The Environmental History of the Pacific Ocean is a course in experimental history, for the ocean’s history has never been properly told. Oceans have long been thought to be timeless, or that whatever changes have taken place underneath the sea are forever hidden from humans. But, a new realization that oceans – as much or more than other ecosystems – are changing at a rapidly increasing pace, means that we will benefit from discovering the long-lost history of the Pacific. And, because of new research in history and marine sciences, we are now better able to do that than ever. This course brings together a variety of readings and other media to invite you to help construct the history of the Pacific Ocean. Primarily focusing on Polynesia as well as the Pacific Northwest, the class will invite you to consider such questions as: What have been the crucial turning points in this history? Which relationships between different cultures and species have been most important? How has the ocean environment connected distant humans? How have different humans tried to understand the Pacific? At the conclusion of this course, you will have joined the ranks of those trying to understand the ocean, this time through the distinctive perspective of environmental history.
Assignments:

Class Participation (10%): You are expected to attend all classes and actively contribute to class discussion of the reading and lecture materials.

Map Exercise (10%): Each Monday students will contribute to an open-source map of important Pacific locations mentioned in that day’s text.

Quizzes (20%): Each Wednesday you will take one written, in-class quiz covering lecture and reading material. Possible quiz questions from the readings will be announced in advance. There will be a total of 8 quizzes. You may also substitute a one-page essay for up to two of the quizzes if you wish. Your lowest quiz score of the quarter will be dropped.

Short Essays (20%): Two short (3 – 4 page) essays due April 21 and May 19 on the assigned readings for those weeks. More information will be given on canvas.

Final Paper (30%): A 10 – 12 page essay that examines either a) one of the themes of the class, or b) one Pacific location or c) week 10’s theme “Disasters Fast and Slow” in the context of class themes. The paper should use and cite at least 5 of the required readings and 5 of the optional readings (can be substituted with other readings approved by the professor). Due Friday, June 10
CLASS SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

WEEK 1  PACIFIC GEOGRAPHIES IN MOTION

March 28  Introduction


March 30  Traveling the Ocean Highways


Quiz 1


David Lewis, We, the Navigators: The Ancient Art of Landfinding in the Pacific (Honolulu, 1972).


WEEK 2  CULTURAL ECOTOLOGIES OF COLONIZATION

April 4  Cultural Ecologies in the South Pacific


Mehana Blaich Vaughan, Kaiaulu: Gathering Tides (Corvallis, 2020).
Edvard Hviding, Guardians of Marovo Lagoon: Practice, Place, and Politics in Maritime Melanesia (Honolulu, 1996).

April 6  Cultural Ecologies in the North Pacific

Charlotte Cote, in Cote, Spirit of our Whaling Ancestors .


Quiz 2

Wayne Suttles, Coast Salish Essays (Talonbooks, 1987).
WEEK 3  ENCOUNTHER on the OCEAN

April 11. Cook’s Pacific


April 13. Encountering the Ocean


Quiz 3
WEEK 4. SEA SLUGS and WHALES

April 18. Sea Slugs


April 20. Whales

William Whitecar, *Four Years aboard the Whaleship*


Short Essay 1 due April 21
WEEK 5. OCEANS and IMPERIALISM

April 25. Oceans of Conquest

- David Arnold, The Fisherman’s Frontier: People and Salmon in Southeast Alaska (Seattle, 2008).

April 27. Literature, Ocean, Empire

- John Steinbeck, “Doc,” in Cannery Row
- Robert Louis Stevenson, “The Dangerous Archipelago – Atolls at a Distance,” and “Fakarava: An Atoll at Hand,” in In the South Seas
- Jack London, “The Royal Sport,” in Tales of the South Seas
- John Steinbeck, Log of the Sea of Cortez
- Michael Lannoo, Leopold’s Shack and Rickett’s Lab: The Emergence of Environmentalism (Berkeley, 2010).

Quiz 4
WEEK 6. WORK, SURF, CONSERVATION

May 2. Work and Conservation


🔗 Kurk Dorsey, “Putting a Ceiling on Sealing”

May 4. Laboring and Surfing

🔗 Greg Rosenthal, documents on guano


🔗 David Malo, *Molelo Hawaii*
🔗 Frances Steel, *Oceania under Steam: Sea Transport and the Cultures of Colonialism, c. 1870 – 1914.*

Quiz 5
WEEK 7  WARS UNNATURAL

May 9. War in the Water


Wilbert Chapman, Fishing in Troubled Waters

Finley, Carmel. All the Fish in the Sea: Maximum Sustainable Yield and the Failure of Fisheries Management. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011.


Judith Bennett, Natives and Exotics

Watch: The Thin Red Line

May 11. Nuclear Ecology


Quiz 6

Watch: Nuclear Savages

May 13 Field Trip to Hatfield Marine Laboratory
WEEK 8  ECOLOGIES of DECOLONIZATION

May 16. Decolonizing the Ocean


頂き  Brian Bargh, The Struggle for Maori Fishing Rights: Te Ika a Maori (HUIA, 2016).

🍎  Howard Droker and Keith A. Murray Collection on Native American Fishing Rights, c. 1890 – 1978, Western Washington University Archives
🍎  Kate Reedy-Maschner, Aleut Identities: Tradition and Modernity in an Indigenous Fishery (Montreal, 2010).
🍎  Bruce Grant, In the Soviet House of Culture
🍎  Benedict J. Colombi and James F. Brooks, Keystone Nations: Indigenous Peoples and Salmon across the North Pacific

May 18. Territorializing the Ocean

頂き  Epeli Hau’ofa, “We Are the Ocean”


Short Essay 2 due


**Essay 2 due May 19**

**WEEK 9  PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTALISM and the PACIFIC ANTHROPOCENE**

**May 23. Atomic Whales**

✍ Watch: *How to Change the World*


Bob Hunter, *Warriors of the Rainbow*


**May 25. Nuklia Fri Pasifik**

✍ Watch: *Nuklia Fri Pasifik*

**Quiz 7**
WEEK 10 THE ENLARGING OCEAN

May 30  No Class Memorial Day

June 1  Disasters Fast and Slow


Watch: There Once Was an Island: Te Henua E Nnoho

Watch: Chasing Coral

Quiz 8

Lani Wendt Young, Pacific Tsunami “Galu Alfi”
Walter Dudley and Min Lee, Tsunami! (Honolulu, 1988).
Roy Starrs, ed., When the Tsunami Comes to Shore: Culture and Disaster in Japan (Leiden, 2014).
Christine Shearer, Kivalina; A Climate Change Story. Chicago, 2011.
David Grover, The Unforgiving Coast: Maritime Disasters of the Pacific Northwest (Corvallis, 2002).