

[Draft 1 of Syllabus, Dec. 28; syllabus will be revised.]

## ENGLISH 6370: Topics in Environmental Literatures: The Blue Humanities: Oceans in Literature and Theory

**Professor Alaimo**

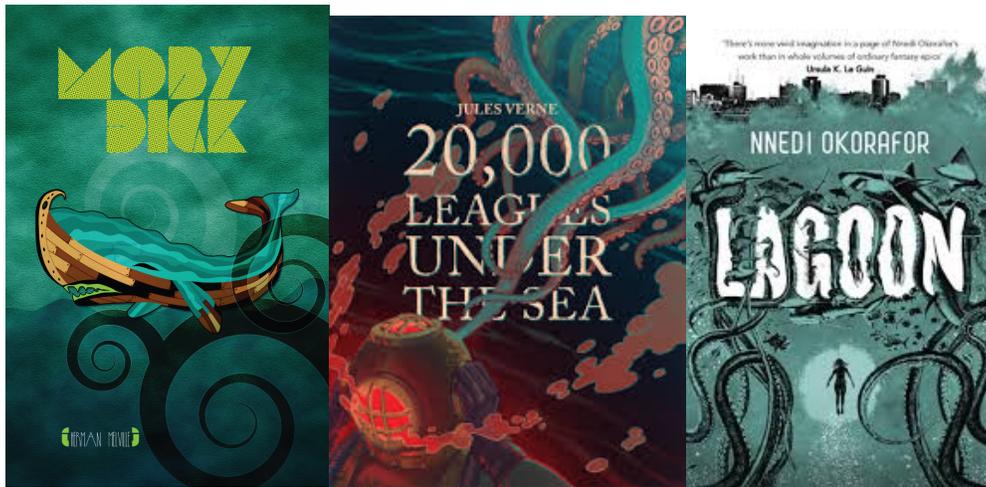
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**Thursdays 6-8:50, Spring 2018**

Seminar Room TBA



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. This course introduces key questions, themes and topics in the blue humanities, from Shakespeare to contemporary cultural studies. We will begin with short introductions to marine biology, ocean history, and the blue humanities, and Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* with Steve Mentz’s book, *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550-1719*. Two weeks with Melville’s *Moby Dick* and one with Jules Verne’s *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and other readings follow. The class will then plunge into modernist poetry, followed by a range of contemporary literature and theory including a feminist SF novel, indigenous literature of the Pacific, an AfroFuturist SF novel, and assorted theory, cultural studies, and science studies. The central concerns of the class will be those of animal studies, posthumanism, and environmentalism, along with gender, race, indigeneity, and de/colonialism.

## Required Texts:

- Marine Biology, *A Very Short Introduction*. Philip V. Madlenov. Oxford UP. ISBN-13: 978-0199695058
- Callum Roberts, *An Unnatural History of the Sea*. ISBN-13: 978-1597265775
- Steve Mentz, *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550-1719*. ISBN-13: 978-0816691067
- Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Signet Classics, ISBN-13: 978-0451527127
- Jules Verne, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, Simon and Schuster, ISBN-13: 978-1416500209
- Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*. [Modern Library ASIN: B00BR5GVAK or Penguin Classics, ISBN 9780142437247 ]
- Joan Slonczewski, *A Door Into Ocean*, ISBN-13: 978-0312876524
- Linda Hogan, *People of the Whale*, Norton, ISBN-13: 978-0393335347
- Villem Flusser & Louis Bec, *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis*, ISBN-13: 978-0816678228
- Stefan Helmreich, *Alien Ocean*, ISBN-13: 978-0520250628
- Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, *Iep Jaltok: Poems from a Marshalese Daughter*, ISBN-13: 978-0816534029
- Nnedi Okorafor *Lagoon*, Saga Press, ISBN-13: 978-1481440882

Selected articles and chapters will be available on Blackboard.

## Course Requirements

Participation, two presentations: 10%

Weekly papers: 30%

Seminar paper (including presentation of seminar paper): 60%

You must complete all the required work in order to obtain credit for the course.

Eight short response papers (3-4 double-spaced typed, stapled pages) will be required. These will be due at the beginning of class each week and will be handed in again, gathered together in a folder, at the final class period. These papers are not meant to be fully fleshed out arguments or analyses. It is best **not** to organize these initial papers around proving one definitive thesis. Instead, these papers should analyze and interpret the texts for the week, compare them to other readings in the course, remark upon the most significant ideas, evaluate the merits and limitations of particular arguments and theoretical frameworks, consider further lines of inquiry, and raise significant and provocative questions. The response papers will receive immediate comments but not grades; these papers will be graded in a portfolio manner, along with your presentation and participation, at the end of the course. (If the papers are C, D, or F papers, they will receive those grades, however, since that information is rather urgent.) There may be a different assignment, for one of the weeks, which will be required and which will count as one of the short papers.

Attend at least one scholarly talk. Please attend at least one scholarly talks and submit a

brief summary and commentary on the presentation. You may hand in the short paper anytime before the final class period. (If you are a PhD student you should be attending as many academic talks as you can!) This spring the History Department will be hosting the Webb lecture series on “The Digital Medieval” (April 4-5), Women’s and Gender Studies will be bringing Valerie Sperling and Sylvanna Falcón (March 6 12:3-3:30); the Center for Theory may have some talks and there may be more.

Two 15-minute presentations on the readings for that evening, which you will sign up for in advance will also be required. (A written version of your presentation can be handed in as that week’s required paper.)

One 20-page seminar paper and an oral presentation of an abstract of that paper will be due the final class period. These papers should demonstrate an understanding and engagement with theoretical issues we have discussed in the course. The paper must include a one-page abstract.

Ph.D. students will also be required to attach a final page explaining how they would revise the paper for publication and listing four journals to which they would submit the paper. They should also list conferences and panel topics that would be a good fit for this paper. (Ideally, the paper will be presented at a conference and then be revised for publication.)

Mechanics: All papers must be “typed,” stapled, and have a significant title. Please do NOT use plastic folders or paperclips for your paper—a staple is sufficient. All papers are due at the very beginning of the class. I never accept faxed papers or emailed papers. Be sure to keep an extra copy of your paper. Please Note: plagiarism is a serious offense and will be punished to the full extent.

### **Participation/Attendance**

Your active, informed participation is crucial to the success of the course. Carefully prepare for each class period by doing the reading in a rigorous and inquisitive manner. Every day that you come to class you should have something valuable to say. I will grade on actual participation, rather than on mere attendance. Since we only meet once a week, only one absence is allowed: two absences may result in a lower grader for the course and three in failing the course.

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### **OFFICIAL UTA POLICIES THAT UTA REQUIRES BE INCLUDED IN THIS SYLLABUS**

**“Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student’s responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations:** UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have

officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: **The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [uta.edu/eos](http://uta.edu/eos).*

**Title IX Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or [jmhood@uta.edu](mailto:jmhood@uta.edu).*

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Campus Carry:** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>. **[NOTE FROM DR. ALAIMO: IF I SEE A GUN IN CLASS OR IN MY OFFICE I WILL CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY]**

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** for semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, [which is located \[insert a description of the nearest exit/emergency exit\]](#). When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**[As you see, this section requires faculty members to be fully aware of the exits nearest their classrooms, even before the semester begins. Evacuation plans may be found at [http://www.uta.edu/campus-ops/ehs/fire/Evac\\_Maps\\_Buildings.php](http://www.uta.edu/campus-ops/ehs/fire/Evac_Maps_Buildings.php). In the case that you are unable to ascertain this information in time for your syllabus, you must be sure to explain to your students on day one how best to exit the building. Inclusion of this verbiage as well as a brief discussion on the matter with your students at the beginning of the term is mandated by UT Arlington Procedure 7-6: Emergency/Fire Evacuation Procedures ([http://www.uta.edu/police/Evacuation\\_Procedures.pdf](http://www.uta.edu/police/Evacuation_Procedures.pdf))**

[Should you learn that your class roster includes students with physical/sensory disabilities, you should arrange to meet *in private* with each of these students to discuss their needs for assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation.]

Students should also be encouraged to subscribe to the MavAlert system that will send information in case of an emergency to their cell phones or email accounts. Anyone can subscribe at <https://mavalert.uta.edu/> or <https://mavalert.uta.edu/register.php>

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](#), [major-based learning centers](#), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](#), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](#). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

**University Tutorial & Supplemental Instruction** (Ransom Hall 205): UTSI offers a variety of academic support services for undergraduate students, including: 60 minute one-on-one [tutoring sessions](#), [Start Strong](#) Freshman tutoring program, and [Supplemental Instruction](#). Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm. For more information visit [www.uta.edu/utsi](http://www.uta.edu/utsi) or call 817-272-2617.

**The IDEAS Center** (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Central Library) offers **FREE** tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. Students can drop in, or check the schedule of available peer tutors at [www.uta.edu/IDEAS](http://www.uta.edu/IDEAS), or call (817) 272-6593.

**Emergency Phone Numbers** In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911.

### Minimal standards for classroom etiquette:

1. **TURN OFF** all pagers, beepers, cell phones and other electronic devices! You may not have these devices turned on while in class. You may not text message or read email or engage in any other electronic activities during class. The only exception is if you choose to access the course readings electronically.
2. Arrive to class **ON TIME**. It is distracting to both the professor and the students to have someone come in late. If you come in late, you will be marked absent.
3. Arrive to class **PREPARED** to discuss the texts and materials in an informed manner. You are expected to make a substantial contribution to every class.
4. Treat your classmates with **RESPECT**. Learn to disagree without being disagreeable. We will often discuss controversial, volatile topics, so everyone needs to learn how to disagree with someone's views, beliefs, or perspectives while maintaining a sense of civility.

## SYLLABUS

### Week One. January 18. **Introductions/Embarkations: Biology, History, Geography**

- ✓ Philip V. Madlenov, *Marine Biology, A Very Short Introduction*
- ✓ Callum Roberts, *An Unnatural History of the Sea*
- ✓ Steinberg and Peters, "Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume Through Oceanic Thinking" [PDF]

### Week Two. January 25. **Shipwrecks and Sea Changes**

- ✓ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
- ✓ Steve Mentz, *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550-1719*.
- ✓ Anonis Balasopoulos, "'Suffer a Sea Change: Spatial Crisis, Maritime Modernity and the Politics of Utopia" [PDF]  
[Recommended: Ian Baucom, "Hydrographies;" Dan Brayton, *Shakespeare's Ocean: An Ecocritical Exploration*]

### Week Three. February 1. **Mapping Oceanic Studies and the Blue Humanities**

- ✓ "The Blue Humanities":  
<https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/mayjune/feature/the-blue-humanities>
- ✓ Alice Te Punga Somerville, "Where Oceans Come From" [PDF]
- ✓ Steve Mentz, "Toward a Blue Cultural Studies" [PDF]
- ✓ Margaret Cohen, "Literary Studies on the Terraqueous Globe" [PDF]
- ✓ ACLA Forum, "Oceanic Routes" [PDF]
- ✓ Rachel Price, "The Last Universal Commons" [PDF]
- ✓ Hester Blum, "The Prospect of Oceanic Studies"
- ✓ Jamie Jones, "Fish Out of Water: 'The Prince of Whales Side Show and the Environmental Humanities'" [PDF]
- ✓ Helen Rozwadowski, "From Danger Zone to World of Wonder: The 1950s Transformation of the Ocean's Depths" [PDF]
- ✓ Stefan Helmreich, "The Genders of Waves" [PDF]

### Week Four. February 8. **The Deep Nineteenth Century**

- ✓ Coleridge, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
- ✓ Jules Verne, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*
- ✓ Richard Maxwell, "Unnumbered Polypi"
- ✓ Karen Leistra-Jones, "'The Deep's Have Music Soft and Low': Sounding the Ocean in Elgar's *Sea Pictures*" [PDF]

Week Five. February 15. **Moby Dick**

- ✓ *Herman Melville, Moby Dick*, first half
- ✓ Lawrence Buell, "Global Commons as Resource and as Icon" [PDF]
- ✓ Caroline Rooney, "What is the Oceanic" [PDF]

Week Six. February 22. No class.

Time off for attending at least one academic talk outside of class.

Week Seven. March 1.

- ✓ *Moby Dick*, second half
- ✓ *Elizabeth Schultz, "Melville's Environmental Vision in Moby Dick"*

Week Eight. March 8.

**20<sup>th</sup> Century Poetry**

- ✓ Poems [PDF]
- ✓ Patricia Yaeger, "Sea Trash, Dark Pools, and the Tragedy of the Commons" [PDF]

Week Nine. March 15. **Spring Break**

Week Ten. March 22. **Separatist SF Seas**

- ✓ Joan Slonczewski, *A Door Into Ocean*
- ✓ Phil Steinberg, "Beyond Postmodern Capitalism, Beyond Ocean-Space," *from The Social Construction of the Ocean* [PDF]
- ✓ Sheryl Vint, "Animal Studies in the Era of Biopower" [PDF]

Week Eleven. March 29. **Thinking with Unthinkable Sea Creatures**

- Villem Flusser & Louis Bec, *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis*
- ✓ Peter Godfrey, "Octopolis," *from Other Minds* [PDF]
- ✓ Eva Hayward, "More Lessons from a Starfish" [PDF]
- ✓ Stacy Alaimo, "Violet Black" [PDF]
- ✓ Donna J. Haraway, "Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Cthulucene."

Week Twelve. April 5. **People of the Whale**

- ✓ Linda Hogan, *People of the Whale*
- ✓ Joshua Reid, [PDF]
- ✓ Jonathan Steinzvand, "What the Whales Would Tell Us" [PDF]

Week Thirteen. April 12. **Oceania**

- ✓ Epeli Hau'Ofa, excerpts from *We Are the Ocean*
- ✓ Liz DeLoughrey, "Radiation Ecologies and the Wars of Light" [PDF]
- ✓ Teresa Shewry, "Hope in the Shadow of Sorrow: Ecology in Oceanic Literatures" [PDF]
- ✓ Karin Amimoto Ingersoll, "Oceanic Literacy: A Politics and an Ethics" from *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology* [PDF]
- ✓ Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, *Iep Jaltok: Poems from a Marshalese Daughter*
- ✓ Laura McLean, Contingent Movements Archive
  - <http://photomediationsmachine.net/2015/02/28/contingent-movements-archive/>

Week Fourteen. April 19. **Afrofuturism at Sea**

- ✓ Nnedi Okorafor *Lagoon*
- ✓ Melody Jue, "Intimate Objectivity: on Nnedi Okorafor's Oceanic Afrofuturism" [PDF]
- ✓ Suzanna Chan, "'Alive. . . again.' Unmoored in the Aquafuture of Ellen Gallagher's Watery Ecstatic."

Week Fifteen. April 26. **Oceanic Futures**

- ✓ Stefan Helmreich, *Alien Ocean*
- ✓ Marina Zurkow, "Slurb," 17 min.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k\\_jY7xCPYY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k_jY7xCPYY)
- ✓ Neimanis, Neimanis, Asberg, "Fathoming Chemical Weapons in the Gotland Deep" [PDF]
- ✓ Elizabeth Deloughrey, "Submarine Futures of the Anthropocene" [PDF]
- ✓ Stacy Alaimo, "Your Shell on Acid: Material Immersion, Anthropocene Dissolves," from *Exposed* [PDF]
- ✓ <https://www.shimz.co.jp/english/theme/dream/oceanspiral.html>  
<https://www.thevenusproject.com/resource-based-economy/environment/cities-in-the-sea/>
- ✓ "Hope Floats" podcast: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05kxk0v> [1 hour]
- ✓ "The future of floating cities" <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20171128-the-future-of-floating-cities-and-the-realities>

Week Sixteen. May 3. **Conclusions/Disembarkations**

- ✚ Seminar papers due. Presentations of seminar papers.
- ✚ Please complete online course evaluations.

## NOTES AND RESOURCES

Additional recommended texts:

Derek Walcott, *Omeros*, Farrar Strauss, ISBN-13: 978-0374523503

Witi Ihimaera, *Whale Rider*, Harcourt, ISBN-13: 978-0152050160

William Finnegan, *Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life*, Penguin, ISBN-13: 978-0143109396

Julia Whitty, *The Fragile Edge: Diving and Other Adventures in the South Pacific*, Mariner Books, ISBN-13: 978-0547053721

Richard Schweid, *Octopus*, ISBN-13: 978-1780231778

Peter Watts, *Starfish*, **ISBN-13:** 978-0765315960

Nick Hayes, *The Rime of the Modern Mariner*, ISBN-13: 978-0224090254

Grebowicz *Whale Song*