“Merchants, Pirates, Missionaries, and the State in Maritime Asia”

Professor Eugenio Menegon

Time: Wednesday, 2:30-5:15 pm
Location: HIS 304

Professor’s Office: Department of History,
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Office Hours: Monday 12:30 - 2 pm; and Wednesday 12:30 - 2pm
and by appointment.

Website for this course is available at: learn.bu.edu

Course Overview:

This seminar will provide an overview of crucial themes in the history of maritime Asia (Indian Ocean; South China Sea; Pacific Ocean), tracing continuities as well as changes in political, institutional, religious, cultural and social processes centering on the oceans and seas of Asia, with more in-depth coverage for the period 1500 to the present. Starting in the 7th century, Asian merchants and governments became involved in an ever-growing network of commerce and cultural exchanges spanning from Japan to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. After the 15th century, a series of new phenomena further connected the oceanic world of maritime Asia: European presence in Asian waters, coastal piracy, the establishment of overseas Chinese colonies in South-East Asia, new Asian and European state policies, and ultimately, the contemporary state tensions over sea lanes and energy, and the rise of a new kind of piracy.
Completion of ALL readings and writing of a one-page response prior to each class meeting is crucial for a smooth working of the seminar. Schedules, topics, readings and films may be revised at times, in which case announcements will be made in class as appropriate.

Attendance and Participation (15%): This portion of the grade will be based on regular attendance (see below) and on the general level of engagement and participation in class.

Weekly responses (30%): Each week, students will prepare a one-to-two-page-long response (STRICTLY 1.5 spacing; 12 point; 1-inch margin) on that week’s readings, and formulate one question for discussion (pls. add your name after the question), both to be e-mailed to the instructor and the student discussion leader(s) a day in advance of class (by each Tuesday, at noon). The response should not simply summarize the readings; rather it should make a comprehensive, yet concise critical analysis of their arguments, and offer a comparison of them. Instructions with prompts will be posted weekly.

Oral Presentations (15%): Seminar members will alternate in leading discussion. The leader(s) will offer a brief oral presentation of the main points of the readings, and then use select questions sent by all seminar’s members (including her/his own questions) to structure the discussion. Each seminar member will also make a final presentation of their own research paper.

Paper proposal and annotated bibliography (10%): first version due by Friday, February 22, 5 pm; final version due by Friday, March 1, 5 pm. Instructions will be posted online.

Paper (30%): Students are required to write one final paper during the semester. Paper is due on Sunday, May 5, by 5 pm (by e-mail).

The final paper is to be 10-15 pages long (double spacing; 12 points; 1-inch margin; excluding bibliography). 1) The topic will be chosen by students after preliminary consultation with the instructor, and a topic/hypothesis will be submitted by Friday February 15, midnight. 2) After further consultation with instructor, a one-page written paper proposal, plus an annotated bibliography, have to be turned in by Friday, February 22, 5 pm, and finalized by Friday March 1, 5 pm. For grading percentage, see above.

**Additional research other than course readings is required for the writing of the paper.**

Penalties for late work: all written assignments must be turned in on the dates specified below. ½ grade will be deducted for each day of delay.

Attendance in all classes (including film screenings and educational visits) is expected and will be recorded. If you cannot attend a specific class you must make all efforts to notify the professor beforehand or to explain your absence later.
Plagiarism in any form is never acceptable. You are advised to review the college's definitions of and policies regarding plagiarism and cheating which are available online and in print. See the CAS Student Conduct Code:
http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/

EXTRA CREDIT EVENTS:

During the semester the Instructor will inform students about selected on-campus events organized by the BU Center for the Study of Asia, the Pardee School, and other BU units. Students who attend such events and send a short analytical paragraph on them can earn extra credit.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC AND WEB RESOURCES


- For web resources, please visit the EXTERNAL LINKS section of our Blackboard website.

READINGS

All readings will be available on the Blackboard course website as PDF files or on the Mugar Library's Electronic Books platforms.

The only exception is the following novel for Week VIII, cheaply available from online vendors (please order it ASAP):


Schedules, topics, and readings for this course may be revised at times if necessary, in which case announcements will be made in class as appropriate.
WEEKLY MEETINGS

• Week I (January 23): Introduction to the historiography of Maritime Asia

Self-introduction; expectations and requirements; instructor’s introductory comments on historiography; screening of documentary Sultan’s Lost Treasure (NOVA production on undersea archeology, about an ancient Chinese shipwreck in the waters of the sultanate of Brunei); discussion of documentary and readings; assignment of semester’s discussion tasks.

Please in preparation for this meeting read:

Companion website to the documentary at: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/sultan/ (also under EXTERNAL LINKS)


• Week II (January 30): Connections through long distance trade in Asia

Documentary: “The Story of India,” section on “Spices”


• Week III (February 6): Asian states, religion, and the maritime world, 600-1500

Documentary: “1421, The Year China Discovered America” (part 1; selections on Zheng He)


• Week IV (February 13): The Selden Map: connecting Asia to Europe

Timothy Brook, *Mr. Selden's Map of China: Decoding the Secrets of a Vanished Cartographer*, chapt 1, pp. 1-18; chapt 2, pp. 19-44; chapt. 8, pp. 149-174. (Blackboard)


**By Friday, February 15, midnight, send a paragraph with topic/hypothesis.**

• Week V (February 20): Pirate, Warlord, or King? Koxinga in Taiwan


**SET UP AN APPOINTMENT WITH PROFESSOR TO DISCUSS YOUR PROPOSED TOPIC AND BIBLIOGRAPHY, on Wednesday February 27**

• February 27: Individual Appointment with Professor

**BEFORE MEETING:**
Send your complete proposal (= title, topic, abstract/hypothesis, & annotated bibliography) for final paper
by Friday, February 22, 5 pm

An edited & improved final version is due AFTER THE MEETING
by Friday, March 1, 5 pm

• Week VI (March 6): New England and Asia

➢ *This seminar session will be conducted at the Peabody Essex Museum, Marine Hall, in Salem, with visit to Pingree House, US Old Custom House and ship, Salem Harbor. Departure from BU around noon; return in the evening.*

James R. Fichter, So Great a Profit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1-6, 82-110, 278-288. (on Blackboard & Online @ Mugar)

[Spring Break: March 9-17]

- **Week VII (March 20): River of Smoke**

Gosh, Amitav. River of Smoke. Picador - Ferrar, Straus & Giroux, 2011. (to be purchased online)

**Group 1** = Read Part I, “Islands” (pp. 3-166)
**Group 2** = Read Part II, “Canton” (pp. 169-341)
**Group 3** = Part III, “Commissioner Lin” (pp. 345-517)
**ALL GROUPS**: Read “Acknowledgements” (note references to historical sources): pp. 518-521


➢ Please visit and explore the following website:
https://www.amitavghosh.com

➢ Use this GLOSSARY (The ‘Crestomathy’) to find unusual words in the book:
https://www.amitavghosh.com/chrestomathy.html

- **Week VIII (March 27): Piracy in Asian seas**


Lim, Geok-lin Shirley, Among the White Moon Faces. An Asian American Memoir of Homelands, part 1, pp. 1-138, and last page pp. 231-32. (Blackboard)

Matheson Hooker, A Short History of Malaysia, London, Allen and Unwin (2003), (Blackboard), concentrate on two short sections:
a) pp. 147-152 (Chinese immigration, 19th century);
b) pp. 171-173 (Colonial education in Malaysia, early 20th century).

**Guest speaker:** Professor Sanjay Krishnan, Department of English, Boston University

- **Week X (April 10): Nationalism & Cultural Heritage. Asian Maritime Dimensions**


**Conversation** with Professor Robert Murowchick, Archeologist, AsianArc Initiative, and Associate Director, Boston University Center for the Study of Asia

NO CLASS ON April 17, MONDAY SCHEDULE

- **Week XI (April 24): Readings of the ocean in contemporary China**

**Video Clips:** 1) “Heshang” (selection on “Blueness”); 2) “Rise of the Great Powers” (selection); 3) Opening of Beijing Olympics (on Zheng He and oceans)

Program Cornell University, 1991; Part 6, “Blueness,” 203-22. PLS. PAY ATTENTION TO THE FOOTNOTES TOO FOR HISTORICAL CONTEXT. (Blackboard)


- Week XII (May 1): State power in Maritime Asia today: the South China Sea disputes

**Documentary:** BBC Documentary “Our World Flashpoint: South China Sea” (2014)


4. Maps of Chinese maritime ambition (Blackboard)

- TBD: Presentations of Final Projects

Instructions will follow.

**FINAL PAPER due on Sunday, May 5, midnight by e-mail.**
MAIN TASKS & DEADLINES

- **Response 1**: Tuesday, 29 January, 12 noon
- **Response 2**: Tuesday, 5 February, 12 noon
- **Response 3**: Tuesday, 12 February, 12 noon
- **Paper topic & hypothesis**: Friday, February 15, midnight
- **Response 4**: Tuesday, 19 February, 12 noon
- **First version of paper proposal & bibliography**: Friday, February 22, 5 pm
- **Meeting Professor**: Wednesday, February 27, during class time (slots to be assigned)
- **Final version of paper proposal & bibliography**: Friday, 1 March, 5 pm
- **Response 5**: Tuesday, 5 March, 12 noon
- **Response 6**: Tuesday, 19 March, 12 noon
- **Response 7**: Tuesday, 26 March, 12 noon
- **Response 8**: Tuesday, 2 April, 12 noon
- **Response 9**: Tuesday, 9 April 9, 12 noon
- **Response 10**: Tuesday, 23 April, 12 noon
- **Response 11**: Tuesday, 30 April, 12 noon
- **Final Presentations**: TBD
- **Final paper due**: Sunday, May 5, midnight