

SYLLABUS (DRAFT)

POLS 387: POLITICS OF THE OCEAN

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa – Department of Political Science

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Office Hours: by appointment

Term: Spring 2019
Time: W 1:30-4:00 pm
Location: Saunders 624

Introduction & Motivation

With oceans comprising 71% of the Earth’s surface, the course of human history has evolved alongside these vast bodies of water, which sustain the lives and livelihoods of people around the world. Our mutual dependence upon the ocean transcends culture, language, and time. It is at once a source of natural resources as well as a medium for transportation that enables international commerce and trade. It exists in the physical space between continents, yet it permeates the political space across socioeconomic spheres. Civilizations were born along the shores of the ocean, empires projected their power across the globe via vast naval armadas, and the greatest wars were fought on the high seas. Today, as technological advancements enable the acceleration of globalization, the oceans continue to be a locus of conflict, from territorial disputes to economic competition; yet, the oceans can also serve as a source of international cooperation, from scientific data sharing to natural hazards mitigation. In this course, we will explore the oceans in their totality – as a natural phenomenon that enables life on Earth, and as a political system within which dynamic human and international relationships have evolved.

Course Overview

The first 4 weeks of this course are devoted to exploring the essence of the oceans as a natural phenomenon with finite resources, which results in a complex web of relationships between the environment and people. We will investigate the political challenges that arise from this “tragedy of the commons,” often illustrated by (but certainly not limited to) our polluted oceans. We then move on to the second phase of this course, which will be devoted to studying the political issues in different regions of the world’s oceans, with a particular emphasis on the recent security challenges of the South China Sea and the future international competition in the Arctic Ocean. While exploring these regions, we will critically analyze issues within maritime strategy and security, which will grow in importance in coming years as the United States enters a period of “great power competition” with China and Russia. The final third of this course will be dedicated to exploring the impact, prediction, and political context of oceanic hazards such as tropical cyclones, El Niño, monsoons, and tsunamis, with the course concluding on the topic of anthropogenic climate change. Since this is not a science course, no advanced scientific training beyond a high school level is required. However, it is absolutely *crucial* that a course about the politics of the oceans be grounded on science, so our lectures will be based upon the latest scientific understanding of these oceanic and atmospheric phenomena, even as we read some literature consisting of narrative first-hand accounts and view the oceans through a political lens.

Assignments & Grading Policy

You are required to complete the readings and be prepared for class discussion at the beginning of each week. Two 5-page essays analyzing a reading of your choice will be due on Weeks 5 and 10 (20% each). A final 10-page paper critically analyzing a current event or issue relevant to class discussions will be due by May 8th (30%). You will each give a 15-minute final presentation on your paper during the last 2 weeks of class (20%). Each day a paper is late will result in 1 letter grade deduction. Class

participation will comprise the remaining 10% of your grade. Please e-mail the instructor if you foresee missing a class. Each unexcused absence will result in 5% deducted from your class participation grade.

Required Books

The following books are required for this course and must be acquired via the UH Bookstore or Amazon.com. Other assigned readings not on this list will be provided electronically via Laulima.

- Dorrik Stow, *Oceans: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2017, 1st edition (ISBN: 9780199655076)
- Callum Roberts, *The Ocean of Life: The Fate of Man and the Sea*, Penguin Books, 2013, Reprint edition (ISBN: 0143123483)
- Daniel Moran, James Russell (eds.), *Maritime Strategy and Global Order: Markets, Resources, Security*, 2016, Georgetown University Press (ISBN: 1626160724)
- James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, 2017, Penguin Press, 1st Edition (ISBN: 073522059X / 978-0735220591)
- Simon Reich, Peter Dombrowski, *The End of Grand Strategy: US Maritime Operations in the 21st Century*, 2018, Cornell University Press, 1st Edition (ISBN: 1501714627)
- Kerry Emanuel, *Divine Wind: The History and Science of Hurricanes*, 2005, Oxford University Press, 1st Edition (ISBN: 0195149416)
- Bonnie Henderson, *The Next Tsunami: Living on a Restless Coast*, 2014, Oregon State University Press, 1st Edition (ISBN: 0870717324)

Course Schedule & Readings

Week 1: The ocean as a natural phenomenon

Dorrik Stow, *Oceans: A Very Short Introduction*, Ch. 1-3

Week 2: The ocean as a complex web of environmental relationships

Dorrik Stow, *Oceans: A Very Short Introduction*, Ch. 7-10

Week 3: “Tragedy of the Commons” – the ocean as a finite resource

Callum Roberts, *The Ocean of Life: The Fate of Man and the Sea*, Ch. 1-3, 9-10, 15-16

Lebreton, et al., “Evidence that the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is rapidly accumulating plastic.”

https://www.theoceancleanup.com/fileadmin/media-archive/Documents/Lebreton2018_SciRep.pdf

Further Reading (optional): Charles Moore, *Plastic Ocean: How a Sea Captain's Chance Discovery Launched a Determined Quest to Save the Oceans*

Week 4: Globalization and Conflict on the High Seas

Daniel Moran, James Russell (eds.), *Maritime Strategy and Global Order: Markets, Resources, Security*, Ch. 1-3, 10

Further Reading (optional): United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Week 5: The Pacific and Indian Oceans

James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, Intro, Ch. 1, 3

Daniel Moran, James Russell (eds.), *Maritime Strategy and Global Order: Markets, Resources, Security*, Ch. 7

Week 6: The Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Caribbean

James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, Ch. 2, 4, 6

Daniel Moran, James Russell (eds.), *Maritime Strategy and Global Order: Markets, Resources, Security*, Ch. 4

Week 7: Maritime Strategy and Security

Simon Reich, Peter Dombrowski, *The End of Grand Strategy: US Maritime Operations in the 21st Century*, Intro, Ch. 1-4

Daniel Moran, James Russell (eds.), *Maritime Strategy and Global Order: Markets, Resources, Security*, Ch. 9

James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, Ch. 9

Week 8: The South China Sea – militarization, conflict, and security

James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, Ch. 5

Daniel Moran, James Russell (eds.), *Maritime Strategy and Global Order: Markets, Resources, Security*, Ch. 5

Further Reading: TBD (public/unclassified reports & guest speaker from U.S. Pacific Command)

Week 9: The Arctic Ocean – international competition and future conflict

James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, Ch. 7

Daniel Moran, James Russell (eds.), *Maritime Strategy and Global Order: Markets, Resources, Security*, Ch. 6

Simon Reich, Peter Dombrowski, *The End of Grand Strategy: US Maritime Operations in the 21st Century*, Intro, Ch. 7

Week 10: Tropical Cyclones – History and Impact

Kerry Emanuel, *Divine Wind: The History and Science of Hurricanes*, Ch. 1, 3, 5, 13, 19, 23, 26-31

Week 11: Tropical Cyclones – Prediction and Mitigation

Kerry Emanuel, *Divine Wind: The History and Science of Hurricanes*, Ch. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 29

Week 12: El Niño, Monsoons, and Piracy

Simon Reich, Peter Dombrowski, *The End of Grand Strategy: US Maritime Operations in the 21st Century*, Intro, Ch. 5

James Stavridis, *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans*, Ch. 8

Further Reading: TBD (journal article w/ basic scientific overview of El Niño and Monsoons)

Week 13: Tsunamis – Experiences, Challenges, and Shared International Vulnerabilities

Bonnie Henderson, *The Next Tsunami: Living on a Restless Coast*

Further Reading: TBD (journal article w/ basic scientific overview of tsunamis)

Week 14: Climate Change – Future of the World's Oceans, Prospects for Global Cooperation

Dorrik Stow, *Oceans: A Very Short Introduction*, Ch. 5-6

Callum Roberts, *The Ocean of Life: The Fate of Man and the Sea*, Ch. 18-22, Epilogue

Kerry Emanuel, *Divine Wind: The History and Science of Hurricanes*, Ch. 32, Epilogue

Further Reading: TBD (excerpts from IPCC report)

Week 15: Final Presentations**Week 16: Final Presentations**