

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS
University of Virginia, Academic Sponsor

Voyage: Fall 2015

Discipline: English

CPLT 2559-102: Literature of Travel

Division: Lower

Faculty Name: Brayton

Credit Hours: 3; Contact Hours: 38

Pre-requisites:

None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From ancient Greece to the present, stories of crossing the water depict the travels and travails of mariners exploring new regions and finding their way home. Since Homer, such narratives have captivated readers with gripping and often sensationalized accounts of little-known parts of the world and of that mysterious fluid element, the sea itself. The line between fact and fiction can be difficult to discern in these literary works, yet that ambiguity often heightens their appeal to readers. In this class we will carefully and critically examine that boundary as we read classic and lesser-known nautical travel narratives, fictional and nonfictional, from a variety of cultural traditions relevant to our voyage. As we do so we will explore the line between fact and fiction in travel narratives, as well as considering multiple contexts for interpretation, particular attention to varying depictions of the marine environment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Our goals in this course are to explore the boundary between fictional and nonfictional narratives of travel; to hone our critical reading and writing skills; to challenge the gender politics of the “man against the sea” tradition; and to give life to nautical travel literature by exploring the regions where some of them are set. Classes will consist of a mix of lecture and discussion, while field seminars will include walking tours, with mini-lectures, and an emphasis on the cultural narratives deployed to frame and present material artifacts recovered from the sea.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Homer, *The Odyssey*

Severin, *The Ulysses Voyage*

Columbus, *The Log of Christopher Columbus*

Verne, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*

Slocum, *Sailing Alone Around the World*

Callahan, *Adrift: 76 Days Lost at Sea*

Handouts: Pamuk, “The Boy Who Watched the Ships Go By”; Raban, *Coasting* (introduction)

AUTHOR: Homer (translated by Robert Fagles).

TITLE: *The Odyssey*

PUBLISHER: Penguin

ISBN #: 978-0-14-026886-7

DATE/EDITION: 1996

AUTHOR: Tim Severance
TITLE: *The Ulysses Voyage*
PUBLISHER: Dutton
ISBN #: 9780525246145
DATE/EDITION: 1987

AUTHOR: Christopher Columbus
TITLE: *The Log of Christopher Columbus*
PUBLISHER: International Marine
ISBN #: 978-0877429517
DATE/EDITION: 1987

AUTHOR: Jules Verne (translated and edited by William Butcher)
TITLE: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*
PUBLISHER: Oxford
ISBN #: 978-0199539277
DATE/EDITION: 2014

AUTHOR: Joshua Slocum
TITLE: *Sailing Alone Around the World*
PUBLISHER: Dover
ISBN #: 0-486-20326-3
DATE/EDITION: 1956 (or any year)

AUTHOR: Steve Callahan
TITLE: *Adrift: Seventy-Six Days Lost at Sea*
PUBLISHER: Mariner Books
ISBN #: 978-0618257324
DATE/EDITION: 2002 (reprint—any year will do)

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Tilbury—September 13

A1—September 15: Intro.; Handout: intro Raban’s *Coasting*; HW: *The Odyssey*, Books 1-4

A2—September 17: *The Odyssey*, Books 1-4; HW: *The Odyssey*, Books 5-8

A3—September 19: *The Odyssey*, Books 5-8; HW: *The Odyssey*, Books 9-10

Civitavecchia—September 21-23
Naples—September 24-26

A4—September 27: *Odyssey*, Books 9+10; HW: Pamuk, “Boy Who Watched the Ships Go By”

A5—September 29: Pamuk, “The Boy Who Watched the Ships”; HW: Severin

Istanbul—September 30-October 5

A6—October 7: Severin, *The Ulysses Voyage*; HW: Severin,

Study Day—October 8

A7—October 10: Severin, *The Ulysses Voyage*; HW: finish Severin

Barcelona—October 11-16

A8—October 18: Severin, *The Ulysses Voyage*; HW: Columer, *The Log*

Study Day—October 20

A9—October 21: Columbus, *Log* HW: Columbus, *Log*

A10—October 23: Columbus, *Log*; HW: Columbus, *Log*

Dakar—October 24-28

A11—October 30: Columbus, *Log*; HW: Verne, Intro+ chs. 1-3

A12—November 1: Verne, *20,000 Leagues*; HW: Verne

Takoradi—November 2-6

A13—November 8: Verne, *20,000 Leagues*; HW: Verne

Study Day—November 10

A14—November 11: Verne, *20,000 Leagues*; HW: Verne

A15—November 13: Verne, *20,000 Leagues*; HW: finish Verne

Salvador—November 15-20

A16—November 21: Verne, *20,000 Leagues*; HW: Slocum, Intro.+ Ch. 1

A17—November 23: Slocum, *Sailing Alone*; HW: chs. 2-5

Study Day—November 25

A18—November 26: Slocum, *Sailing Alone*; HW: chs. 6-12

A19—November 28: Slocum, *Sailing Alone*; HW: finish Slocum

Arrive/Depart Port of Spain—November 29

A20—December 1: Slocum, *Sailing Alone*; HW: Callahan, Intro+ Ch. 1

Study Day—December 2

A21—December 4: Callahan, *Adrift*; HW: Callahan

Puntarenas—December 6-11

A22—December 12: Callahan, *Adrift*

A23—December 14: Callahan, *Adrift*

Study Day—December 16

A24—December 27; A-Day Finals

Arrive San Diego—December 21

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

- 1) Visit to the Museu Maritim of Barcelona, the Columbus Monument, and the Port Vell (old port). This field lab will be an exploration of the way Catalans understand and depict the historical significance of Christopher Columbus, who may or may not have been of Catalan origin. In this field lab we will investigate the way Columbus's life and legacies are framed in a cultural narrative that differs markedly from the one we are accustomed to in the United States. Thus, this would be an exercise in comparative cultural history, including the areas around the museum (the Ramblas neighborhood and the old waterfront).
- 2) Visit to the Aquarium de Barcelona in the Port Vell. This field lab will be an investigation of the aesthetic and epistemological legacies of Jules Verne, whose novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, it has been claimed, invented the way modernity visualizes the marine environment. In our visit to the aquarium we will go on a "Verne hunt," exploring the ways a modern, world-class aquarium frames, or represents, the marine environment visually, textually, acoustically, and otherwise.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be required to complete two projects based on their port stop experiences and field seminars. The first will be a short response paper (2-3 pp.); the second will be a "concept map" describing some aspect of the history of nautical travel. Students will present their concept maps orally in class (~10 min. each). Both of these assignments will receive a letter grade that will be factored into the overall class grade.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

Essay 1: 20 %
Essay 2: 20%
Attendance/Participation: 30%
Field Lab Response Paper: 10%
Concept Map: 10%
Oral Presentation: 10%

RESERVE BOOKS AND FILMS FOR THE LIBRARY

None

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

None

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

None

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."