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Faculty of Science Course Syllabus (Section A) (revised June 2021)

HSTC 3331.03 / HIST 3073.03 / BIOL 4664.03 / MARI 4664.03 / OCEA 4331.03 / SCIE 4001.03
History of the Marine Sciences
Spring 2023 (May 8 – May 30, 2023)

Dalhousie University and the University of King's College sit on ancestral and unceded Mi'kmaw territory, subject to the Peace and Friendship Treaties that are the basis for peaceful co-existence and good relations among all who live in Mi'kma'ki. We are all Treaty people.

We acknowledge the histories, contributions, and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and communities who have been here for over 400 years.

Instructor(s): Dr. Gillian Gass gillian.gass@dal.ca Office hours by appointment

Lectures: M/T/W/R 9:35 – 11:55 a.m.

Course delivery: In-person (lectures/seminars/group work not recorded)

Calendar Course Description

This course traces the history of marine sciences from the antiquity to the 20th century. Topics may include ancient cosmologies, voyages of discovery, ocean circulation, and a range of scientific perspectives and technological developments that have shaped the human understanding of the oceans.

Introduction to the Course

In this course, we will trace the history of marine sciences from the ancients to the 20th century. We will not attempt a complete narrative covering how human understanding and study of the ocean developed across such a wide range of time and space; instead, at each class meeting we will examine a selection of topics from particular historical moments to try to understand some central questions relevant to the history of marine sciences and the history of science more broadly. This class gives sciences, social sciences, and humanities students alike the opportunity to learn about the historical context of one area of science and to work with primary historical sources and selected secondary analyses that aim to make sense of a particular type of human activity.

This is an advanced-level summer class that will take place within a four-week period. As such, this class will be an intense period of work and, in addition to the regular 9:35-11:55 a.m. class meetings you should expect to spend significant time out of class each day preparing for the next day's class reading as well as working on exams and the course project. All course readings are available to you within via our Brightspace site.

Each year, students from a wide range of academic backgrounds take this course, and I encourage each of you to find a place for this course within your overall programme of study and your own particular interests. How does this material fit in with or connect to the rest of what you already know and what you are learning at university? What interests and contributions do you bring to the course? As we focus on particular topics and get into details, it helps to keep in mind the question: what does this mean for how we think about science, about nature, about knowledge and its possibilities and limits?



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