Maritime Anthropology / Maritime Ethnologie
Syllabus & Reading List

Special course/block seminar in the **BA Course for Cultural Studies** / BA-Ethnologie
Fachbereich 9 (Kulturwissenschaften), Bremen Universität
Also open to MA students from: Sociology, Urban and Regional Development & Erasmus

Block seminars (S):
S1: Sat 19.10.19, 10.00 - 16.00
S2: Sat 16.11.19, 10:00 - 16:00
S3: Sat 30.11.19, 10:00 - 16:00
S4: Sat 14.12.19, 10:00 - 16:00
S5: Sat 18.01.19, 10.00 - 14.00

Venue: GW2 B2880

**Lecturer**: Dr. Rapti Siriwardane-de Zoysa

**Medium of Instruction**: English (addition communication in German is welcomed)

**Time Management**: The course is organized as a block seminar comprising of 14 themes/topics, each lasting two to two and a half hours. The seminar will take place in five block-sessions during the Winter Semester.

**Course Description:**

How intimately connected is the sea to your everyday life? Oceanic and coastal spaces have been gaining renewed salience in recent decades due to debates on climate change, globalization, human and species migration. Historians and geo-political analysts have often studied seas as surface territories and as highways of trans-continental flows, and as spaces of conflict that are fought for, and fought over. Cultural, literary and feminist scholars among others have long been engaging with imaginaries and meanings of the sea, from fiction writing and film, to decolonial and other kinds of emancipatory politics. How then does contemporary anthropology (as a discipline), given its land-centered historic roots, engage with marine realms? How do oceans and seas matter in today’s digitalized world? Furthermore, how might our (inter)disciplinary interests be extended to consider broader agencies and dynamics of socio-ecological life, well beyond the human/anthropocentric ‘maritime’ realm?

This block seminar offers a cross-disciplinary **primer to Maritime Ethnology** (or Maritime Anthropology), and spans a range of environmental historic, contemporary cultural, socio-economic, and political themes that are of topical interest. Students are particularly encouraged to explore: a) questions of difference and connection that marine realms offer in everyday life; b) ways in which seascapes, seafaring- and coastal communities have
at times been ‘othered’ and/or rendered marginal to global history, science, and politics; c) how oceanic realms themselves come to be socio-culturally and politically constructed. Moreover, what could be termed as varied anthropologies of saltwater continue to offer exciting new theoretical and methodological avenues with which to “think from” and to “think with” the sea, particularly in ways that challenge land-centric perspectives in contemporary scholarship.

The block seminar series ‘An Introduction to Maritime Ethnology’ will cover a range of conceptual, thematic and methodological currents within the following sub-disciplines: classical maritime anthropology, maritime history (and ‘new thallasology’), comparative literature, cultural and feminist geographies, critical oceanic studies, decolonial thinking, political ecology, Science and Technology Studies (STS), and Urban Studies.

The course is also tailored for MA students, and those considering coastal and marine-related topics for their theses.

The seminar series organized as follows:

- Thinking from the Sea: Images, Narratives, Sensibilities
- The re/making of maritime anthropology
- Oceans Past: Coastal and Seaborne Histories
- Maritime Lifeworlds: Fisheries, Ship societies and Beyond
- Governing the Ocean: UNCLOS and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- ‘Anthroposea’: Sea change, Plastics, and Environmental crises
- Gendered epistemologies of the sea
- Decolonial currents in ocean studies
- More-than-human and Multispecies approaches
- Liquid Worlds: Water, Ice, Depths and Seabeds
- De-terrestrialising Methods (1): Mobile practices & Autoethnography
- De-terrestrialising Methods (2): Non-representational ethnographies
- New Urbanisms: Port cities, Tourism, and Coastal futures
- ‘Frontiering’ the Ocean: Exploration, Extraction, Freedom

The seminar will utilize varied teaching formats and styles that place emphasis on nurturing students’ independent thinking, the development of their own thematic fields of interest, and the ability to write. The block seminars are designed to be interactive, with two group or pair-work exercises planned at each session. Students are encouraged to bring in a case-study of interest at the beginning of each seminar, in order to topically engage with the diverse themes that are being discussed (e.g. coastal pollution, migration and borders, marine conservation, coastal protection, urban tourism, seabed mining etc.). Open-access audio-visual material will be integrated as a part of the teaching corpus.

The experiential element will include features such as situational presentations (e.g. pitching a project idea), poster sharing sessions and experimentation with other self-selected genres (e.g. life history narratives, scripts for short sketches, infographics and political cartoons), together with the development of academic material in the form of short papers and small-project proposals. The students are particularly encouraged to use the seminar to develop their ability to formulate arguments and substantiate these in a written format – also linked to their own thesis topics.

Irrespective of the teaching format, all sessions will substantially build on obligatory readings, vital to ensuring the quality of in-class discussions. All obligatory and recommended readings will be made available for download via StudIP.

Course requirements:
For 3 CPs: Active in-class participation, having read the obligatory readings for each block seminar

For 6 CPs: Active in-class participation, and the submission of a term paper (minimum 12 pages, font size 11, 1.5 spacing) OR a 20 minute oral presentation during class on a chosen topic

Consultation Hours: By appointment, please email siriward@uni-bremen.de / rapti.siriwardane@leibniz-zmt.de /
## Block seminar ‘An Introduction to Maritime Ethnology’

**Lecturer:** Dr. Rapti Siriwardane

### Seminar 1 (AM): Thinking from the Sea (19.10.19)

**Objectives:** An overview on diverse perspectives and debates related to studying marine and coastal realms. The focus is on exploring forms of maritime knowledge-making in their broadest sense.

**Obligatory reading:**


**Documentary screening:**

Brennan, Ruth; Hurrel, Stephen (2016). *Producing Seascapes: a documentary*

**Supplementary:**


Objectives: Reflecting the evolution of a sub-discipline, while critically engaging with the ‘maritime’ versus the marine. We will also be discussing specificities of coastal spaces and communities.

Obligatory reading:


Recommended reading:


Objectives: a glimpse into ‘new thallasology’ and the ways in which comparative histories have been reconsidered.

Obligatory reading:


Supplementary:


Connery, Christopher (2006). *There was No More Sea: the supersession of the ocean, from the bible to cyberspace*. *Journal of Historical Geography* 32, 494-51.


Seminar 2: Maritime Lifeworlds (16.11.19)

**Objectives:** An overview of how maritime and coastal societies have been theorized and written about, with a focus on constructivist perspectives.

**Obligatory reading**


**Supplementary:**


Seminar 2, contd.: Governing the Ocean (16.11.19)

**Objectives:** A history of UNCLOS and the evolution of a global and regional ocean governance regime, together with a discussion on its contemporary challenges. An introduction to the SDGs and how they matter in development practice, with a critical focus on the idea of the ‘commons’. We draw on fishing crises as a point of departure.

**Obligatory reading:**


Supplementary:


Seminar 2, cond.: ‘Anthroposea’: Sea change, plastics... (16.11.19)

Objectives
An introduction to perspectives on marine and coastal transformations against the backdrop of socio-environmental risk. These distinct nature-cultures and their diverse riskscapes will be discussed against two themes – relative sea level change and marine plastic pollution.

Obligatory reading (26.11.):


Schönbauer, Sarah & Bergmann, Sven. *Microplastics by other means? How microplastics can be a tool for inter/trans-disciplinary engagement*, in Marine Coastal Cultures (available online).

Supplementary:


Seminar 3: Gendered epistemologies of the sea (30.11.19)

Objective: A critical overview of how the maritime has been gendered, historically, socio-culturally and politically. Presentation material will also offer an introduction into feminist geographies of the sea.

Obligatory reading:


Supplementary:


Weeratunge, Nireka; Synder, Katherine A. (2010). Gleaner, fisher, trader, processor: understanding
**Seminar 3, contd.: Decolonial currents in ocean studies (30.11.19)**

**Objective:** Forays into differences between postcolonial and decolonial thinking in ocean studies. Studies will be encouraged to reflect on what it means to ‘decolonize’ the maritime, and indeed the marine realm with a particular focus on island spaces and their imaginaries.

**Obligatory reading:**

Hauofa, Epeli (2008). *We are the Ocean: Selected Works*. Hawai`i: University of Hawai`i Press.

**Supplementary:**


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**Seminar 3, contd.: More-than-human & multispecies approaches (30.11.19)**

**Objective:** An introduction to the ‘multispecies turn’ in anthropology, and what these currents mean for anthropologies of the maritime/marine in particular. A case-study featuring a research project on invasive seagrass in the Dutch Antilles will be presented for further debate.

**Obligatory reading:**

**Supplementary:**


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**Objective:** Beyond surface sensibilities, how have diverse voluminalities (and their concomitant imagines and practices) of the sea been theorized and challenged? Offers an introduction to a later lecture on marine exploration and deep-sea mining.

**Obligatory reading:**


**Supplementary:**


Seminar 4, contd.: Mobile practices & Autoethnography (14.12.19)

Obligatory readings:


Supplementary:


Seminar 4, contd.: Mobile practices & Autoethnography (14.12.19)

Obligatory reading:


Supplementary:


### Seminar 5 (end): New Urbanisms – Port Cities, Tourism & Coastal Futures (18.01.20)

**Objective:** Coastal transformations and future(s) ahead? Stringing pieces together; course evaluation and feedback round.

**Obligatory Reading:**


**Supplementary:**


### Seminar 5, cond.: ‘Frontiering’ the Ocean: Exploration, Extraction, Freedom (18.01.20)

**Objective:** Interdisciplinary debates and currents in shaping the future of Critical Ocean Studies.

**Obligatory Reading:**


**Supplementary:**


Mazé, Camille; Dahou, Tarik; Ragueneau, Olivier; et al. (2017). *Knowledge and power in integrated coastal management. For a political anthropology of the sea combined with the sciences of the marine environment*. *Comptes Rendus Geoscience*, 349, (6-7), 359-368.


Simpson, Isabelle (2016) "*Operation Atlantis*." *Shima* 10, no. 2. (available online)

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**Open-access resources (in no particular order):**

**Floating Laboratory of Action and Theory at Sea** (A Rethink Tank) - [https://floatsea.org/](https://floatsea.org/)

**Marine Coastal Cultures**, Uni Hamburg, Leibniz-ZMT & Uni Bremen (a network blogsite) - [https://marinecoastalcultures.com/](https://marinecoastalcultures.com/)

University of Oslo, **Maritime Anthropology (a podcast trailer)**


Helen Rozwadowski – **Fathoming the Ocean** - [http://fathomingtheocean.com/](http://fathomingtheocean.com/)

Sammler, Katherine – **Salty Geographies** - [https://saltygeographies.net/](https://saltygeographies.net/)

Vannini, Phillip - **Ferry Tales** - [http://ferrytales.innovativeethnographies.net/](http://ferrytales.innovativeethnographies.net/)


Robinson, Gary – ‘*A Sea of Small Boats*: Places and practices on the prehistoric seascape of western Britain’ (available online) (chapter on **Maritime Anthropology**)