trip on your own to a  
nearby seaport.

We begin with a study of maritime history. One cannot understand the history of America without  
an appreciation of its maritime heritage. Students interpret the past not only through readings and  
classroom discussions but also through material culture studies of maritime artifacts and folklore.

At the same time, we study of marine policy through lectures and guest speakers whose topics  
embrace both economic and environmental issues as well as current policy regarding world trade and  
regulatory reform, conservation and fisheries, national defense and admiralty law.

Readings Required for Purchase

I am asking you to buy eight books. You are free to buy them from any retail dealer or over the  
internet. For your convenience, an order for these books has been placed at the Student Co-Op Store on the  
Douglass/Cook Campus. There phone number is 732.932.9017.
All reading assignments are due by the day they are listed on the syllabus. You should have read each assignment carefully and be prepared to discuss the text in class.


Weather Emergency Information

In the event of adverse weather conditions, the number to call is (732) 932-7799. This is the official recorded message for school closing at Rutgers University. Please be advised that the University is rarely closed except under severe conditions such as blizzard or hurricane. If the University is open, both residents and commuters are expected to attend all scheduled classes and exams. If you are not present when the University is open, it will be counted as an unexcused absence. Please make your travel plans accordingly.

The Term Paper

Term papers are due without fail on Monday, December 12, no later. Otherwise, I will not have time to grade them. Papers should have a one-inch margin on all sides and should be in Times New Roman at 12-point type. Student who are taking this class as a “regular course” are expected to write about 2500 words of text. Students who are taking this class a “senior seminar” are expected to write about 3750 words of text.

Papers are to be typed or printed on a word processor, should be stapled together (no papers clips or plastic binders, please) and may include illustrations or pictures--though these are by no means required. If you use a typewriter or dot-matrix printer, make sure you have a fresh ribbon. If you use word processing equipment, turn the justification OFF (as was done on this syllabus). Make sure all essays are paginated (given page numbers) and given a title suggestive of theme.

To help you get started, we will be distributing by drawing, pre-assigned topics on some aspect of marine policy. The topics have been carefully chosen for their suitability in terms of scope and availability of source material. They are neither too broad nor too narrow. And you should be able to find adequate and authoritative material working with the Rutgers University Library. You should study the best authorities you can find on your subject, balancing different opinions. Think out your conclusions, organize your material, and present it clearly in proper form with due credit for all borrowed ideas. If, for any reason, you are uncomfortable with your topic, you may be able to be released to a new topic of your own devising if you submit your alternative proposal promptly in writing.
To insure that your project is indeed a term project, I want to give me a one-paragraph discussion of your assigned topic early in the semester. This précis is due in class on Monday, October 9. Please submit it in duplicate, typed on 8 1/2" X 11" paper, the original and copy stapled in upper left hand corner. I will have my responses available by the next meeting of the class. By submitting a précis, you get a head start on the optional paper.

Case Studies

You will be given three case studies, each relating to a real-world problem. In a typical case study, you will be given a written summary of a real-world problem faced by maritime management executives. In this training module, we will ask you to play the role of a key decision-maker within a maritime organization. You will then read about the case and come up with possible solutions to the problem. For example, you may help an organization figure out why they are losing money, or why their clients do not like their services, or why it takes so long to get the information they need.

You will receive three written case studies that lay out a problem confronted by the management of a maritime organization. You should read the case study carefully, take notes, and try to form a tentative response. (Be sure to keep a copy for yourself.) The basic format is as follows: Problem, Background, Alternatives, and Recommendations. These short papers will be graded and returned to you.

Check plus = Excellent. Your paper has unusual insight with extra care and attention. Displays industriousness & conscientiousness.

Check = Good. Your paper has presented all the necessary information and is well written.

Check minus = Satisfactory. Your paper has covered the required material though with some shortcomings in either style or substance.

Academic Integrity

All work must be your own independent effort. Students must cite properly all outside sources consulted in written assignments. Students should review the university policy on academic integrity. Breaches of academic integrity will result in a zero for the assignment; additional sanctions may be imposed by the University administration. I will help you any way I can so you can succeed while maintaining academic integrity. I truly want you to well, so you are invited to visit my office hours often.

Deadlines

I must be strict about deadlines because I have very limited grading time and late papers make it difficult for me to return graded papers in a timely fashion. Also, I want everyone to have exactly the same amount of time to work on the assignment for the sake of fairness. Please do not put me in the position of trying to decide how late is “late”. You should take responsibility for submitting work when it is due, not twenty minutes or a day later. Rest assured everyone will be treated equally.

The Optional Field Trip

Sometime between now and October 31, I would like you to get into New York on your own and see the historic ship collection at the South Street Seaport Museum, 207 Front Street, New York, NY
10038, for extra credit by submitting a one-page (250 word) report on your visit.

I am particularly eager for you to see the Peking, a 1911 German-built, steel-hulled, four-masted bark. The second-largest sailing ship still in existence, the Peking is 347 feet long, with towering masts seventeen stories high. Peking carried nitrate between Europe and South America until 1931, rounding Cape Horn twice each trip. I also want you to see the steel-hulled Ambrose Lightship which was built in 1908 to stand at the entrance to Port of New York, its lights guiding ships to the channel.

South Street Seaport Museum is open six days a week, Tuesday through Sunday, from 10:00 am until 6:00 pm. Closed Mondays. Stop first at the visitors’ center, 12 Fulton Street, for tickets, information, and a detailed map that will help you find things. Admission is $8 for adults and $6 for students with identification. You may wish to find additional details at www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org.

Those who complete the optional field trip are eligible to receive five bonus points on the final quiz. Since the assignment is entirely optional, there will be no extensions beyond March 8th. Attending the museum can only help your midterm grade. Be sure to attach a cash receipt or ticket stub to your paper as proof of your visit. No one has to make this trip. However, those who do visit the museum should find the experience rewarding.

Videos

We will be watching a number of videos in our course in class. For best results, you should plan on watching each video at least twice—once in class and once on your own for review. After being shown in class, each video will be placed on reserve (and assigned a serial number) at the nearby Douglass Library in the Media Room on the lower level. This facility is open very long hours, so you should have no difficulty in seeing these videos are your convenience. Hours are Monday-Thursday, 9:00 am to 10 pm; Friday 9:00 am to 6:00pm; Saturday 10:00 am to 6:00 pm; and Sunday noon to 8:00 pm. You must order videos by their serial numbers which can be obtained with the IRIS monitor by clicking on "reserve desk" and directing your inquiry by instructor name (Gillespie) or by course name (Maritime Culture) or by course number (01:050:488).

Grading Components

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<td>Case Study #1</td>
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<td>Case Study #2</td>
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<td>Case Study #3</td>
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<td>Moderation</td>
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<td>Oral Report</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
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<td>Final Quiz</td>
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<td>Term Paper</td>
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Note that students who are taking this class as “senior seminar” must serve at least one class session as a moderator. Students taking this class as a “regular course” do not serve as moderators, so their class participation counts 20% instead of 10%.

Class Participation

It goes without saying that class participation is a very important part of the work in a seminar and will from a corresponding part of your grade in the course. Also, please believe me when I say that, because of the intimacy of a seminar environment, in which we do our work together, I will know when and if you are ill-prepared.
**Absences**

A seminar is a participatory experience. Each student must contribute to in-class discussion every week. Therefore, unlike other classes where attendance may not be taken, in this course attendance is expected and required. Tardiness will not be tolerated. Several tardy appearances will equal an absence and will affect your final grade. You will be allowed one unexcused absence without grade penalty. The consequences of unexcused absences are as follows:

1 unexcused absence = No penalty
2 unexcused absences = 20% grade penalty = final grade no higher than a B
3 unexcused absences = 30% grade penalty = final grade no higher than a C
4 unexcused absences = failure in the course

Excused absences are those that result from documented family emergencies, illness, religious observance, court dates, jury service, or military duty; that is, situations over which you have no individual control. Please inform me as soon as possible if you are unable to attend class on a regular basis.

**Role of the Moderator**

On the day that you are appointed moderator, you are in charge. You can temporarily assume the authority of the professor. On that day, you should be the best prepared person in the room. You may call on people and you may ask direct questions. There is no more important participant in a discussion than the person leading it. This role can be both challenging and rewarding. Here are a few suggestions for bringing out a range of opinions, exploring the topic thoroughly, and encouraging a rich and lively discussion.

A discussion leader

- serves as a facilitator rather than a lecturer,
- remains impartial, shows respect for all opinions, and does not try to influence the outcome of the discussion,
- creates opportunities for everyone to speak,
- helps participants look for common ground, but avoids pushing for a consensus,
- keeps the conversation moving and on track by occasionally summarizing points and bringing the discussion back to the topic if it wanders unproductively,
- raises views that have not been considered by the group,
- asks questions that challenge old assumptions,
- deals quickly with any problems that arise and, if a ground rule is broken, asks the group to help re-establish the rules, and
- helps integrate outside experts into the conversation, so that their valuable knowledge contributes to the richness of the exchange of ideas but does not dominate the conversation.
Final Quiz Policy

We have only one quiz, given only at the scheduled time. No exceptions will be granted to this rule. I do not believe it is fair to give some students more time to study than other students. I also feel that it is my responsibility to teach good work habits. Do not embarrass yourself by asking for a special exception. If your plans call for you to be out of town for the final quiz, you should drop this course right away.

In the belief that proper crib preparation is cannot be distinguished from studying, we have institutionalized and legalized the crib sheet for the final quiz in this course. You are allowed to use a legal crib sheet. Our purpose is to reduce exam anxiety and to encourage good study habits. The rules are as follows:

@ Both sides of a single 8 1/2" X 11" piece of paper may be used.

@ Cribs must be written by hand--not typed--and signed. They may not be mechanically reproduced or photocopied.

@ The crib sheet must be turned in with the exam; it will not be returned

Semester Advisory

It is characteristic of life at Rutgers that there are many competing demands for your time. However, you should bear in mind that you and you alone are responsible for keeping up with the assigned work in this course. When the semester ends with the final examination, work for this course is complete. Therefore, once the course had ended, there will be no opportunities for "make up" exams or "extra credit" work to improve your grade. Such after-the-fact activities are unfair to everyone else who has done the work all along. The time to work on this course is NOW, not after the class is over.

Schedule of Classes

Mon 9/11 WEEK ONE
Introduction and Organizational Meeting; moderator dates chosen.
In-Class Video: “Tall Ship: High Seas Adventure”
Distribution of syllabus; Term paper topics assigned.

Mon 9/18 WEEK TWO
In-class video: “A&E’s Longitude”
Read Dava Sobel’s Longitude before class

Mon 9/25 WEEK THREE
In-class video: “Around Cape Horn”
Read Marcus Rediker’s Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea before class

Mon 10/02 WEEK FOUR
In-class video: “Crab Fishing”
Read Donald T. Phillips’s Character in Action before class

Mon 10/09 WEEK FIVE
In-class video: “Seapower: Container Ships”
Case Study #1 “Fishing Vessel Safety” due at start of class.
Mon 10/16  WEEK SIX
In-class video: “Dangerous Seas: USCG Search and Rescue”
Read John McPhee’s *Looking for a Ship* before class
Guest Speaker: Commander Eric P. Christensen, USCG

Mon 10/23  WEEK SEVEN
In-class video: “Seapower: Navies of the World”
Case Study #2 “Fast Combat Support Ships: Who Crews?” Due at start of class

Mon 10/30  WEEK EIGHT
In-class video: “Liberty Ships”
Read Marc Levinson’s *The Box* before class.

Mon 11/06  WEEK NINE
In-class video: “USCG Rescue Swimmers”
Case Study #3 “Merchant Seafarers as Hostages” due at start of class

Mon 11/13  WEEK TEN
In-class video: “Seapower: Very Large Crude Carriers”
Read Kurlansky’s *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World* before class
Guest Speaker: Douglas Stevenson, Esquire, Center for Seafarers Rights

Mon 11/20  WEEK ELEVEN
Forum on Port Elizabeth and Port Newark
Guest Speakers

Mon 11/27  WEEK TWELVE
In-class video: “The Perfect Storm” [excerpt]
Read Sebastian Junger’s *The Perfect Storm* before class

Mon 12/04  WEEK THIRTEEN
In-class video: “Scandal at Sea”
Read E. Annie Proulx’s *The Shipping News* before class
Final Quiz and Course Evaluation

Mon 12/11  WEEK FOURTEEN
Term Papers Due
Oral Reports Due

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters,
see the works of the Lord, and his wonder in the deep.
For he commands, and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves.
Then they cry out to the Lord in their trouble and he brings them out of their distress.
He makes the storm calm, so that the waves are still.
Then they are glad because they are quiet, and he brings them into their desired haven.”

--Psalm 107