

M M

CONTENTS

Course Syllabus	1
Approaching Literary Texts	8
Invitations	12
Offshore Field Seminar	17
Human Bodies In/Of Water	20
Intertidal: The Literal/Littoral Zone	36
The Deep Sea	46
Pacific Northwest Field Seminar	65
In Ink: Reading Cephalopods	70
Climate	79
Louisiana Field Seminar	86
Middle Passages	92
Whales: Cetaceans & Citations	
Smaller Than Whales	114
Sharks	122
The Sea is History / The Sea Is The Future	129
On Writing	144
Alternative Tables Of Contents	148
Moby-Dick Textual Whale Hunt	150

COURSE SYLLABUS

GLOBAL OCEAN LITERATURE

[whale] Fall 2023

Monday & Wednesday 10.30 - 11.45am Masin Room

Dr. Kelly P. Bushnell (she/her) kpb2@williams.edu OH: Mon 1-2pm @ Keener

"If there is poetry in my book about the sea, it is not because I deliberately put it there, but because no one could write truthfully about the sea and leave out the poetry."

Rachel Carson, The Sea Around Us (1951)

"Poetry is the journal of the sea animal living on land..."

Carl Sandburg in the Atlantic (1923)

"When a whales dies, the story has just begun." From "Life After Whale (On Whale Falls), Smithsonian (2011)

Course Description

The whale fall is an image to which we will return over and over this term. It is a place where we can consider many of the literal and figurative questions of living on a watery world: What is depth? What is exploration? Who is a seafarer? Why do we term some animals "charismatic" (Megaptera novaengliae, the Humpback Whale) but not others (Osedax mucofloris, the "Bone-Eating Snotflower" worm who eats her bones)?

A critical aspect of this course is in moving beyond the *human* experience of seafaring to consider literary representations of *nonhuman* organisms at/in the sea. The ocean is thus the deck prism* through we will view historically-contingent questions of existence and identity and the inextricable connections between social and environmental justice.

Additionally, we will practice the art of close reading and analysis as you continue to develop your writing and communication skills in service of being a critical, thoughtful human on our blue planet.

^{*} Deck prisms are solid glass prisms that were often set into the decks of wooden sailing ships to concentrate light belowdecks without the risk of fire from a lantern. You can see them on multiple ships here at the Seaport.

A Note on *Moby-Dick*.



Herman Melville Moby-Dick



Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick.* Oxford UP 2022. Edited by Hester Blum. ISBN 0198853696.

You must purchase this exact edition, otherwise not only will you be missing the supplemental information specific to this edition, but your page numbers will be different which will cause you unnecessary headaches.

While much of our course will focus on the voices and narratives not often represented in anthologies of sea literature, *Moby-Dick* is more radical than you may have been led to believe, and it is one of my absolute favorite novels to teach and to read and re-read. Rather than reading the novel in one gigantic unit, we will spread the voyage of the *Pequod* over our voyage together this term, reading several chapters at a time every week or two to provide an overarching structure for the term and to make thematic connections to our poetic texts.

Your Course Reader

All other texts (mostly poems) are in this Course Reader. Please bring it to every class and please do me the great honor of writing all over it. I've introduced each week's texts with some guiding questions or running starts for you to consider as you annotate. You'll also notice some QR codes that will take you to supplemental videos, scholarly works, or other materials.

As a document, your Course Reader is a journal of sorts in which you can track your critical thinking as it evolves throughout the semester, and keep of your texts and notes in one convenient place. It also allows us to easily make connections to previous texts during class.

The *Dory*

This semester we will also continue a Williams-Mystic tradition to compile a literary magazine called the *Dory*. Round about when we get home from Louisiana I'll ask for volunteers to serve as the Editorial Board for the F'23 issue. Editors will craft the call for submissions (which generally includes any type of written or visual work) and decide what form the magazine will take. Then the evening of your Skills Show-Off we'll have a reading for faculty and friends!

Accessibility

To ensure that we can provide appropriate accommodations in a timely manner, please be sure to discuss accommodation request with Tom right away.

Assignments & Grades

Response #1	25%	Due 9/13
Response #2	25%	Due 10/18
Final Project Proposal		Due 11/8
Final Project	30%	Due 11/29
Attendance & Engagement	20%	

Late written work will have one letter grade deducted for every day it is late. Please remember Williams-Mystic is a fast-paced semester with many assignments, events, and travels which leave little time to make up anything you miss, so generally we try to avoid extensions except in serious cases.

What does 100% Attendance & Engagement look like? You are in class on time, with your text out, you're taking notes, listening actively to your classmates, joining the discussion when you have something to add, and/or coming to office hours for clarification or further discussion.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Acuy! (Hello, in Mohegan.) Mystic Seaport sits on the traditional lands of the Pequot and Mohegan people. The name "Mystic" is derived from the Pequot word **missituk**: "a large river whose waters are driven into waves by tides or wind." We pay our respects to their ancestors, their elders both past and present, and to their future generations.

Acknowledgement is an important social justice practice; however, it is only a starting point. This term we will discuss territorial acknowledgement as a practice, and you will have the opportunity to learn more from the traditional inhabitants of this land.

The Pequot word **WuyeepuyÃ'q** (pronounced wee-ee-pee-on-kwa) means "**come in a good way**." Let us strive to "come in a good way" as stewards of this land and these waters, and as good relatives to those with whom we share them.

Honor Code

In all you do at Williams-Mystic you are bound by the Honor Code, which will be discussed by the faculty at the beginning of the term.

In the humanities, the Honor Code violation I see most often is plagiarism, but many (perhaps even most) of the plagiarism I see is not malicious but accidental— the result of poor note taking and source management. If you have any questions about ethical use of sources (or if you'd just like some tips on keeping track of research and quotes) please don't hesitate to come chat with me. When you have read this syllabus to completion please email me a picture of a Pacific Spiny Lumpsucker (*Eumicrotremus orbis*).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please arrive in class having read all texts listed and chosen at least one to annotate in depth.

Week 1: Invitations

Wed 23 August Aimee Nezhukumatathil, "Invitation"

Lucille Clifton, "Blessing the Boats" Ofelia Zepeda, "Carrying our Words" Walt Whitman, "The World Below the Brine"

+ Have a look through the "Approaching Literary Texts" section of your Reader.

{ Week 2&3: Offshore Field Seminar }

Week 4: Loomings (Beginning Moby-Dick)

Mon 11 Sept Moby-Dick: Etymology, Extracts, Ch. 1-12 (p. 1-72)

Meet at entrance to Voyaging in the Wake of the Whalers exhibit.

Wed 13 Sept *Moby-Dick:* Ch. 13-27 (p. 72-127)

Response #1 Due at beginning of class.

Week 5: Human Bodies in/of Water

Mon 18 Sept Denise Levertov, "The Depths"

Robert Hayden, "The Diver"

Adrienne Rich, "Diving Into the Wreck" Susan Fawcett, "Blackwater Diving" Peggy Shumaker, "Night Dive" Samuel Green, "Night Dive" Elizabeth Katz, "Elegy for a Diver"

Ben Howard, "The Diver" Aimee Suzara, "Amphibious"

Donika Kelly, "Self-Portrait as a Body, a Sea" Rick Noguchi, "The Ocean Inside Him"

Robert Sullivan, "Ocean Birth"

Raquel Salas Rivera, "sea of the poem (an annex so we may dream

backwards)"

Wed 20 Sept This week your science and humanities classes are reversed so we can

visit the Mashantucket Pequot Museum on Thursday.

Week 6: From the Intertidal Zone to the Deep Sea

Mon 25 Sept Intertidal: The Literal/Littoral Zone

HD, "The Pool"

DH Lawrence, "Seaweed" Denise Levertov, "The Tide" Mary Oliver, "Hermit Crab" Jeffrey Yang, "Nudibranch" Elizabeth Bishop, "The Bight" David Baker, "The Sea" Evelyn Flores, "Tidepools"

Wed 27 Sept The Deep Sea

Sarah Lindsay, "Adaptive Behavior" Sarah Lindsay, "Jericho Worms" Sarah Lindsay, "Eye in the Sea" Brooks Haxton, "Submersible"

Rudyard Kipling, "The Deep Sea Cables"

Miriam Gable, "Marine Snow" David Baker, "Whale Fall"

{ Week 7: Pacific Northwest Field Seminar }

Week 8: Underway on the Pequod

Mon 9 Oct Indigenous Peoples Day - No Class

Wed 11 Oct *Moby-Dick*: Ch. 28-50 (p. 127-226) \rightarrow 99 pages: start early!

Week 9: Cephalopods / Climate Panel

Mon 16 Oct In Ink: Reading Cephalopods

Moby-Dick: Ch. 51-59 (pp. 226-269) → Especially Ch. 59: The Squid

Marylin Nelson, "Octopus Empire"

Eric Paul Schaffer, "The Open Secret of the Sea"

Jeffrey Yang, "Nautilus"

Sarah Lindsay, "Isolated Octopus" Sarah Lindsay, "The Common Octopus" Sarah Lindsay, "Speaking of the Octopus" Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Kraken"

Wed 18 Oct Interdisciplinary Climate Panel: 9-11.45am @ Masin Room

Kathy Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner & Aka Niviana, "Rise" Aimee Nezhukumatathil, "Triggerfish Invective"

Annee Nezhakumatatin, Triggeriish mivective

Jeffrey Yang, "Triggerfish"

Craig Santos Perez, "A Sonnet at the Edge of the Reef" Craig Santos Perez, "Love in a Time of Climate Change"

Response #2 Due at beginning of class.

{ Week 10: Louisiana Field Seminar }

Week 11: Middle Passages

Mon 30 Oct Visit to Stonington Lighthouse, please read:

Robert Hayden, "Middle Passage"

Danez Smith, "dream where every black person is standing by the ocean" Joann Balingit, "Song Where Every Filipinx Person is Standing by the

Ocean"

Wed 1 Nov Mohamed Hassan, "Secrets of the Sea (for Alan Kurdi)"

'Gebenga Adeoba, "Seafarers"

Week 12: Un/Charismatic Mega/Fauna

Mon 6 Nov Whales: Cetaceans & Citations

Stanley Kunitz Kunitz, "The Wellfleet Whale" Kamilah Aisha Moon, "Notes on a Mass Stranding"

Annie Finch, "Watching the Oregon Whale" Kimiko Hahn, "[The Whale Already]" WS Merwin, "For a Coming Extinction"

Mary Oliver, "The Humpbacks"

Wed 8 Nov Smaller Than Whales

Sarah Lindsay, "Debt to the Bone-Eating Snotflower"

Sarah Lindsay, "Carnivorous Sponges of the Antarctic Ocean"

Anna Świrscscyńska, "I am Filled with Love"

Jeffrey Yang, "Dinoflagellate"

Aimee Nezhukumatathil, "Self-Portrait as a Scallop"

Aimee Nezhukumatathil, "Suppose You Were a Moray Eel" William Cowper, "To the Immortal Memory of the Halibut..."

William Cowper, To the Immortal Memory of the Hanbu

Final Project Proposal Due at beginning of class.

Week 13: Sharks & Shanties

Mon 13 Nov Moby-Dick: Ch. 60-80 (p. 269-330) \rightarrow Esp. Ch. 66: The Shark Massacre

Herman Melville, "The Maldive Shark"

Mary Oliver, "The Shark"

Alan Dugan, "Plague of Dead Sharks"

Carl Sandburg, "In a Breath"

Richard O'Connell, "Shoal of Sharks"

Nancy Willard, "Sand Shark"

Wed 15 Nov Class onboard Charles W. Morgan

Moby-Dick: Ch. 81-101 (p. 330-415)

Week 14: Fall Break

Wherever you are this week, take some time to finish Moby-Dick!

Week 15: Voyage's End

Mon 27 Nov Moby-Dick: Ch. 102-119 (p. 415-465)

Wed 29 Nov *Moby-Dick:* Ch. 120-135 + Epilogue (p. 465-522)

Final Project Due at beginning of class.

Week 16: The Sea is History / The Sea is the Future

Mon 4 Dec Revisit "Middle Passage" and "The Deep Sea Cables," then:

Carl Sandburg, "Sea-Wash"

Derek Walcott, "The Sea is History"

Jeffrey Yang, "Coelacanth"

Linda Hogan, "The Turtle Watchers"

Craig Santos Perez, "Praise Song for Oceania" Brandi Nalani MacDougall, "Water Remembers"

Rita Dove, "Primer for the Nuclear Age"

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, "Monster"

Wed 6 Dec Making connections between multiple texts this term.

Dory Launch Reading at the Skills Show-Off this evening!

Moby-Dick Specific Reading Schedule

Tackling a text the size of *Moby-Dick* might seem daunting in just eight class periods, so I've found that seeing it broken down like this assuages some students' anxieties. There are a few days where you'll need to have read pretty large chunks, but I've endeavored to place those days strategically within the semester; for instance, your 99-pager is the Wednesday after Indigenous Peoples' Day, so there will be no class on Monday. Please also ask me anytime for more tips and tricks for reading (and retaining!) large amounts of text.

Mon 11 Sept	Etymology, Extracts, Ch. 1-12 (p. 1-72)	72 pages
Wed 13 Sept	Ch. 13-27 (p. 72-127)	55 pages
Wed 11 Oct	Ch. 28-50 (p. 127-226)	99 pages
Mon 16 Oct	Ch. 51-59 (p. 226-269)	43 pages
Mon 13 Nov	Ch. 60-80 (p. 269-330)	61 pages
Wed 15 Nov	Ch. 80-101 (p. 330-415)	85 pages
Mon 27 Nov	Ch. 102-119 (p. 415-465)	50 pages
Wed 29 Nov	Ch. 120-135 + Epilogue (p. 465-522)	57 pages

APPROACHING LITERARY TEXTS

Before our first class please takes some time to read over the next few pages of strategies for approaching literary texts. This is classified as an Upper-Division Literature course, but due to the unique nature of Williams-Mystic I don't have any expectation that you will be familiar with literary terms, techniques, or critical theory. One of the fun parts of the course is that you will pick up lots of literary and critical methodology along the way.

Also: I promise you that this course reader has no resale value, so please write all over it. Annotating and writing as we read is one of the great joys of scholarly work: it's an opportunity to place ourselves in conversation with the author and with the readers who've come before us. There is nothing right or wrong about annotation: it's a form of meditation in which we explore the relationship between reading and writing. (As literacy educator Pam Allyn puts it, "Reading is breathing in, writing is breathing out.") But reading and annotating literary texts is also a *practice* in every way in which we use that word in English from athletes to physicians. Your semester at W-M is a great time to nurture this practice.

How to Annotate a Literary Text

Annotation = the act of making notes about (ideally directly on) your assigned text.

Some people call this "active" reading or something along those lines, but it is especially important in literary studies because (unlike a textbook), we are interested not just in *what* is written but *how* it is written. In addition to the plot/imagery of a literary text, every structural and stylistic the choice the author makes—large or small—is important to us.

When you annotate you are looking for (and *not*ing) the following:

YOUR REACTIONS TO THE TEXT

Mark moments in the text that make you feel something, whether positive or negative. It's always more interesting to discuss the moment that move us.

WORDS TO LOOK UP

It's probably important, and this is how reading improves your vocabulary better than any other intellectual pursuit.

PATTERNS & REPETITION

Your brain: Wait... didn't the author already use that word? Haven't I seen a white bird in the text before? I'm not sure why, but I'm getting the feeling this important so I'm gonna mark it.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

Take a moment to notice how a text looks on the page. If fiction: Is it divided into sections? How many? Why? If poetry: How long are the lines? Do they rhyme? Are there verses or just one?

PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT SENTENCES OR PASSAGES

You will develop a literary "instinct" that will strengthen like a muscle during this class, and it will twitch when you read a line or a passage that seems especially important (even if you're not yet sure why).

THINGS THAT ARE CONFUSING TO YOU

Be sure to note elements of the text than seem confusing to you. For instance: Why does this character do what they do? Why does this poem look practically unreadable? The things which seem confusing or frustrating at first are the questions/elements in a text that often yield the richest discussion exploration.

Poetry

Sound

- ✓ What types of **sounds** does the poem use?
- ✓ Does it **rhyme**? (If so, try to express the rhyme scheme in letter format, i.e. abab cdcd efef gg.)
- ✓ Does it make use of assonance, consonance, alliteration, or onomatopoeia?

Accent, Rhythm, Meter, and the Poetic Line

- ✓ Does the poem have a define rhythm (meter)? (If not, it is **free verse**.)
- ✓ If so, express the **meter** in terms of its **metrical feet** (i.e. iambic) and **meter** (i.e. pentameter). Here's a reminder:

Types of Metrical Feet			
u /	Iamb (iambic)	pro pose ,	
/ u	Trochee (trochaic)	daily	
uu/	Anapest (anapestic)	interfere	
/ u u	Dactyl (dactylic)	underwear	
/ /	Spondee (spondaic)	good dog	

METERS		
1	Monometer	
2	Dimeter	
3	Trimeter	
4	Tetrameter	
5	Pentameter	
6	Hexameter	
7	Heptameter	
8	Octameter	

Example: Iambic pentameter has five iambs per line

✓ Zoom in on individual lines. Are they **end-stopped** or **enjambed**? Do any lines make use of **caesura**?

Images, Symbols, Allusions, and Figurative Language

- ✓ What is the **imagery** in the poetry?
- ✓ Do you detect any literary/cultural/historical allusions?
- ✓ Take some time to comb through the poem for figurative language including (but not limited to):
 - Simile
 - o Metaphor
 - o Synecdoche
 - o Metonymy
 - o Paradox and oxymoron

Voice and Genre

- ✓ Who is the **speaker** of the poem? How is their persona characterized?
- ✓ Does this poem fall under any particular established **genre** of poetry? (Including but not limited to **aubade**, **ballad**, **dramatic monologue**, **elegy**, **epic**, **epithalamion**, **lyric**, **ode**, **pastoral**, **romance**, and **sonnet**.)

CONDUCTING A CLOSE READING

Fiction

Plot Structure

- ✓ What is the **conflict** in this narrative? Is it **internal** or **external**? (There will likely be multiple.)
- ✓ Does the plot use a **framing narrative** or any **flashbacks**?
- ✓ Chart the stages of **plot development**:
 - o exposition
 - o rising action
 - climax
 - o falling action
- ✓ Does this narrative have any sense of **resolution** (*denouement*)?

Point of View

- ✓ What is the **narrative point of view**?
 - o First, second, or third person?
 - Omniscient or limited omniscient?
- ✓ Does this text's narration require a **suspension of disbelief**?
- ✓ Does the narrator make use of **stream of consciousness**?
- ✓ What do we know about the persona of our narrator? Do they seem reliable or unreliable?

Characters and Characterization

✓ Taking the text as a whole or in sections, are characters characterized through **description**, **action**, or **dialogue** (see also: **diction**)? (And when?)

<u>Setting</u>

- ✓ Where (and when) does this text take place?
- ✓ How does the setting influence the narrative?

Theme vs. Motif

- ✓ What themes are present in this text?
- ✓ What motifs are present in the text? What significance might they hold?

Style and Tone

- ✓ What do we know about the narrator and characters through their **diction**?
- ✓ Zoon in to the sentence level of particularly interesting passages. How do these passages use:
 - Denotative vs. connotative means of words
 - Concrete vs. abstract words
 - o Syntax
- ✓ Repetition: Are any images, words, colors, etc repeated? (See also: motifs)
- ✓ Can you isolate any images (especially physical things) that seem like they might be **symbols**? What might they be representing/symbolic of? (Do you think the entire text might be **allegory**?)
- ✓ Do you detect any literary/cultural/historical allusions?
- ✓ Take some time to comb through the text for **figurative language** including (but not limited to): Simile vs. metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, paradox, and oxymoron

M

ALTERNATIVE TABLES OF CONTENTS

Any syllabus, course reader, anthology, mix tape, or Spotify playlist is an act of making meaning and, also, making decisions. Give some thought to how *you* might structure an Ocean Literature class. Would you take us around the world by region? By theme?

Dr. Kelpy's Rejected Ideas for Structuring an Ocean Literature Class

- >> By time period, strictly chronologically
- >> By global winds/currents (I'd still like to experiment with this one)
- >> By kingdom-phylum-class-order-family-genus-species
- > By Margaret Cohen's Chronotopes of the Sea: blue water (out of sight of land), brown water (rivers and estuaries), white water (rapids and waves), island, shore, and ship
- > By how nice the author has been to me at conferences

Poets with Multiple Poems in This Reader

David Baker	"The Sea" and "Whale Fall"

Robert Hayden "The Diver" and "Middle Passage"

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner "Rise" and "Monster"

Denise Levertov "The Depths" and "The Tide"

Sarah Lindsay "Adaptive Behavior"

"Jericho Worms"
"Eye in the Sea"
"Isolated Octopus"
"The Common Octopus"

"Speaking of the Octopus"

"Debt to the Bone-Eating Snotflower"

"Carnivorous Sponges of the Antarctic Ocean"

Aimee Nezhukumatathil "Invitation" and "Triggerfish Invective"

Mary Oliver "Hermit Crab"

"The Humpbacks"
"The Shark"

Carl Sandburg "In a Breath" and "Sea Wash"

Craig Santos Perez "A Sonnet at the Edge of the Reef"

"Love in a Time of Climate Change"

"Echolocation"

Jeffrey Yang "Nudibranch"

"Nautilus"
"Triggerfish"
"Dinoflagellate"
"Coelacanth"

Indigenous Poets

Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O'odham)

Kathy Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner (Marshallese)

Aka Niviana (Greenlandic Inuk)

Graig Santos Perez (Chamorro)

Evelyn Flores (Chamorro)

Robert Sullivan (Maori)

Brandi Nalani MacDougall (Kanaka Maoli)

Linda Hogan (Chickasaw)

Rena Priest (Lummi)

Black Poets

Lucille Clifton

Robert Hayden

Donika Kelly

Marylin Nelson

Danez Smith

Gebenga Adeoba

Kamilah Aisha Moon

Derek Walcott

Rita Dove

LGBTQ+ Poets

Adrienne Rich

Elizabeth Bishop

David Baker

Danez Smith

Asian-American Poets

Aimee Nezhukumatathil

Aimee Suzara

Jeffrey Yang

Joann Balingit

Rick Noguchi

Kimiko Hahn

Poets Writing from/about The Pacific

Eric Paul Shaffer

Craig Santos Perez

Brandy Nalani MacDougall

Robert Sullivan

Kathy Jeñil-Kijiner

Aimee Suzara

Evelyn Flores

™ Moby-Dick Textual Whale Hunt

On the following page are 16 squares, each with a recurring image or theme in Moby-Dick.

When you notice one as you read, note the page number. Find as many as you can, and think creatively! For instance, there will be an important *literal* coffin (casket) in the text, but you'll also meet a Mr. Coffin.

This is great practice for observing patterns and motifs in literary texts, and gives you a premade list of citations if you choose to write an essay about, say, coffin imagery in *Moby-Dick* for your final project.

The first person to successfully find two good citations for each square receives a prize of KB's choosing (that they probably won't like).

More Note Space

Old testament references	Duplicates	Someone ends up in the water	Notable meals
Someone wonders if animals have souls	Phallic jokes (this should be a free square)	Comparisons of ships and bodies	Worries about natural resource depletion that prefigure climate crisis
Someone wonders if men have free will at all	Things that are not books but that are described as books or read as books	Quotes attributed to someone that you have a strong suspicious are fabricated by Melville	Things that are white (not the whale)
Coffins	Imagery that anticipates the American Civil War	Someone approaching the limits of human knowledge/experience	An entire chapter in which the plot does not move forward because Ishmael is on a tangent

