The Sea in History
FYSEM–UA 000

Wednesday, 3:30–6:00
Spring 2021
New York University

Description:
Over 70 percent of the Earth’s surface is water, most of it residing in the planet’s great seas and oceans. But how have those vast watery spaces, together with the world’s lakes and rivers, shaped the millennia? Have these bodies of water been connective tissues bringing peoples together or barriers pushing them apart? They have, of course, been both, providing highways for commerce and migration, life-sustaining fisheries, battlefields that determined the fate of civilizations, and powerful stimulants to the advancement of technology on a broad front. This seminar will explore the many—and often surprising—faces of the sea in history. It will, likewise, ask students to contemplate their own responsibility in preserving the rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans that have shaped the destiny of mankind.

Required Texts:
• Additional readings posted on *NYU Courses*.

Goals:
• This course will provide students an opportunity to (a) expand and enrich their understanding of global history, (b) think critically and express ideas persuasively, and (c) develop and enhance research and writing skills appropriate to the presentation of historical argument.

Requirements and Evaluation:
• Regular attendance is required.
• Read all materials before class begins in order to discuss the texts in depth. You will be asked to comment on readings and to give presentations on assigned topics. Bring the texts we are discussing with you to class each week.
• Grading will be based on the assignments below, as well as regular contributions to class discussion.

Assignments:
• Weekly essays in response to assigned readings (3 pages, 1½ line spacing), beginning February 3rd.
• Project description and preliminary bibliographical: This 3 to 5 page essay will present your statement of intent, introduce the principal resources you intend to employ, and discuss the particular historiographical issues that relate to your seminar project. Due February 17th.
• Research paper: This paper will explore an aspect of “The Sea in History” (18–20 pages, including notes and bibliography). Approval of topic by instructor required. Due Wednesday May 12th.
• Weight: Reading Response essays, 60%; Take-home final exam, 30%; Participation & attendance, 10%.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading to be discussed</th>
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| 2. 3 February | The role of the sea in constructing ancient societies  
| 3. 10 February | From the Roman Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean  
| 4. 17 February | The transformative power of the sea in East and Southeast Asia  
| 5. 24 February | Remaining maritime links in an unstable Europe  
| 6. 3 March | Asian outreach  
| 7. 10 March | European breakout  
| 8. 24 March | An Asian Golden Age  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 April</td>
<td>The world carried forward on a sea of change</td>
<td>Paine, “‘Annihilation of Space and Time’” in <em>Sea and Civilization</em>, 508–45.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 May 2021</td>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>Turn in final seminar paper to Ireland House by 4 p.m. (Wednesday)</td>
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**Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Cheating (adapted from the website of the College of Arts & Science, [https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html](https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html]):**

Academic integrity means that the work you submit is original. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious — for example, presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written); writing a sentence or paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea(s) without a reference to the source of the idea(s); or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance). Receiving or giving help on a take-home paper, examination, or quiz is also cheating, unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects).