

FYSP 055**Encountering Water: Worship, Fear, and Appropriation in the History of H₂O****Instructor:** Garrett Washington garrett.washington@oberlin.edu Tel: 440-775-6879**Class Time:** T/TH 11AM-12:15PM**Classroom:** Science Center A155**My Office:** Rice 28**Office Hours:** W/F 2:30-4:30PM and By Appointment**Course Description:**

This history course will borrow from philosophy, economics, political science, geography, and the sociology and anthropology of religion, to introduce students to the study of water. Focusing on the past five centuries, we will explore the ways in which people across the world have sacralized, feared, fought, and harnessed water. Since time immemorial water has represented nature's ultimate paradox: the "softest" natural element in both classical and eastern thought and yet an element capable of overcoming all the others; an agent of purification, healing, nourishment, and mechanical power and yet an agent of destruction and devastation; the most plentiful natural resource on earth and yet a resource that increasingly proves unobtainable when humans seek it most. Students will examine and draw conclusions about the nature of humankind's encounter with water using book chapters, scholarly articles, and a wide array of primary sources from religious and philosophical texts to images to mechanical descriptions to water management documents to the wisdom of Bruce Lee. Through lectures, discussion, debate, short essays, and an individual research paper, this course will provide students with the tools to get their heads around the global history of water, from Holy Water to Katrina to the Steam Engine to Evian.

Student Learning Objectives:

- To develop knowledge about the various roles that water has played in human life over the centuries
- To develop knowledge of the ways that water use and thought have changed over time.
- To develop an awareness of commonalities and differences in thinking about and using water across cultural boundaries
- To improve critical reading, analytical writing, and verbal communication skills
- To improve critical and analytical thinking skills, particularly in dealing with difficult questions.

Required Texts:

(All Readings will be available electronically via Blackboard,
E-Reserves, or J-Stor)

Class Topics and Readings:

September 3	Intro to the Course
	READINGS : none
	ASSIGNMENTS : none

September 5 Introducing Themes of the Course
READING(S) :
1) James Salzman, *Drinking Water: A History* (New York: Overlook Duckworth, 2012), 25-34
2) William Cullen Bryant "The Hurricane" 1854 and "Green River" 1872
3) Ovid, *Metamorphosis* Book 1: Lines 244-312 (1st Century AD)
4) Tim Dinsdale, *Loch Ness Monster* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 32-35
ASSIGNMENTS :
None

September 10 Museum Visit
READING(S)
ASSIGNMENT(S)

WATER AND PURIFICATION

September 12 Middle Eastern Traditions
READINGS :
1) George A. Barton "The Origin of the Thought-Pattern which Survives in Baptism" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 56, no. 2 (Jun., 1936): 155-164
2) N'tilas Y'dayim/ Wudu/Baptismal Instructions
ASSIGNMENT(S) :
Summary 1

September 17 East Asian Religions
READING(S) :
1) "Shinto symbols" *Contemporary Religions in Japan* Vol. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1966): 33.
2) Gerald Groemer, Sacred Dance at Sensōji: The Development of a Tradition" *Asian Ethnology*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (2010): 281-282
3) Anouska Komlosy, "Procession and Water Splashing: Expressions of Locality and Nationality during Dai New Year in Kishuangbanna," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol. 10, No. 2 (Jun., 2004): 357-363.
ASSIGNMENT(S):
None

OF WATER AND GODS

September 19 India and Egypt
READING(S):
1) Steven G. Darian, Ganges in Myth and History (Honolulu:

University of Hawaii Press, 1978), ch. 2

2) Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 106-108.

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Summary 2

September 24

Celtic Waters, and Boobera Lagoon

READING(S)

1) G. L. Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., 1892), ch. 4

2) http://brg.cma.nsw.gov.au/index.php?page=boobera_lagoon

ASSIGNMENT(S):

none

September 26

Holy Water in Catholicism and Daoism

READINGS:

1) Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), Excerpts

2) Kristofer Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Taoism" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Nov., 1985): 44

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Primary Source Analysis Exercise

Summary 2 Rewrite due

FEARSOME WATER

October 1

Floods

READING(S):

1) Anne Birrell, "The Four Flood Myth Traditions of Classical China" *T'oung Pao*, 2nd Series, Vol. 83, Fasc. 4/5 (1997): Excerpts (213-216, 221-227, 228-231, 233-235, 344-349)

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Synthetic Essay due

October 3

Hurricanes and Typhoons

READING(S):

1) Greg Bankoff, "In the Eye of the Storm: The Social Construction of the Forces of Nature and the Climatic and Seismic Construction of God in the Philippines" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* Vol. 35, no. 1 (Feb., 2004): 91-111.

2) *The Hurricane: Mauritius, 1892*

ASSIGNMENT(S):

None

October 8 Drought
READING(S):
1) Imperial Gazetteer of India vol. III, 475-478 (view pp 517-520 at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/33747855/1907-The-Imperial-Gazetteer-of-India-Volume-3-Economic>)
2) *The Great Famine: Report of the Committee of the China Famine Relief Fund* (Shanghai, 1879), 5-7, 34-37, 41-48
ASSIGNMENT(S):
Synthetic Essay Rewrite due Oct. 8, 10PM

RETHINKING WATER AND MAN

October 10 Worldchanging Ideas about Nature in Europe: Enlightenment Thought and Water-Canals
READING(S):
1) René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method for Rightly Conducting One's Reason and of Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, Part 6, Methods 35-37 (1637)
2) Chandra Mukerji "The New Rome: Infrastructure and National Identity on the Canal du Midi" *Osiris, Vol. 24, No. 1, Science and National Identity* (2009): 15-32.
ASSIGNMENT(S)
1) **Reading Questions 1**
2) **Topic and Annotated Bibliography due**

October 12 Field Trip
READING(S)
Pierre Claude Reynard "Charting Environmental Concerns: Reactions to Hydraulic Public Works in Eighteenth Century France" *Environment and history* 9, no. 3 (2003): 251-273

October 15 Worldchanging Ideas about Nature in Europe: Enlightenment Thought and Water – Swamps
READING(S):
Ian Thompson, *The Sun King's Garden: Andre Le Notre and the Creation of the Gardens of Versailles* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006), ch. 4
ASSIGNMENT(S)
1) **Reading Questions 2**

October 16-October 28 ----- NO CLASS -----

READING(S)

Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men : Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1989), 210-221.

MODERN WATER

October 29

Water Use and Modernization in Europe

READING(S):

1) Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, "Germany A Nature Fit for Industry: The Environmental History of the Ruhr Basin, 1840-1990," *Environmental History Review* Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring, 1994): 35-40.

2) Göran Olsson "The Struggle for a Cleaner Urban Environment: Water Pollution in Malmö 1850-1911," *Ambio* Vol. 30, No. 4/5, Aug., 2001 : 287-289.

ASSIGNMENT(S):

1) **Proposal** due

October 31

Used Water in a Modernizing Europe

READING(S):

1) Stephen Halliday, *The Great Stink of London: Sir Joseph Bazalgette and Cleansing of the Victorian Metropolis* (History Press, 1999), ch. 1 and 2.

2) Salzman, *Drinking Water*, 87-94

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Reading Questions 3

OF WATER AND CONTROL

November 5

2nd Museum Visit

November 7

Managing Waste Water

READING(S)

1) Matthew Gandy, "The Paris Sewers and the Rationalization of Urban Space," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1999): 23-44.

2) Michelle Allen, "From Cesspool to Sewer: Sanitary Reform and the Rhetoric of Resistance, 1848-1880," *Victorian Literature and Culture* Vol. 30, No. 2, 2002: (excerpts)

ASSIGNMENT(S):

None

- November 12 Managing Water Quality
 READING(S):
 1) Agathe Euzen, Jean-Paul Haghe “What kind of water is good enough to drink: The evolution of perceptions about drinking water in Paris from modern to contemporary period” *Water History* Vol. 4 (2012): 231–244.
 2) Andrew Borde, *The First Booke of the Introduction of Knowledge... Volume 3* (1542), 252-253.
 ASSIGNMENT(S):
Reading Questions 4
- November 14 Controlling Water on the Move
 READING(S):
 Erik Törnlund and Lars Östlund, “Floating Timber in Northern Sweden: The Construction of Floatways and Transformation of Rivers,” *Environment and History* Vol. 8, No. 1 (Feb., 2002): 85-106.
 ASSIGNMENT(S):
 None
- November 19 Controlling the Water on the Move in the Colonies – Guest Speaker
 READING(S):
 1) Benjamin Weil, “The Rivers Come: Colonial Flood Control and Knowledge Systems in the Indus Basin, 1840s-1930s” *Environment and History* Vol. 12, No. 1 (February 2006): 3-29
 - or -
 1) Aaron Stephen Moore, "The Yalu River Era of Developing Asia": Japanese Expertise, Colonial Power, and the Construction of Sup'ung Dam,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 72, No. 1 (Feb., 2013): 115-139.
 ASSIGNMENT(S):
Reading Questions 5
- November 21 Discussion

DISOBEDIENT WATER

- November 26 Uncontainable Water (Three Gorges Dam/Sindh, Pakistan)
 READING(S):
 1) Judith Shapiro, *Mao’s War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in the Revolutionary Era* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 21-66.
 2) Fred Pearce, *When the Rivers Run Dry: Water—The Defining Crisis of the Twenty-First Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006),

27-32
ASSIGNMENT(S)
Role Play

- December 3 Unavoidable Water
READING(S):
1) Daya Gunatillake, "The 2004 Tsunami in Sri Lanka: Destruction and recovery," *Geography* Vol. 92, No. 3 (Autumn, 2007): 285-290
ASSIGNMENT(S):
Rough Draft Due
- December 5 Water Un-accessible, Water Un-findable—Guest Speaker
READING(S):
1) Pearce, 35-42
2) Charles Fishman, *The Big Thirst: The Secret Life and Turbulent Future of Water* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 218-221.
3) Hussein A. Amery, "Water Wars in the Middle East: A Looming Threat," *The Geographical Journal* Vol. 168, No. 4 (Dec., 2002): 313-323.
ASSIGNMENT(S):
Reading Questions 6
- December 10 **Discussion:**
- December 12 Sharing of Research
- December 18 **Final Paper Due at 11AM**

Grading:

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE
Final Paper	20%
Rough Draft	5%
Topic and Annot. Biblio	5%
Proposal	5%
Role Play	12.5%
Reading Questions (x6)	2.5 %
Primary Source Anal. Exercise	2.5%
Synthetic Essay	10%
Summary (x2)	5%
Participation	15%
Total	100%

Assignment Explanations:

Participation: A composite grade comprising attendance (required), participation in class during discussions, activities, and presentations.

Summary: A concise 300-word summarization of a single reading assignment, meant to allow you to practice expressing yourself clearly and concisely within a limited number of words. All students are required to rewrite **Summary 2** in accordance with and response to the written comments that I will provide .

Reading Questions: Respond to the questions provided, and bring them to class. These are meant to help guide you through the longer readings, highlight important themes and information, and give your mind something to hang the reading content upon.

Synthetic Essay: (1500 words) An essay based on the readings and classes of weeks 1-4 in which you respond to the following question: How are the perspectives of diverse cultures on the religious and mythological role of water similar? All students are required to rewrite **Summary 2** in accordance with and response to the written comments that the professor will provide .

Primary Source Analysis Exercise: Respond to the questions on this worksheet as they relate to printed stories, found in Kaufman's *Consuming Visions*, of miracle healings in late nineteenth century France.

Role Play: Prepare **both sides** of a debate between Chinese Communist Party officials and Chinese scientists over the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in the 1950s. Playing the role assigned at the beginning of the class period, students will engage in a debate moderated by the professor for approximately 45 minutes.

Final Paper: (3500-4000 words) Write a research paper on development of any water crisis since 1950 not covered in class. Students may choose from the professor's list of suggestions, but are also encouraged to find original topics. Over the course of the first half of the semester, students will prepare to write this paper by completing their **Topic and Annotated Bibliography** and **Proposal**.

Topic and Annot. Biblio: (300) words, not including sources) Summarize the topic that you have chosen and list and annotate at least 10 sources that you will use to research the topic. The sources must include a mixture of books or scholarly articles, and newspaper articles.

Proposal: (500 words) State your research question and why it is important, summarize the literature that you have read thus far, and explain how you plan to go about answering your question.

Rough Draft (1700 words or more) Students are expected to make as much progress in writing the Final Paper as possible. A Rough Draft will include a summary of others' writings on the topic, the student's research question and argument, and show that the student has written several body paragraphs in which s/he supports and elaborates upon this argument.

Due Dates and Assignment Details:

All Assignments are due **on the day** listed in the syllabus. All written work must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font and double-spaced. Grading for all written work will be heavily based on organization and clarity, effective argumentation, grammar and diction, and readability.

FINE PRINT

Syllabus Disclaimer

This syllabus may be altered at any time by the instructor. Any such changes in this course will be posted immediately on Blackboard, and I will e-mail a revised syllabus that replaces the original to all enrolled students.

Late Assignments/Make-Ups

- A. Students must notify me in writing or in person **before** the day of a paper deadline or other major assignment if they intend to turn in late or make up the item. This practice, when used within reason, will allow students to receive full credit.
- B. Any assignments turned in late or exams missed without notification will receive only partial credit.

Working with Honor

Oberlin students are required to write and sign the Honor Pledge on all academic exercises. The pledge reads: "I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." This commits students to not engaging in any type of academic dishonesty, of which cheating and plagiarism are two important types. For more on the Oberlin College Honor System, visit <http://new.oberlin.edu/dotAsset/3840268.pdf>

Plagiarism : This term essentially refers to copying someone else's work without acknowledging that s/he was the source. This can include using the work of a classmate, a scholar, or even one's own work if it was completed for a different course. The liberal arts education is based on the development of creative and critical thinking skills in students, and plagiarism hinders these goals. If you are unsure about what plagiarism means, hypothetically or in an actual situation, I am happy to discuss it with you at any time during the semester.

Each student is encouraged to help me get to know him/her. Come to class, and come to office hours.

