The Indian Ocean World: Sailors, Slaves, and Pirates
HIST 387-009
Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10 pm, David King Jr. Hall, 2053

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3-4 pm and Thursdays, 1:30-3 pm, or by appointment

Course Description:

The Indian Ocean constitutes the world’s oldest cultural continuum, uniting communities in locations as far flung as Zanzibar and Oman, Madagascar and Borneo, Goa and Mozambique. More than fifteen centuries before Europeans first crossed the Atlantic, sailors, merchants, and migrants traveled across the Indian Ocean, sharing languages, culinary practices, and religious beliefs. This contact, however, was not always egalitarian and peaceful. Millions of people were enslaved and forcibly transported across the ocean. Pirate attacks have plagued the merchants of the ocean since at least the tenth century CE. In this class, we will examine how these different threads, of exchange and violence, have brought populations living on the shores of the ocean together for over two millennia. Students will read a variety of primary and secondary sources, as well as a novel, in order to understand the power that the Indian Ocean has played on peoples’ lives and histories.

Course Objectives:

1. You will be able to understand major events that shaped the Indian Ocean world and gain knowledge about the complexity of human experience from a historical perspective.
2. You will develop concepts of time, continuity, and change in order to understand and reconstruct the past.
3. You will develop a perspective of a world beyond your own personal location and rethink traditional land or continent-focused histories.
4. You will engage with a variety of primary and secondary sources, including novels, digital archives, online sources, and visual material. We will work on reading skills in class to engage, analyze, and interpret these sources using techniques used by historians.
5. You will be able to clearly and concisely express yourself in writing and speaking. You will properly cite print and online material in your papers.
Grading and expectations

Participation: This class is participatory and, in order to get the most from class, you need to attend every class prepared and having thought about the assigned reading(s). If you have poor class participation – due largely to absences, i.e., your non-presence during discussions – your final grade will fall dramatically. In other words, if you average a B on assignments and exams but fail to participate consistently, your final mark will be a C. If you are absent for more than four classes (and do not provide an adequate excuse in a timely manner – i.e., notify me after your second missed class), you will lose points from your class participation grade. Note: I will not re-teach a missed class via email or during an office conference.

Classroom Etiquette: You may not use cell phones, laptops, or any other electronic devices in the classroom unless they are being used for a classroom activity. Please arrive on time and pack up your things only when the discussion has completely finished. Any violation of these rules will significantly lower your participation grade.

Weekly Response Papers: You will write a short paper of 200-300 words reacting to ALL of the assigned reading(s) on weeks when you do not have another writing assignment. These papers are to be emailed to Dr. Hooper as a Word attachment before 2 pm on the day of class. Late response papers will not be accepted for any reason. All evidence must be properly cited using footnotes. Please see the guides posted on blackboard for more details. There are 9 papers assigned throughout the semester, you may choose to only complete 8 or have Dr. Hooper drop the lowest.

Source Analysis Papers: You will write three longer papers analyzing assigned sources throughout the semester. These papers will be 3-5 pages in length. You will be graded on the quality of your argument and your use of evidence. You must use footnotes to cite all evidence. You must submit these papers in hard-copy and via email before class. Be prepared to make a short presentation in class about your findings.

Mid-term and Final Exams: These take-home exams will be comprehensive and deal with our readings and discussions in class. The exams will test your ability to analyze historical data and
not just focus on the memorization of dates and events. To do well in this course, you must take careful notes of the readings and pay attention in class. The exam questions will be posted online and you will submit your responses via email. The due dates are listed on the syllabus.

**Exam Rules and Deadlines:**

In accordance with university regulations, professors in the Department of History and Art History re-schedule exams after receiving documentation of a medical emergency or family emergency; often this documentation must be verified by the Dean of Student Life. Work-related or personal/family obligations are not adequate excuses for re-scheduling an exam or obtaining any kind of extension.

**Final Grade:**

Participation - 10% (based on the quantity and quality of your contributions, includes assigned presentations)
Response Papers - 10% (8 total papers)
Source Analysis Papers - 30% (each paper worth 10% of final grade)
Mid-term Exam - 20%
Final Exam - 30%

**Academic Honesty:**

In this course, you will be expected to adhere to the Honor Code at George Mason. It is your responsibility to read and understand the policy (available at http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/masons-honor-code/). We will discuss the use of citations and quotations throughout the semester. If you have any questions on how to cite a source, please see the professor. If you are caught plagiarizing or using material written by another student in your written work, or using notes during exams, you will fail the assignment and, in some cases, the course.

**Office of Disability Services:**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. See http://ods.gmu.edu.
Other Important Campus Resources:
The Writing Center: Robinson A114, http://writingcenter.gmu.edu
University Libraries: http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html

Note about Communications:
Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information. Blackboard will be used to post important messages, links for readings, and grades for papers.

Texts Available for Purchase in the Bookstore (You may NOT use digital copies of these books):


* You will also be expected to obtain a copy of a novel chosen from the list provided by the instructor
Course Schedule

January 21 – Introduction to the course, discussion of syllabus and course expectations. We will also look at the following websites (links available on blackboard):

January 28 – * Class will start at 5 pm * The Indian Ocean during the longue durée. In class, we will look at a variety of primary sources on the pre-modern Indian Ocean (Periplus and Ibn Battuta)
Readings:
- Pearson, Indian Ocean, 13-45.
- start reading Ghosh, In an Antique Land
* Bring completed notes from readings to class
*Response paper due

* January 30 – talk on Africans in India, 6:30 pm * your attendance is required (RSVP online)

February 4 – *Class will start at 5:30 pm * - Islamic networks and pre-modern pirates: major debates in pre-modern Indian Ocean history
Readings:
- Pearson, Indian Ocean, 46-112.
- keep reading Ghosh, In an Antique Land
*Response paper due

February 11 – Approaches to understanding Indian Ocean history.
Reading:
- Ghosh, In an Antique Land.
*Response paper due

February 18 – The arrival of Europeans, part 1. Short presentations on Paper 1 in class.
* Paper 1:
For this paper, you will focus on the collection of maps available online at www.oldmapsonline.org. Examine maps from the pre-1800 period that focus on the lands around the Indian Ocean. How did Europeans present the
ocean? What information did they focus on? What do these maps reveal about European perceptions and knowledge about the ocean?

**February 25** – The arrival of Europeans, part 2 – looking at Vasco da Gama’s journal in class

**Readings:**
- Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, 113-158.

*Response paper due

**March 4** – European trading companies, through online research. Bring computers to class.

*Mid-term exam will be posted at noon, March 3 and returned to instructor via email by noon, March 7

**March 18** – Slavery and the Slave Trade around the early modern Indian Ocean

**Readings:**

*Response paper due

**March 25** – Early modern pirates and maritime violence

**Readings**

*Response paper due

**April 1** – Imperialism in the Indian Ocean

**Readings:**

*Response paper due

**April 8** – Migration in the era of European imperialism and short presentations on Paper 2.

*Paper 2:
For this paper, you will be reading a selection of primary sources about the experiences of South African Indians, available online at: http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/documentary-history-south-african-indians. Choose one of the eight sections to focus on for your paper and address the following questions: How would you describe the experiences of Indians in South Africa? What do the sources you examined reveal about their lives in South Africa?

April 15 – Indentured and convict labor

Readings:

* Response paper due

April 22 – The Hajj in the modern Indian Ocean

Readings:

* Response paper due


* Paper 3:
Choose a novel from the list provided by the instructor (also available on blackboard). In your paper, focus on the role that the Indian Ocean played in the novel and how the author used the ocean as a backdrop to the story. How was the Indian Ocean essential to this story?

* Final Exam – to be posted online at noon on May 5, to be returned to the instructor via email by noon on May 9.