

A History of Seafaring in the Age of Sail
HITO 178/278
University of California, San Diego
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Tuesdays, 2:00-4:50 (or all afternoon)
Room: H&SS #4025, "Galbraith Room"
Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:15-2:00

A whale ship was my Yale College and my Harvard
-Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

The sea is a hostile environment unfit for human habitation yet for centuries people have risked their lives to travel the oceans. What makes people take to the sea and how did they manage the dangers and difficulties of shipboard life? Life at sea is at times radically different than life on land or it can magnify the struggles we all face (food, water, social peace and cohesion). The sea is a contested space where the laws that govern nation states do not always apply. Many people took to the sea not of their own choosing but through some form of kidnapping and bondage. This course forces students to imagine existence on a whole other plane of being afar from what they are accustomed. How does one survive at sea? What kind of social world is born out of close confinement in trying conditions? Taught in conjunction with the San Diego Maritime Museum and the UCSD Special Collections Library, this course investigates life at sea from the age of discovery to the advent of the steamship. We will investigate discovery, cartography, technology, piracy, fisheries, commerce, naval conflict, and seaboard life and seaport activity.

Readings

Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*

Everything else is in Special Collections or online.

Some weeks have long readings while others have very little. Please plan ahead and start the longer readings well ahead of time knowing that you are going to have breaks along the way. For example, the last week's reading should be started many weeks before.

Warning: Required Trips

This course is unusual in that it requires two half-day long trips away from campus. One will take place during class hours on a Tuesday while the other will be on a Saturday. You will need to work this out with other courses. On two occasions this class will be on board actual sailing vessels at sea. If this terrifies you or you know that you are chronically seasick please take this into consideration. The San Diego Bay is pretty calm and the museum would not take us out if the water was remotely choppy (we had to move a class for this once in the past)

Grades

The final grade for this course is based on a combination of short written assignments, in class presentations, seminar participation, and a larger final paper. The five papers/presentations will be graded as a combination of both the written paper and oral presentation amounting to about 10% each (total of 50%). General class participation (class discussion of reading, asking questions at the museum, etc.) comprises 20%. Your final paper is worth 30% of your final grade.

Academic Honesty: Students may work in groups and are encouraged to discuss paper topics.

However, they are to write their own essays. If you copy material from assigned or unassigned texts you must cite the source by using quotation marks and indicating where the material came from. Every essay can be written using assigned readings or primary source documents found among the web links on the course web site. In-class exams are closed book with no texts or crib sheets. Cheating will be dealt with according to UCSD's policy on Academic Dishonesty.

Schedule (Subject to Change)

Tuesday, April 4

The Room is a Ship: Life at Sea

Reading: Ned Ward, *The Wooden World Dissected* (1707 or 1708)

Linda Colley's "The Sea Around Us"

Assignment: Come to class prepared to imagine the classroom as resembling a ship on a two month long voyage.

Tuesday, April 11

Cartography

Reading: Gregory H. Nobles, "Straight Lines and Stability: Mapping the Political Order of the Frontier," *The Journal of American History*, Vol.80, no.1 (June 1993), 9-35; Article by J. B. Harley and web site on the historiography of cartography.

*Supplemental Reading: Martin Bruckner: *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, & National Identity*

Assignment: First read the articles about how historians use maps as sources to teach us about the past. Write 2-3 pages on a map. Bring in a copy of a map from one of the databases. Remember to focus more on what the mapmaker was trying to "argue" and less about the map's accuracy. Send an email with the image, a link to the image, or a powerpoint presentation before class. Give roughly 8-minute presentation in class.

Tuesday, April 18

Ship Design and Construction

*Maritime Museum Trip One

Arrive at Museum at 12:30 and Pilot Tour at 2:45

Reading: Assorted Online Readings on "Ship Terms and Diagrams."

Reread "Wooden World Dissected"

Watch videos from Maritime Museum *San Salvador* building site.

*Supplemental Reading: Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh: *The Many-Headed Hydra*

Tuesday, April 25

Pirates in the Archives

Reading: Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, Introduction-Chapter Four.

*UCSD Archive Visit

*Supplemental Reading: Lauren Benton: *The Search For Sovereignty*

Tuesday, May 2

The Age of Sail in Print

*UCSD Archive Visit

Reading: Choose a printed text found in UCSD's Special Collections Library on the Age of Sail (before 1860) about life at sea, ship building, nautical science, or sail handling, etc.

Assignment: Write 2-3 pages analyzing your printed text and present what you found to the class. Give roughly 8-minute presentation about your text (showing it on the screen).

Tuesday, May 9 [No Class this Week Because of Saturday Trip]

Sail Handling

*Maritime Museum Trip Two

Reading: Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840),

Saturday May 13, Sail the *San Salvador*

Arrive at museum at 12:30 for "hang test" if you choose. We will sail the *Californian* until about 4:30-5:00.

Tuesday, May 16

Recording Life at Sea

*UCSD Archive Visit

Reading: Special Collections Logbooks

Assignment: Write 2-3 pages analyzing a manuscript logbook from UCSD's Special Collections Library and present what you found in class. Give roughly 8-minute presentation about your text (showing various pages on the screen to class).

Tuesday, May 23

Commodities

Reading: Assigned to each student.

Assignment: Each student is in charge of one commodity (sugar, bullion, rice, etc.) and must be able to show on a world map the movement of that commodity through global markets. Give roughly 8-minute presentation about your commodity in class.

Sunday, May 28, Sail the San Salvador?

Tuesday, May 30

The Middle Passage

Reading: All on course website.

Assignment: Write 2-3 pages about the middle passage based on newspaper searches or slave trade database. Be prepared to discuss what you found in class, no formal presentation.

Supplemental Reading: Gregory O'Malley, *Final Passages*

Tuesday, June 6

Writing Pirates!

Reading: Mark Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*, Chapter Five-Conclusion

Prepare questions for professor about how history books actually get produced (research, writing, production).

FINAL PAPERS DUE

Friday, June 10

10-12 Pages Analyzing Primary Sources from the Age of Sail