

HIS556/HIS398: American Maritime History
Fall 2021

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Office: EN C211C
Office Hours: MWF 11am-12pm; W 1-2pm;
R 11am-12pm (Virtual) or by appt.



Above: Poster for United States' Lines, SS *Leviathan*, 1925

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

The history of the United States is essentially maritime. From the colonial era to the present, Americans have been inextricably tied to fresh and salt water in dimensions economic, political, military, imperial, environmental and scientific, social and cultural. Though the meaning and significance of maritime activities has changed remarkably over the past five hundred years, nevertheless, Americans encounter with seas, lakes, and rivers has remained central to the experience of the nation. This course will examine the watery dimensions of American history, tracing out the significance of maritime history for the nation as a continuous aspect of American life while also examining the way maritime work, life, and leisure have undergone remarkable change over time. The objectives of the course will be to introduce you broadly to major themes in American maritime historiography, to familiarize you with historiographical debates within the field, to teach you how to see the merits and flows in its scholarship, and to discuss how maritime historians are in conversation with one another. Of course, throughout, you will also learn about major moments in American maritime history and to continue to hone your skill in primary and secondary-source research, in analytical and critical thinking, and in oral and written communication.

TEXTS:

Philbrick, *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* (ISBN 978-0141001821)

Symonds, *The Battle of Midway* (ISBN 978-0199315987)

Kahrl, *Free the Beaches: The Story of Ned Coll and the Battle for America's Most Exclusive Shoreline* (ISBN 9780300215144)

GRADES (HIS556):

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Class Participation | 130 Points | |
| Ship-Map Quiz | 30 Points | |
| Exams (2) | 200 Points | |
| Précises (4) | 80 Points | |
| Readings Presentations (4) | 40 Points | |
| Final Project | 120 Points | =600 Total Points |

GRADES (HIS398)

| | | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Class Participation | 130 Points | |
| Ship-Map Quiz | 30 Points | |
| Reading Journals | 120 Points | |
| Exams | 200 Points | |
| Final Paper | 120 Points | =600 Total Points |

DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Class Participation (HIS556/398)

Class participation is worth more points cumulatively than any other component of your grade. I value it highly. You will be assessed on the quality and consistency of your participation in class discussion, in answering questions posed during lecture, and in contributing to the good of the class during exam reviews. Each class meeting is worth 10 points (approximately four for attendance and six for active participation). 10 Points x 13 Class Meetings = 130 Points

Ship-Map Quiz (HIS556/398)

On 9/13, you will complete a quiz designed to acquaint you with important points of American maritime geography, ship design, and sail rig. There will be 30 IDs, each worth 1 point.

Exams (HIS556/398)

You will have two exams, consisting of 10 short answer identifications and one essay. One week prior to each exam, I will give you a study guide, on which you will find a list of terms and essay topics to consider in preparing for the exam. On each exam, I will give you 15 terms, from which you may choose 10 to identify. Each ID is worth 3 points. I award 2 points for answering Who/What/When/Where and 1 point for discussing the term's historical significance—by which I mean, why is it important? You may choose one of two essays on which to write. IDs are worth 30 points total. The essay is worth 70 points. Both exams will be completed online and are open book/open note.

Final Project (HIS556/398)

In consultation with me, students will choose either to write a twenty-paged, double-spaced-12-point font primary and secondary-source based research paper on an aspect of maritime history introduced in the course or they may choose to write a twenty page page historiographical paper on a debate within the subfield with the instructors consultation and approval; the structure and assessment will vary depending on the project, but will break down approximately as follows: 20 points for an annotated bibliography of relevant primary and/or secondary sources to include at least 5 books/articles. The bibliography will be due to me no later than class on October 11; 40 points for appropriate discussion of primary and/or secondary sources; 20 points for identifiable argument; 10 points for appropriate use of quotes from sources; 10 points for identifying strengths and weaknesses of sources; 10 points for highlighting connections or disparities among sources; 10 points for attention to structure, style, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Final projects will be due on the final class meeting December 6. I may also approve alternative final projects such as formal K-12 lesson plan on some aspect of maritime history; digital or public history exhibit, in which case the graded components of the final project may be worked out independently with me; HIS398 students wishing me to look over a rough draft before submission can do so provided I have at least one week before the final deadline to look at it.

Précis x4 (HIS556)

Four times a semester, you will submit a one-page, single-spaced précis (or book summary) that must include 1) Author's Thesis 2) Historiography 3) Sources 4) Strengths 5) Weaknesses. The précis will be due in class on the day we discuss the readings in question. Each précis will be worth 20 points (4 points for each of the précis components).

20 Points x 4 Précis = 80 Points

Weekly Readings Presentation x4 (HIS556)

Four times a semester, you will work with fellow group members to build a short (2 slide) PowerPoint presentation on the week's supplementary readings to present to the class. One slide should include authors' main argument and significance of the work; identification of important people/places/events; fun/interesting/surprising facts; a second slide with three possible exam IDs from the excerpted readings; these should focus on historically significant people, places, vessels, events along with a 3-5 Who/What/When/Where/Why Important sample exam answer. I will choose 5 to include on the exam. The presentations are worth 10 points each, breaking down as follows, 3 points for identifying main argument; 2 points for identifying significance of the work; 2 points for a fun/interesting/curious/anecdotal piece of info from the reading; 3 points for appropriate sample exam IDs.

10 Points x 4 presentations = 40 Points

Weekly Reading Journals (HIS398)

For this component of your grade, you must submit to me no later than our class meeting at 5pm on Monday evenings, a one-page, double-spaced reading journal. Each journal should include approximately a half page summarizing the reading. Your goal here should be to convince me that you read the assigned pages. The second half page should be devoted to a reflection on the reading. You can reflect in a number of ways. You might ask yourself, "what did I find interesting and why?" or "what did I find confusing, and why?" As we move through the course, you might link the reading to themes, issues, or questions we've already discussed in the course.

Please note, reading journals are to be completed for the main textbooks only, not for the excerpted readings. HIS398 students are only responsible for reading the three main texts.
10 Points x 12 Journals = 120 Points

POLICIES

Attendance

I expect you to attend class and to be on time. As outlined under class participation, you can earn up to 10 points each class for active participation. If you are absent, excused or not, you simply lose those points. Exceptions will be made for those who suspect or have tested positive for COVID and every effort will be made to accommodate those students' participation in class meetings via Zoom. Latecomers interrupt both your attention and mine. I will overlook the occasional latecomer, but consistent lateness will result in loss of participation points. As class participation makes up more than 20% of your grade, an easy way to succeed is simply to show up on time and be engaged.

Mobile Devices

Using cell phones in class inhibits your learning and is disrespectful to me. I will tolerate the accidental ring, but clandestine or open use of your phone in class will result in the loss of that day's class participation grade. The best practice is to turn off your phone at the start of class and leave it off until class is over.

Late Work

At the graduate level, I do not accept late work; if you must miss a class, you may email me the relevant work by the end of the class day and you must provide me with a hard copy of the assignment at our next class meeting. Any work not submitted will result in a zero for the assignment.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with accordingly, resulting in a zero for the assignment and possibly failure of the course. When you use someone else's ideas without giving them credit in the form of a citation or reference, you are plagiarizing. If you take an idea or quote from the assigned text, please cite it with a footnote according to Chicago Style. Otherwise, all written ideas should be your own.

Accommodations

Southern Connecticut State University provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, for students with documented disabilities on an individualized basis. If you are a student with a documented disability, the University's Accessibility Services office can work with you to determine appropriate accommodations. Before you receive accommodations in this class, you will need to make an appointment with Accessibility Services located on the 3rd Floor of Buley Library. To discuss your approved accommodations with me or other concerns, such as medical emergencies or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment to meet as soon as possible.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, I will follow the university's closure/delay policy; if the university is open, the class will be meeting.

COVID-19

COVID conditions are regularly changing. For current directives and mitigation practices, please check the SCSU Fall 2021 Reopening website. As we begin the semester, everyone **MUST** wear a mask that covers their nose and mask in any campus building, including classroom spaces. If a student is not able to wear a mask due to a documented disability or medical reason, the student must seek an accommodation from the Center for Academic Success and Accessibility Services prior to arriving on campus.

We would also offer this guidance to help you know the expectations for mask-wearing and how to address any concerns that might arise.

1. Students must arrive to class wearing a mask or face covering over their mouth and nose. If a student does not have a mask, the student must pick up a disposable mask (available in most campus offices) before joining the class session.
2. If a student enters a class without wearing a mask, the student will be told by the faculty member that they must put one on.
3. If a student refuses to put on a mask after being instructed to do so, the faculty member will request that the student leave the class and notify the Office of Student Conduct.
4. If the student refuses to leave, the faculty member will excuse themselves from class and seek assistance from the Office of Student Conduct and/or University Police in accordance with the Disruptive Student Policy.

| Week | Date | Discussion/Lecture Topic | Assigned Texts | Important Dates |
|------|-------------|---|--|--|
| 1 | 8/30 | Lecture: Putting the Maritime in American History Syllabus Overview Podcast Discussion | Podcasts | |
| 2 | 9/6 | No Class: Labor Day Holiday | Prepare for Map Quiz Prepare for Ship Quiz | No Class! |
| 3 | 9/13 | Primary Source Discussion: Benet's "Clipper Ships and Captains" Lecture: Wood Ships and Iron Men from Memory to Modernity Ship-Map Quiz Discuss Readings | All: Philbrick, xi-76 Smith, "Thou Uncracked Keel;" Bruggeman, "Save the Olympia" | Journal 1 Due Ship-Map Quiz |
| | 9/18 | 1pm: Mystic Seaport Museum Field Trip? (optional extra credit) | | |
| 4 | 9/20 | Map/Ship Quiz Primary Source Discussion Lecture: Indigenous Seafaring and European Encounter Discuss Readings | All: Philbrick, 77-150 HIS556: Excerpts from Lipman, <i>Saltwater Frontier</i> ; Reid, <i>The Sea Is My Country</i> | Journal 2 Due Commit to Final Project Topic |
| | 9/23 – 9/24 | Virtual US Naval Academy Naval History Symposium (optional extra credit) | | |
| 5 | 9/27 | Primary Source Discussion: <i>Ranger</i> Recruitment Poster Lecture: The Maritime Dimensions of American Independence from the Revolution to the War of 1812 Discuss Readings | All: Philbrick, 151-238 HIS556: Excerpts from Gilje, <i>Liberty on the Waterfront</i> Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets" | Journal 3 Due |
| 6 | 10/4 | Primary Source Discussion: Morison's <i>Maritime History of Massachusetts</i> Lecture: A Social History of Jack Tar Discuss Readings | All: Symonds, 1-63 Excerpts from Rediker, "When Women Pirates Sailed the Seas;" | Journal 4 Due |

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| | | | Vickers, <i>Farmers and Fishermen</i> | |
| 7 | 10/11 | Primary Source Discussion: Negro Seamen's Act Freedom and Slavery in the Maritime World from the Barbary Wars to the Civil War Book Discussion | All: Symonds, 64-132 HIS556: Excerpts from Bolster, <i>Black Jacks</i> and Rediker, <i>The Slave Ship</i> | Journal 5 Due Annotated Bibliography Due |
| 8 | 10/18 | Primary Source Discussion: Whaleman's Journal The American Whale Fishery Discuss Readings | All: Symonds, 133-197 HIS556: Excerpts from Norling, <i>Captain Ahab Had a Wife</i> ; Jones, "Fish Out of Water" | Journal 6 Due Mid-Term Exam (Take-Home) |
| 9 | 10/25 | Primary Source: Erskine's <i>Twenty Years Before the Mast</i> Lecture: Maritime Manifest Destiny and the Emergence of Antebellum Empire Book Discussion | All: Symonds, 198-287 HIS556: Excerpts from Rouleau, <i>With Sails Whitening Every Sea</i> ; Karp, "Slavery and American Sea Power" | Journal 7 Due |
| 10 | 11/1 | Primary Source: Dana's <i>To Cuba and Back</i> Lecture: Industrialization, Maritime Labor, and Reform Discuss Readings | All: Symonds, 288-366 HIS556: Excerpts from Maggard, Cole, "Philadelphia's Lords of the Docks;" | Journal 8 Due |
| 11 | 11/8 | Primary Source: Tracy's <i>Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy</i> , 1889 The US Navy from Commerce Raiding to Sea Power Discuss Readings | All: Kahrl, 1-67 HIS556: Excerpts from McConaghy, <i>Warship under Sail</i> ; Melhorn, <i>Two Block Fox</i> | Journal 9 Due |
| 12 | 11/15 | No Class | View <i>In the Heart of the Sea</i> (2015) and <i>Midway</i> (2019) | No Class! |
| 13 | 11/22 | Primary Source: Currier & Ives' "Low Water in the Mississippi" Lecture: Inland Rivers, Lakes, and Bays Book Discussion | All: Kahrl, 68-147 HIS556: Excerpts from Fraga, "Digitally Mapping Commercial Currents;" | Journal 10 Due |

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| | | | Kelman, <i>A River and Its City</i> | |
| 14 | 11/29 | <p>Primary Source Discussion Goode's <i>Fish and Fisheries of the United States</i></p> <p>Lecture: Fisheries, Science, and the Marine Environment</p> <p>Discuss Readings</p> | <p>All: Kahrl, 148-230</p> <p>HIS556: Excerpts from Bolster, <i>The Mortal Sea</i>; Keiner, <i>The Oyster Question</i></p> | Journal 11 Due |
| 15 | 12/6 | <p>Primary Source Discussion: Wallace's "A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again"</p> <p>Lecture: Beaches, Bikinis, and the Box</p> <p>Discuss Readings</p> | <p>All: Kahrl, 231-303</p> <p>HIS556: Gillis, <i>The Human Shore</i>; Simon, "Staging Utopia on the Boardwalk"</p> | <p>Journal 12 Due</p> <p>Final Papers Due</p> |
| 16 | 12/8 – 12/16 | Final Exam: Date and Time TBA | | Final Exam (Take-Home) |