## 

**Comparative Literature 240A**

**Literature of the Sea**

**Summer 2021**

**Mondays-Thursdays 9:10 am - 11:20 am**

**ZOOM via COURSE CANVAS PAGE**

**Instructor: Barbara Krystal**

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**Course Website: https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1457364**

**Office Hours: Mondays -Thursdays 11:30 am - 12:30 pm or by appointment (Zoom)**

“Even  [if you never have the chance to see or touch the ocean, the ocean touches you with every breath you take, every drop of water you drink, every bite you consume. Everyone, everywhere is inextricably connected to and utterly dependent upon the existence of the sea.](https://www.azquotes.com/quote/609050)” – Sylvia Earle, Marine Biologist and Ocean Pioneer

**Course Description:**

We are embarking on an exploration of the sea. Writers have long found the sea and the modes of human interaction with it a cause for wonder and reflection. Throughout history the ocean has acted as a site of encounter, of cultural production, and of adventure. It has served as a highway, a source of food, a place of warfare, and stage for discovery. Yet, it was, and often still is, relegated to the backdrop, a mere setting without a role of its own. Cast as “alien,” although credited with origin of life, the ocean is more than an empty vessel and has shaped the ways in which people regard themselves nationally, politically, and socially. We will examine what author-sailor Herman Melville calls the “watery part of the world” through exploration of literature linking humanity to the ocean (blue humanities). Seafaring, shipwrecks, superstitions, gods and sea monsters are some of the many subjects we will investigate through our readings and visual media, challenging our sense of stability as we discover the ways in which ideas, beliefs, and practices formulated in a fluid, mobile space seeps onto the ideas, beliefs, and practices on dry land. The sea itself often forms a stark, ill-defined, ever-changing, and dangerous background against which dramas of self-discovery and social conflict are played out.

**Course Objectives:**

The goal of the course is to develop and strengthen critical reading and writing skills through responses to works of literature/film/art. This will be supported by learning how to articulate a point of view that relies on textual support. Your writing should evince quality thinking and improvement in your ability to express critical insight. You will be asked to meet the following outcomes:

1. Read closely and carefully throughout the quarter.
2. Produce complex, analytical and persuasive literary arguments that lead to an understanding of the text.
3. Create complex claims and provide evidence to substantiate that claim.
4. Gain awareness of academic writing and develop strategies for revision.

**Required Texts: (All texts/content and media available on Canvas)**

***“Manuscript Found in a Bottle”* (Author: Edgar Allan Poe)**

***Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (Author: Jules Verne)**

***The Little Mermaid* (Author: Hans Christian Andersen)**

***Under the Sea-Wind* (Author: Rachel Carson)**

***The Old Man and the Sea* (Author: Ernest Hemingway)**

**Supplementary Reading/Theory:**

**“Undersea” by Rachel Carson; “Maritime Culture” by Helen Rozwadowski; “Monster Theory” by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen; “The Uncanny” by Sigmund Freud; “Protecting the Ocean” by Sylvia Earle**

**Films:**

***The Old Man and the Sea (animated)***

***Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea (1954)***

**Attendance and Participation:**

Class discussions provide a way to test your ideas and receive feedback. Taking notes and asking questions will help you generate ideas for your papers. **Regular participation is required and you are required to bring two questions or comments of interest in reference to the assigned text to each class session.** We will discuss your questions and comments either as a class or in small groups. Each student will have one private, mandatory meeting with me in my office. A sign-up sheet will be provided.

**Short Paper Assignments:**

As this is a composition course, your written assignments make up a majority of your grade. However, it is also a literature course, and good writing begins with careful reading; your daily reading and class discussions will contribute more to effective writing than a study of rhetoric and techniques. Our main goals for writing in this course are to build effective arguments through careful consideration of multiple perspectives, thorough analysis of evidence, and attention to writing as a collaborative process. The written assignments will practice each of these components.

During the quarter you will be writing **three short paper** assignments, approximately 2-3 double-spaced pages each, complete with a claim, for the texts/film/visual media we read/view/discuss in class. You are welcome to use class discussions to formulate ideas and as evidence

Assignments will be posted on Canvas and submitted via Canvas.

**Essay Writing Assignments:**

You will write **two essays**, 5-7 double-spaced pages each, utilizing material from the course. In order to maintain an equitable class, no late work is accepted.

Assignments will be posted on Canvas and you will submit your essay via Canvas

**Resources and Tutoring:**

Odegaard Writing and Research Center provides writing and research assistance from trained writing tutors at all stages of the writing process

<http://depts.washington.edu/owrc>

Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment (CLUE) provides writing assistance

<http://depts.washington.edu/aspuw/develop/writing-center>

**Accommodations:**

Students requesting accommodations for this class are encouraged to make an appointment to see me during my office hours to discuss their needs. Please let me know or contact Disability Resources for Students: 11 Mary Gates Hall; (206) 543-8924; uwdrs@uw.edu.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are required to incorporate evidence and cite that evidence. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the University of Washington’s manual on Student Conduct which can be found at: http://www.washington.edu/cssc/for-students/student-code-of-conduct/

**Grading:**

The grading scale follows the standard set by University of Washington.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter** | **Number** | **Note** |
| A | 4.0-3.9 | 96-100% |
| A- | 3.8-3.5 | 90-95% |
| B+ | 3.4-3.2 | 86-89% |
| B | 3.1-2.9 | 83-85% |
| B- | 2.8-2.5 | 80-82% |
| C+ | 2.4-2.2 | 77-79% |
| C | 2.1-1.9 | 74-76% |
| C- | 1.8-1.5 | 70-73% |
| D+ | 1.4-1.2 | 67-69% |
| D | 1.1-0.9 | 63-67% |
| D- | 0.8-0.7 | Lowest passing grade. |
| E | 0.0 | Academic failure. No credit earned. |

**Assignment Weight:**

**20% Class Participation** (contributions to class discussions, in-class writing, peer reviews, completion of reading assignments)

**Participation will be graded weekly as follows:**

10 points: attentive class participation, active engagement, and speaking at least once, posting on Canvas

8-9 points: engagement in all activities, without speaking in class discussions

7 points: some engagement, but sometimes distracted or focused on materials unrelated to the course

6 points: total disengagement

5 points: focus on other matters

4-0 points: lack of participation and/or absent from class

**30% Reading Response Papers**

**25% Midterm Essay**

**25% Final Essay**

**Calendar**

Listed below are the course readings and activities for each day of class. The course calendar is subject to change; any change will be communicated to you as early as possible.

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| **Date** | **In Class Activity** | **Assignment due at beginning of Class Period for this class date** |
| Monday, June 21 | Representation of the sea: maps, stories, monsters, discovery, invention, and adventure. | Read: Syllabus  Keeping Things Shipshape: introductions, course objectives, readings, assignments. Analytical Writing Tools |
| Tuesday, June 22 | Discussion:  The Strange and Familiar Sea; Kinship, monsters, and challenging perspectives. What monsters signify and how they hold a mirror to our way of seeing. | Read: “The Uncanny” by Sigmund Freud; “Monster Theory” by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen;  “Undersea” by Rachel Carson  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Wednesday, June 23 | Discussion:  Straddling land and sea. Ocean origins and evolutionary tropes. | Read: *The Little Mermaid* by Hans Christian Andersen  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Thursday, January 24 | Discussion:  Fathoming the Fathomless: Science and Seafaring  Escape, Discovery, Adventure  Oceanic Gothic | Read: *Message Found in a Bottle* by Edgar Allan Poe  Read: “Maritime Culture” by Helen Rozwadawoski  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Monday, June 28 | Discussion:  Transformations, Law/Order; Shipwreck; Strange and familiar relations with the sea. | Read: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne (Part I, Chapters 1-11)  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Tuesday, June 29 | Discussion:  Rites of Passage; Initiation; Morality and Ethics of the Sea and of the Shore. | Read: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne (Part I, Chapters 12-23)  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Wednesday, June 30 | Discussion:  Fathoming the Fathomless: Science and Seafaring  Escape, Discovery, Adventure | Read: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne (Part II, Chapters 1-11)  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Thursday, July 1 | Discussion:  Private versus public access to knowledge. Rights and privilege of knowing.  Who owns the Sea? National Identity. | Read: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne (Part II, Chapters 12-23)  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Monday, July 5 | Holiday | Read: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne |
| Tuesday, July 6 | Discussion:  What lives in the sea? Agency of animals. Exploring through other perspectives. | Read: *Under the Sea-Wind* by Rachel Carson (Book 1)  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Wednesday, July 7 | Discussion:  Science and Art/Fact and Aesthetics | Read: *Under the Sea-Wind* by Rachel Carson (Book 2)  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Thursday, July 8 | Discussion:  Material Immortality.  Humanity and Nature.  Belong to the sea and understanding diversity of life; Thinking with Sea Creatures. | Read: *Under the Sea-Wind* by Rachel Carson (Book 3)  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Monday, July 12 | Discussion:  Kinship with the sea  Technology and Belonging to the Sea | Read: *The Old Man and the Sea*  By Ernest Hemingway  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Tuesday, July 13 | Discussion:  Rites of Passage  Oceanic Feeling | Read: *The Old Man and the Sea*  By Ernest Hemingway  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Wednesday, July 14 | Discussion:  Pride  Ego  Physical and Emotional Relations with a Liquid World | Read: *The Old Man and the Sea*  By Ernest Hemingway  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Thursday, July 15 | Discussion:  Now what? How knowing the sea changes perspective. Divine knowledge/power and developing a sea-ethic | Read: *The Old Man and the Sea*  By Ernest Hemingway  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Monday, July 19 | Discussion:  Interspecies Communication  Science of Communication  Species Telling Stories | Read: “Decoding Whale Talk”;  “Whale Song Echoes Help Scientists Map the Ocean Floor”  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Tuesday, July 20 | Discussion:  Where can life survive? What makes life interconnected? | Read: “Life Beneath the Antarctic Ice”; “Plastic Ocean Unites Corporations to Save Sea Life”  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Wednesday, July 21 | Discussion:  Interplay between humans and ocean  Centrality of Ocean to Quality of Life  Studying the Ocean in New Ways | Read:  TedTalk: “Protect the Ocean” by Sylvia Earle  “Why the Ocean Matters to Everyone, Everywhere” by Sylvia Earle  Bring two comments or questions to class. |
| Thursday, July 22 | Discussion:  Oceanic Themes  The ocean has been cast as “alien” to the human yet the origin of all life; so immense as to be impervious to anthropogenic harm yet nonetheless in peril; too vast for comprehension and yet compressed into image and narrative. A once neglected area for humanities scholarship, the ocean is now receiving much-deserved attention, in literary studies, history, anthropology, science studies, animal studies, and environmentalism. | Summary of Texts  Review  Developing Final Essay Thesis Statements. |
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