Hist 608. Colloquium:  
Environmental History of the North Pacific

Associate Professor  
Ryan Tucker Jones  
rtj@uoregon.edu  
363 McKenzie Hall  
Office Hours: Monday / Tuesday, 9:30 – 11:30

The Pacific Coast of Kamchatka

Introduction

This colloquium interrogates the historical literature on the North Pacific Ocean from Japan, through Russia, to Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. In the colloquium we will investigate the historical utility of non-standard geographical frames of analysis, the usefulness of trans-national history, and the challenges involved in writing the history of the oceans.
Required books

Kenneth Ames and Herb Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast*

Brett Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*

David Igler, *The Great Ocean*

Josh Reid, *The Sea Is My Country*


Bruce Grant, *In the Soviet House of Culture: A Century of Perestroikas.*

Matthew Morse Booker, *Down by the Bay: San Francisco's History between the Tides*

Frank Zelko, *Make It A Greenpeace!*

Jakobina Arch, *Bringing Whales Ashore. Oceans and the Environment in Early Modern Japan*

Donovan Hohn, *Moby Duck*

Grading. All requirements must be completed to earn a final grade in this course

1. Discussion Participation 25%

Your participation is the key to the success of this class. Think of our discussions as lively conversations about issues of mutual interest to all of us. Our purpose is to explore, analyze, and reflect on the arguments made in the readings and the evidence they use to support those arguments. To participate fully you should come prepared for each class by critically reading all the assigned materials. You should take notes indicating what you think were the books’ strengths, weaknesses, and key contributions to the fields.

2. Class Presentation 10%

For each set of readings, one of you will be asked to help lead the discussion. You should submit a list of 5 – 10 questions at least 24 hours before class. These should be broad questions that will help us explore the readings’ main themes, arguments, and methods.

2. Book Précis 20%

For 2 of the books, of your choice, you will write a formal book review, approximately 1000 words in length. The review will be due at the end of the class whose book you have chosen.

3. Public Presentation 10%

On March 10, we will undertake a field trip to the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology in Charleston, joining an international group of environmental historians, many of whom work on ocean history. During the field trip you will have a chance to share a 5-minute presentation of your final paper in progress.

4. Final paper 35% Due March 23
This is an historiographical paper, c. 15 – 20 pages long, that should focus on a clearly-defined aspect of North Pacific environmental history. You should approve your topic with the professor by February 7. A preliminary bibliography will be due on February 14.

Class Schedule

**Week 1. Jan 10. Approaches to Regional and Oceanic History**

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:
Week 2. Jan 17. An Indigenous North Pacific?

Required Reading:


I.S. Gurvich, “Ethnic Connections across Bering Strait,” in *Crossroads of Continents* Ames and Maschner, *Peoples of the Northwest Coast*


Suggested Reading:

Madonna Moss, *Northwest Coast: Archaeology as Deep History*


Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:

Ilya Vinkovetsky, *Russian America: An Overseas Colony of a Continental Empire*.

Ryan Tucker Jones, *Empire of Extinction: Russians and the North Pacific’s Strange Beasts of the Sea, 1742 - 1867*


---

**Week 4. Jan 31. The North Pacific in an Age of European Exploration**

Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:


Required Reading:


Suggested Reading:


Week 6. Feb 14. ******************* No Class *******************

Please use this week to make substantial progress towards your final paper and final paper presentation

Week 7. Feb 21. Transoceanic Histories in a Period of Transition
Required Readings:

Bathsheba Demuth, Selections from Dissertation

Sonja Luehrmann, *Alutiiq Villages*, Chapters 2, 3.

Suggested Reading:


Aelxander Dolitsky, *Allies in Wartime: The Alaska-Siberia Airway during World War II*

Otis Hayes, *The Alaska-Siberia Connection: The World War II Air Route*


Required Reading: Matthew Morse Booker, *Down by the Bay: San Francisco’s History between the Tides*

Brett Walker, “Mercury,” in *Toxic Archipelago*

Suggested Readings:


Carmel Finley, *All the Fish in the Sea: Maximum Sustainable Yield and the Failure of Fisheries Management.* Chicago, 2011.


---

**Week 9. March 7. Decolonization (plus Jakobina Arch guest visit)**

Required Reading:

Bruce Grant, *In the Soviet House of Culture*

Katherine Reedy-Maschner, “Deprivation and Abundance: The Role of Salmon and ‘Other Natural Resources’ in Sustaining Indigenous Aleut Communities,” in *Keystone Nations*
Suggested Readings:


Peter Coates, *Trans-Alaska Pipeline Controversy*


*************** March 10,11 Field Trip to OIMB ***********************


Required Reading:
