

070.113
Freshman Seminar: Water and Collective Life
Weds 1:30-3:50
Macauley 400

Professor Deborah Poole
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Weds. 4:00-6:00, or by appointment

This seminar provides an introduction to anthropological thought through an exploration of the place of water in human collective life. Readings and seminar discussions will provide an introduction to some of the key concepts that anthropologists use in their research. We will be reading work by historians, political scientists, and popular writers as well as by anthropologist. We will also be viewing several films - some in conjunction with another freshman seminar on water taught by Prof. Margaret Keck in the Political Science Department (190.199). Films can help bring the questions being discussed in this course to life; they are also "texts," in the sense that they make arguments and build a dramatic narrative to support them.

In addition to learning how anthropologists approach the study of water and the environment, students will learn how to engage and evaluate arguments and critical perspectives in social science texts; how to write a critical précis of a text; how to generate productive seminar discussion questions; how to formulate a research question; and how to develop a strategy for addressing, or answering, your research question. Among the questions we will explore together in class are: how water is valued and utilized in different human societies; what the distribution and use of water can tell us about cultural or social understandings of nature, power, and the material world; why gender, class and cultural difference matter for the scientific study of water; and how everyday social relationships shape what we understand as "water."

Seminar discussions and readings for this class have been divided into four thematically organized units. We start the semester by asking how anthropologists approach the study of the material world, and what difference it makes to think about water as *social* matter. In section II, we explore the scientific, religious and legal governance of water. In section II, we will discuss the use, distribution, and regulation of water in "global cities." In the final weeks of class, we consider how socially and culturally diverse societies respond to shifting economies of water. In addition to reading and discussing the assigned texts and films, on **October 29** we will work jointly with Professor Keck's class to do some "hands-on" research with primary source documentary and field materials. On **November 5** we will meet as a seminar to discuss your ideas for the final research proposals due on **December 17**.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Attendance and participation (40% of final grade):

Students are required to attend and participate actively in all seminar discussions. If you must miss a class, please notify Prof. Poole in advance. Discussion questions for the films and readings will be posted on Blackboard by Monday of the week for which they are assigned. Students should come to class prepared to discuss these questions and to raise any additional questions they may have about the readings and films.

- In addition to attending seminars, all students are required to meet individually with the professor at least twice during the semester: once in the first three weeks of classes; and again in early November to discuss your research proposals. Appointments for these meetings will be made in class. Students are also encouraged to come to my regular office hours to discuss any questions or concerns they might have about the class.

2. Journals (20% of final grade):

Over the course of the semester, students will record their responses to the texts and films assigned for the class in a journal. The journal should complement not replace regular note taking. It is intended to help you connect the different concepts, texts, case studies, and approaches we will cover during the semester. Journals are also useful for reflecting on issues or arguments you may not have understood or found compelling. They are a means to sort out your thoughts, and to jot down new ideas that come to you as you are reading a text, or watching a film. Grades for the journals will reflect the thought and care that has gone into writing it, and the timely and consistent posting of journal entries. Individual journal entries will not be assigned a letter grade.

3. Response papers (20 % of final grade):

In addition to maintaining a journal with weekly entries, each student is expected to turn in four 250 to 300 word response papers -- one for each of the four thematic units. Response papers should be handed in to the instructor at the beginning of the class in which we will be discussing the readings your paper addresses.

Response papers are sometimes called reaction papers. A good one will identify the main problem the author is trying to address (or the main point s/he is trying to make), evaluate how well the author uses evidence to support his or her claims, and reflect on how the author's points resonate with other texts or films we have read/seen in class. While you are free to agree or disagree with the author's conclusions, and to express opinions about the author's argument or overall style

of argumentation, a good response paper should go beyond personal opinion to show what you found to be particularly productive and/or problematic about the author's approach.

4. Research proposal (20% of final grade)

Over the course of the semester, students will develop a research proposal in which they formulate a clear research question, show how that question responds to (or enters into critical dialogue with) readings we have done for the class, and identify a strategy for carrying out the research.. In developing the research questions for your proposal, you can draw on your own experience and/or interest in water and anthropology. But you must also incorporate concepts, methodologies or perspectives from the readings and films we discuss in class. Students may want to engage in limited library research on their selected topics, and/or carry out preliminary observations or interviews on their topic. Students are **not**, however, either required or expected to carry out an extensive research project for the class. Guidelines for the research project proposal will be distributed in advance of the **November 5** seminar meeting at which we will discuss your ideas for the proposals. Students will also work closely with the instructor in advance of this meeting to identify appropriate research topics and questions.

Readings

All readings, with the exception of *The Organic Machine* (Sept. 17), are available on-line through MSEL Electronic Reserves. Electronic Reserves can be accessed via Blackboard or through the MSEL webpage.

The Organic Machine is available for individual purchase as either a paperback or e-book on Amazon.com. Copies of the book will also be available for short-term loan at the library reserve desk.

Academic Ethics

The strength of the University depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and/or the Chairperson of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on "Academic Ethics for Undergraduates" and the Ethics Board Web site

(<http://ethics.jhu.edu>) for more information. Ethics for Undergraduates guide and the Ethics board website for more information <http://www.jhu.edu/ethics/index.html>

Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Dr. Brent Mosser, in Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu. Students that require an accommodation must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. The office website is <http://web.jhu.edu/disabilities/index.html>

If you believe you need other accommodations for assignments or examinations, please contact the course instructor ahead of time to discuss the matter privately.

Policy regarding use of electronic devices

Students are encouraged to take notes by hand. If you must use a laptop or iPad for note-taking, please let the professor know at the beginning of the semester. Any other use of electronic devices during seminar (e-mail, Internet surfing, games, chats, Facebook, and so on) is distracting and disruptive to your fellow students and will not be permitted. Students who violate this policy will be asked to turn off their devices and/or to leave the classroom. Repeated violations will lead to a permanent ban on the use of electronics, including laptops, in the seminar room.

Syllabus of readings and Seminars

I. WATER AND THE SOCIAL

Sept. 3 Introduction. (*open discussion led by Prof Poole*)

Sept. 10 Jamie Linton. "2010. "From Premodern Waters to Modern Water." **In** J. Linton, *What is Water: The History of a Modern Abstraction*, pp. 73-104 (Chapter 4). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press

Nefissa Naguib. 2013. "Aesthetics of a Relationship: Women and Water." **In** John Richard Wagner, ed. *The Social Life of Water*, pp. 82-96. New York: Berghahn

Recommended:

Steve Caton & Benjamin S. Orlove. "Water Sustainability: Anthropological Approaches and Prospects," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39:401-415

- Sept. 17 Richard White. 1996. *The Organic Machine. The Remaking of the Columbia River*. New York: Hill & Wang

II. WATER AND POWER

- Sept. 24 Library research orientation and film screening: MSEL library

1:30 - 2:30: library orientation: Yunshan Yee [MSEL; with Pol Sci 090.199]

2:30 - 3:50 *Thirst* (USA, 2004, Snitow, 60 ")

- Oct. 1 Jamie Linton. 2012. "The Human Right to What? Water, Rights, Humans and the Relation of Things." In Farhana Sultana & Alex Loftu, eds. *The Right to Water: Politics, Governance and Social Struggles*, pp. 45-59. London: Earthscan

Bakker, Karen. 2007. "The 'Commons' Versus the 'Commodity': Alter-Globalization, Anti-Privatization and the Human Right to Water in the Global South." *Antipode* 39 (3): 430-55

- Oct. 8. Timothy Mitchell. 2002. "Can the Mosquito speak?" *In Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics and Modernity*, pp. 19-53. Berkeley: Univ of California Press.

Lansing, J. Stephen. 1986. "Balinese "Water Temples" and the Management of Irrigation," *American Anthropologist* 89(2): 326-341.

Recommended:

John Richard Wagner. 2012. "Water and the Commons Imaginary," *Current Anthropology*, 53(5):617-641

III. CITIES AND WATER

- Oct. 15. **Film:** *Cadillac Desert*, I. [students should view film before class].

Margaret Keck. 2002. "Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink: Land Use and Water Quality in São Paulo Brazil." In Peter Evans, ed. *Liveable Cities*, pp. 162-194. Berkeley: University of California Press

Erik Swyngedouw. 2004. "The City in a Glass of Water." In *Social Power and Urbanization of Water: Flows of Power*, pp. 27-50. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press

Nikhil Anand. 2011. "Towards an Anthropology of Water in Mumbai's Settlements." In Isabelle Clark-Desces, ed. *Companion to the Anthorpolgy of India*, 426-441. Blackwell Publ.

Oct 22: *Poisoned Waters* (PBS Frontline documentary - 60") (*in class screening*)

Michael Paolisso, Priscilla Weeks and Jane Packard. 2013. "A Cultural Model of Farmer Land Conservation," *Human Organization*, 72(1):12-22.

Selection of articles, analyses and primary source documents on: *AFBF v. Environmental Protection Agency* (United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; Case No. 13-4079): LINKS TO BE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD

Oct 29: **Research proposals**

In-class and individualized discussion of student research projects.

There are no assigned readings for this class. However, students should come to class prepared to discuss the following questions: (a) What is your research question or questions? (b) How will you go about collecting the evidence you will need to answer your research question(s)? and (c) How does your research question and proposed methodology build on and deepen perspectives, issues and themes developed in the assigned readings and class discussions?

Nov. 5: **BLOOMBERG 168: Research workshop**

We will meet with Professor Keck and students from her freshmen seminar to discuss and compare disciplinary approaches to the study of water, water systems and waterscapes. The second part of the class we will workshop student projects from both classes.

IV: ECONOMIES OF WATER

Nov. 12 Paul Trawick. 2001. "The Moral Economy of Water: Equity and Antiquity in the Andean Commons," *American Anthropologist*, 103(2):361-379

Rutgerd Boelens & Miriam Seemann. 2014. "Forced Engagements: Water Security and Local Rights Formalization in Yanque Colca Valley, Peru," *Human Organizacion*, 73(1):1-12

Nov. 19 **BLOOMBERG 168.**

read: Denise Russell. 2010. *Who Rules the Waves? Piracy, Overfishing and Mining the Oceans.* **Read:** Chapters 1,2,3, & 8 (pp.1-59, 137-149)

Nov. 26 **Thanksgiving (no class)**

Dec. 3. [*Climate change readings TBA*]

Dec. 10 Study Week

Dec. 17 Final paper due