Maritime History and Culture
CAS NS 322 (4 credits)

Course Catalog Description (max. 40 words):
Explore impacts of European maritime ventures on the societies they contacted in the Atlantic or Pacific, with focus on the resulting social, political, economic, and cultural changes. Investigate responses documented in the post-Colonial literature of indigenous people.

Instructor(s): Sea Education Association Faculty

Location: SEA campus in Woods Hole, MA, at sea aboard SEA’s sailing school vessel (SSV) Robert C. Seamans, ashore during several island port stops, and ashore in New Zealand.

Prerequisites: Admission to SEA Semester. Sophomore standing or consent of instructor.

Course Philosophy and Approach:
Sustainability in Polynesian Island Cultures (SPICE) is an interdisciplinary program that examines the interaction of culture and ecological sustainability. We develop the program around this theme by first establishing a working definition of “sustainability,” using the islands on our cruise track as case studies. We address the relationship between people and their environment, and look for ways to measure and assess the impact of agriculture and aquaculture, fishing, the introduction of new species of plants and animals, changing demographics due to migration and European colonization, and the impact of global trading networks. The SPICE program consists of five courses, each with specific academic requirements, although the lines between the disciplines in lectures, discussions and projects are, by design, blurred into an interdisciplinary whole. Discussion of course materials from environmental, historical, cultural, scientific and nautical perspectives will integrate our program themes.

Maritime History and Culture (MHC) is a four-credit course team-taught by the Maritime Studies and Nautical Science professors. This course begins on shore in Woods Hole and continues throughout the sea component and the subsequent second shore component in New Zealand. We begin with a quandary when we talk about cultural sustainability, because the practices that bind any group together naturally evolve and change. Shared ideas, artistic taste, customary relationships with natural systems and with supernatural agents, and the social organization of the group are all subject to modification over time. In the places we will visit, however, sudden and dramatic changes resulted from population loss due to diseases brought be European and American mariners in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Missionaries and colonial governments sought purposefully to replace indigenous knowledge and beliefs with their own models, resulting in the loss of many local social and cultural practices and the profound alteration of others. Despite this loss, there were always aspects of ancient Polynesian knowledge that persisted on the island, and a cultural revival begun in the 1960s has resulted in renewed interest in the manifestations of indigenous group identity. In this course, we will look at cultural change and persistence in four areas: 1) Religion, including the survival of ancient practice despite the
conversion of a majority of Polynesian people to Christianity; and the place of South Asian religions in Fiji; 2) Landscape, including both ancient and modern systems of land ownership, management and agriculture; 3) The relationship between Tourism and cultural demonstrations. (Is there a difference between practices maintained for an internal audience, and those packages for consumption be outsiders?); and, 4) Political Systems, looking at the role of clans and chief, and of European and American colonial governments.

As part of their work in Maritime History and Culture, each student will complete a research project that will culminate in a polished entry for our on-line Atlas of Polynesia that includes both text and visuals. This major course assignment and the associated research process are specifically designed to complement the similar type of work students undertake in Marine Environmental History (MEH) using different documents and with a different focus. Some details of this MHC research assignment are provided in the ‘Assignment’ section below; further details will be discussed during the introductory class meetings.

This course consists of 24 hours of lecture/discussion sessions, research and writing workshops, and field trips during the initial 4-week shore component in Woods Hole, 30 hours of field trips and independent research in the island communities visited during the 6-week sea component, and 15 hours for field trips, mentored work sessions and writing workshops, and student presentations during the final 2-week shore component in New Zealand. Many of the activities listed on this syllabus are joint activities integrated with other SPICE courses, most particularly with Maritime Studies (MS); weekly contact hours summarized here and given in the course calendar below reflect only the portion allocated to this Maritime History and Culture course.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Understand the complex interplay of the evolution in navigation techniques and maritime technologies and the development of Caribbean history and culture after 1492.
2. Apply interdisciplinary techniques and approaches to maritime studies.
3. Develop and support a thesis based on work with primary and secondary materials.
4. Work within a collaborative research and writing environment: present ideas for group feedback and offer and exchange constructive critiques of written work in a peer revision process.
5. Interrogate and evaluate arguments and conclusions developed during onshore research through observations and interviews conducted during island visits.
6. Develop and practice graphic/illustrative skills to communicate complex ideas, display technical knowledge and relay personal experiences.

Evaluation:

- Final paper/Atlas of Polynesia entry: 40%
- Research presentations (3): 30%
- Participation in discussions & research process: 30%
Assignments:

Paper/Atlas Entry and Associated Presentations: Students will look at cultural change and persistence in Polynesian islands in one of the course’s four main areas of focus – religion, landscape, tourism, and political systems. They will be part of a team of researchers working on one of these topics, sharing sources and ideas, and working together in the ports of call to talk with local informants. The background research will be done during the Woods Hole shore component, with a presentation about the work in progress and a draft of the paper due before we head to sea. The conclusions of the shore-based research are then corroborated with student field research during our many port stop visits, by means of guided field trips, independent exploration, and interviews. Based on these observations, students will then compare their first-hand experiences to their onshore research, share their findings in a port stop presentation, and revise their paper to incorporate information gathered during the cruise and reflect upon what they have learned. The final deliverable from each student is a 10- to 15-page research paper, including a bibliography and illustrations with captions that will serve as a polished entry for our on-line Atlas of Polynesia. In addition, each student will give a final presentation detailing their research results during the second shore component in New Zealand. This major course assignment and the associated research process are specifically designed to complement the similar type of work students undertake in Marine Environmental History (MEH) using different documents and with a different focus.

Participation: Thoughtful active participation in class discussions on shore and at sea is an important component of this course, and students will be evaluated on this. Demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings during these class discussions is expected and required. In addition, students will be evaluated on their contribution to the research process as a member of their research team.

Required Readings and Background Research References (partial list):


Stair, John B., 1897. *Old Samoa: or, Flotsam and Jetsam from the Pacific Ocean*.


**Useful References for Marine History and Culture Research Papers/Atlas Entries:**


The Samoan Story of Creation. *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. 1, Wellington, 1892.

**Expectations and Requirements:**

- Punctual attendance is required at every class meeting.
- Active participation in class discussion is expected.
- Late assignment submissions are not accepted.
- The policy on academic accuracy, quoted below, will be strictly followed in this class.

The papers that you submit in this course are expected to be your original work. You must take care to distinguish your own ideas and knowledge from wording or substantive information that you derive from one of your sources. The term “sources” includes not only published primary and secondary material, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people and text that you cut and paste from any site on the Internet.

**The responsibility for learning the proper forms of citation lies with you.** Quotations must be placed properly within quotation marks and must be cited fully. In addition, all paraphrased material must be acknowledged completely. Whenever ideas or facts are derived from your reading and research, the sources must be indicated. (Harvard Handbook for Students, 305)

- Considerations for use of internet sources:
  - As you browse websites, assess their usefulness very critically. Who posted the information and why? Can you trust them to be correct? Authoritative? Unbiased? (It’s okay to use a biased source as long as you incorporate it knowingly and transparently into your own work.) Keep track of good sources that might be useful for subsequent assignments, and annotate in your bibliography any sites you cite. Your annotation should include the name of the author or organization originating any material that you reference. If you can’t identify the source, don’t use it!
**Course Calendar:**

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<tr>
<th>Week 1 (4 hours)</th>
<th>on shore at SEA campus in Woods Hole</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction to SPICE &amp; Maritime History and Culture (MHC): Assignments &amp; Course Expectations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture/Discussion Topics:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduction to the Atlas</td>
<td>Stair, 1897.</td>
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<td>• Demographics of Sustainability</td>
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<td>• Polynesian Migration</td>
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<td>• Culture and Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Food and Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop: Reading lists; introduction to research; writing &amp; editing standards</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2 (8 hours)</th>
<th>on shore at SEA campus in Woods Hole</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture/Discussion Topics:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• European &amp; American Expansion to the Pacific</td>
<td>Shankman, 2009.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• European Perspectives of Samoa</td>
<td>Stair, 1897.</td>
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<td>• Mythology and Oral Traditions</td>
<td>Stevenson, 1905.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Kinship &amp; Structure of Polynesian Society</td>
<td><strong>Sign up &amp; begin work on MHC project</strong></td>
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<td>First MHC research group meetings</td>
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<td>Field trip: Port of New Bedford and Whaling Museum</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 3 (7 hours)</th>
<th>on shore at SEA campus in Woods Hole</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture/Discussion Topics:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Colonial Politics</td>
<td>Bade, 2011.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student MHC presentations</td>
<td>Robb, 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop: Papers; research methods</td>
<td><strong>Prepare &amp; deliver 1st student presentation on MHC research project</strong></td>
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<td>Work on collecting source material, drafting paper, and planning field work</td>
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### Week 4 (5 hours) – on shore at SEA campus in Woods Hole

**Lecture/Discussion Topics:**
- Tropical Island Fishing and Fisheries
- Contemporary Polynesian Literature

**MHC group research meetings**

**Mentored review of paper drafts & preparation of research materials for ship**

**Readings:**

*Draft MHC paper, field work plan, & annotated source list due at end of week*

### Weeks 5 and 6 (10 hours) – during island port stops & at sea

**Port Stop Orientation and Planning**

**Visits 1 & 2 to island communities (3 to 4 days each)**
- Guided field trips
- Independent student exploration

**Port Stop Debrief and Discussion**

**Class Lecture/Discussion Topics:**
- Colonial ideology in Polynesia
- Polynesian observation/adaptation to new environments & materials
- Tanonga/Artforms - Ta Tatau/Ta Moko; fishhooks/lures

**Port-specific readings**

### Weeks 7 and 8 (10 hours) – during island port stops & at sea

**Port Stop Orientation and Planning**

**Visits 3 & 4 to island communities (3 to 4 days each)**
- Guided field trips
- Independent student exploration

**Port Stop Debrief and Discussion**

**Class Lecture/Discussion Topics:**
- Colonial restrictions in Polynesia
- Diaspora of Polynesian creativity
- Tanonga/Artforms – carving/sculpture; cloth/fiber

**Prepare & deliver 2nd student presentation on MHC research project**

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[www.sea.edu](http://www.sea.edu)
### Weeks 9 and 10 (10 hours) – during island port stops & at sea

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Stop Orientation and Planning</td>
<td>Port-specific readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visits 5 &amp; 6 to island communities (3 to 4 days each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Guided field trips</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Independent student exploration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Port Stop Debrief and Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Lecture/Discussion Topics:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Visual presentation of collaboration &amp; celebration in Polynesia</td>
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### Weeks 11 and 12 (15 hours) – 2nd shore component in New Zealand

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Field trips to local sites of MHC interest</td>
<td>Prepare &amp; deliver 3rd student presentation on MHC research project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentored MHC research project work sessions and writing workshops</td>
<td>Final MHC Atlas entry/paper is due at end of 2nd shore component</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final presentations of MHC projects</td>
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