UCONN | COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

COMMITTEE ON CURRICULA AND COURSES

Proposal to Add a New Undergraduate Course
Last revised: September 24, 2013

1. Date: Date: February 18, 2014
2. Department requesting this course: HIST
3. Semester and year in which course will be first offered: spring 2015

Final Catalog Listing

Assemble this after you have completed the components below. This listing should not contain any information that is not listed below!

HIST 2210. History of the Ocean
(Also offered as MAST 2210.) Three credits.
Cultural, environmental, and geopolitical history of the ocean from prehistory to the present. Examines the impact of migration, industrialization, modernization, and globalization on the relationships between people and oceans.

Items Included in Catalog Listing

Obligatory Items

1. Standard abbreviation for Department, Program or Subject Area: HIST
2. Course Number: 2210
3. Course Title: History of the Ocean
4. Number of Credits: 3
5. Course Description (second paragraph of catalog entry):
Cultural, environmental and geopolitical history of the ocean from prehistory to the present. Examines the impact of migration, industrialization, modernization, and globalization on the relationships between people and oceans.

Optional Items

6. Pattern of instruction, if not standard:
7. Prerequisites, if applicable: ENGL 1010 or 1011 or 2011 or 3800
    a. Consent of Instructor, if applicable:
    b. Open to sophomores/juniors or higher: Open to sophomores
8. Recommended Preparation, if applicable:
9. Exclusions, if applicable: "Not open to students who have taken HIST 3995 History of the Ocean"
10. Repetition for credit, if applicable:
11. Skill codes "W", "Q" or "C":
12. University General Education Content Area(s), if any: 1

a. If Content Area 1, specify a CLAS area, A-E: C
b. Justification for inclusion in CLAS area, A-E:
(Please consult CLAS guidelines for areas A-E.)

This course raises student awareness of a critical part of the planet that has not always been recognized for its importance to human history. In spatial terms, better understanding of a place that covers three-quarters of the globe and provides 99% of its living space is integral to general education. A humanistic investigation of our historical relationship with the ocean equips students to grasp the economic and political importance of the ocean and its resources, to recognize our ethical responsibilities to this environment, and to explore the cultural dimensions of our knowledge and use of the sea. Given the centrality of the ocean in the 21st century – consider the impending sea level rise, human migration to coasts, overfishing, the growing offshore oil and wind energy industries, the growth of maritime recreation, geopolitical struggles for control over ocean resources, and other ocean-related issues – it is imperative that we educate a generation of students who are equipped to understand the ocean broadly and in humanistic terms.

As important as it is to acknowledge and understand the diversity of human cultures, it is important, and increasingly urgent, to recognize the historical and ethical dimensions of the human relationship with the natural world, including recognizing that different human cultures engage differently with nature and natural resources. This course contributes to general education in Area One by cultivating informed citizens with broad knowledge of the ocean beyond the natural sciences, extending to include humanistic inquiry. The course challenges the widely held assumption that the ocean exists outside of human history. It draws students into an investigation of the length and character of human interactions with, and uses of, the sea and its resources. There is one world ocean yet many shores and seas, so this course prompts students to examine how different cultures have perceived and used the ocean differently while encouraging them also to seek global understanding as appropriate.

Why 2000 level? While this class is designed to be an introduction to historical understanding of the ocean, it is more specialized than typical 1000-level history courses in that it focuses methodologically on environmental, cultural and geopolitical history. It is similar in level to HIST 2206, which introduces students to the history of science.

13. S/U grading: no

Justification

1. Reasons for adding this course:

Within the UConn curriculum, there is a need for more courses with maritime- or ocean-related content for the Maritime Studies program, which completed its first decade in spring 2013. Currently, there is only one MAST/HIST course, which is MAST/HIST 3455 Atlantic Voyages.

In content and theme, this class also contributes to Environmental Studies, a newly approved interdisciplinary program at UConn.

In addition, Prof. Rozwadowski has stepped down from a ten-year term of service as the Maritime Studies head (in fall 2013) and will be doing more teaching; this class reflects her research and teaching expertise and expands the breadth of courses she will be able to offer regularly.

2. Academic merit:

The ocean, which has long been treated by historians as a timeless place that serves merely as a backdrop for human events, has begun to attract attention from a variety of sub-fields of historical scholarship. Humanists, ecologists, and environmentalists recognize the need for better understanding of the human relationship with the ocean over time. Adding ocean-centered courses to the curriculum fills an urgent social need to increase, in the students we teach, awareness and responsible understanding of human perceptions and uses of the ocean.

This course is proposed to be cross-listed with Maritime Studies (MAST) because it is both interdisciplinary and ocean-focused (see separate cross-listing proposal). The course employs disciplines in addition to history (mainly anthropology, archaeology, historical geography, and historical ecology) in the service of studying the ocean's influence on human history, the impacts people have had on the ocean, and -- perhaps most importantly -- why a humanistic and historical approach to the oceans is so valuable.

3. Overlapping courses: None.

4. Number of students expected: 35

5. Number and size of sections: 1 section of 35 students

6. Effects on other departments:
Environmental Studies noted (in an email of 9/17/13) that the course will be a wonderful addition to its major.

7. Effects on regional campuses:
This class will be offered regularly at Avery Point and could be offered at other campuses.

8. Staffing: Rozwadowski
9. Dates approved by
   HIST Department Curriculum Committee:
   HIST Department Faculty:

10. Name, Phone Number, and e-mail address of principal contact person:
Micki McElya, Micki.mcelya@uconn.edu, x6-2085

Syllabus

A syllabus for the new course must be attached to your submission email.
Attached