



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

In Pursuit of the Whale:
Cetological Literature at the Bamfield Marine Science Centre
July 4 – 22 2016

Professors:

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Classroom: Bamfield Marine Science Centre

Academic Calendar Entry

An advanced level course, sited at the BMSC, that brings approaches from historicism, ecocriticism, and critical animal studies to bear on cetological literature from the 19th century to the present.

Course Format

Periodic lectures on specific topics will be combined with intensive seminar discussion of required texts. Field trips will include local sites related to historic whaling, and, if possible, encounters with wild cetaceans. Assessment will employ the British Oxbridge tutorial method of intensive small-group discussion of draft essays.

Course Overview, Content and Objectives

The course will involve close study of literature and films relating to whales and whaling, employing theoretical concepts from ecocriticism (environmentally-oriented cultural criticism) and critical animal studies. Making good use of the proximity of wild cetaceans, historic whaling sites, and the contemporary cultural industry of whale-watching, the course will combine place-based experiential learning with historically and theoretically informed methods of cultural analysis in order to address the questions: How have attitudes and interactions of humans and whales changed in modern history? What have whales come to mean in contemporary cultures (predominantly, but not solely, Canadian)? And finally: where might the entangled naturecultures of cetaceans and human primates go next? The disciplines of English literature, cultural theory, and environmental ethics, and the findings of marine biologists, the recorded experiences of Western whalers, and the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples will be brought to bear on these questions.

Evaluation Criteria and Grading

Course assessments will be differentiated by word limit and passing grade according to student level.

1. Research essay 2000 words (400-level) / 2500 words (500-level) (30%). This essay will be written midway through the second week and discussed in a tutorial with one other student at the end of the second week. It will then be redrafted for submission at the conclusion of the course.
2. Research essay 2000 words (400-level) / 2500 words (500-level) (30%). This essay will be written midway through the third week and discussed in a tutorial with one other student at the end of the third week. It will then be redrafted for submission the week after the conclusion of the course.
3. Reflective journal (20%). Throughout the course, responses to the texts and the environment will be recorded in a journal. The journal will be reviewed midway through the course and submitted



at the end. While this assignment does not have a formal word limit, 500-level responses will be expected to demonstrate significantly greater detail and depth.

4. Student-led seminar (20%). Working in groups, students will organize and lead a seminar on a required text or film.

Marking Criteria (Written Assignments)

The following table was adapted from Bath Spa University English department marking criteria.

The pass mark for 500-level work is 63%.

Grade		Knowledge	Presentation/expression	Argument
Outstanding (90+%)	A+	Work that shows comprehensive knowledge of primary texts and their relevant context. This knowledge extends in some directions well beyond what is 'prescribed' by the module documentation, lectures and seminars.	Work that follows the appropriate academic conventions accurately. Its tone and register are flexible and well-judged, and it presents sophisticated and complex ideas confidently, clearly and engagingly.	Work whose argument is well-structured to reflect a process of thought and enquiry that combines into a whole to reach a conclusion that is persuasive and may be surprising. It shows ability to read and interpret primary sources sensitively and critically in order to develop its argument. It reads secondary sources sceptically and critically, entering debate with them and using them as a springboard to launch its own interpretations. It demonstrates a sophisticated critical interrogation of the assigned question/topic. Outstanding work will throw a new and original light on the issue/text(s) under discussion, and, at the highest level, will reach the standard of published scholarly work.
Exceptional (85-89%)	A			
Excellent (80-84%)	A-			
Very good (76-79%)	B+	Work that shows a good knowledge of the primary text(s) and the relevant context. It has a good foundation in the prescribed reading and builds on ideas put forward in lectures and seminars. It shows evidence of reading in relevant and worthwhile secondary sources.	Work that follows appropriate academic conventions well. It is fluently written and expresses arguments and ideas clearly in an appropriate academic register. It is properly paragraphed and integrates quotations correctly.	Work whose argument is well-structured and leads to a clear conclusion. It supports its argument with quotation and, where appropriate, close reading. It recognises the existence of alternative points of view and debates with and develops points made in secondary sources. It shows evidence of real critical engagement with texts.
Good (72-75%)	B			
Quite good (68-71%)	B-			



Competent C+ (64-67%) Acceptable C (60-63%) Barely acceptable C- (55-59%)	Work that shows familiarity with the main features of the primary text(s). Refers to relevant secondary sources.	Work that follows academic conventions well and without systematic errors. It is clearly expressed and shows an intention to emulate an appropriate academic register. It is properly paragraphed. There may be weaknesses in expression and presentation.	Work that contains relevant but basic points that accumulate to reach a point of view about the question/topic. Its points are supported by quotation, but do not demonstrate a very penetrating critical response.
Marginal pass D (50-54%)	Work that shows faulty and inaccurate knowledge of the primary text(s). Secondary sources are unreliable and of little or no academic value.	Academic conventions poorly observed. Difficulty in expressing ideas in an appropriate register. Frequent errors in punctuation and syntax. Quotations improperly integrated, leading to syntactic chaos.	Work that addresses the question/topic in an elementary way and with little understanding. Little or no relevant reference to the primary text(s) or supporting evidence from them.
Fail F (0 – 49%) [Work can also fail for rubric infringement, non-submission or submission after cut-off date or without an agreed extension, or because of unfair practice.]	Work that shows little or no first hand knowledge of the texts and what has been argued about them by others.	Work that makes little attempt to observe the academic conventions for the type of assessment concerned. It shows such a poor command of written English (syntax, register, punctuation and spelling) that it fails to communicate effectively.	Work that has no structured argument and shows little evidence that the student can distinguish between points that are relevant and those that are irrelevant to the requirements of the assessment. It shows little or no understanding of how either primary or secondary texts should be used in constructing an argument.

Column 1 gives the main grades and rough definition of different levels within the grade band. The other columns describe the characteristic attainment at the given grade in terms of knowledge, expression/presentation, and argument. The letter grade descriptors encompass considerable variation from the lower to the higher end of each scale. The most accomplished work (e.g. B+) will exhibit more of the virtues and/or fewer of the limitations attributed to a given letter grade (e.g. the B range).

In any given case it is possible for work to fit different grade-bands in these three aspects, and this will affect its final mark. In general, however, unless there are particular problems (such as those caused by dyslexia), discrepancies are likely to be minor, and the work will conform pretty closely in all respects to the combined description of the grade-band it is awarded. The three aspects in general have roughly equal weighting, but are not numerically assessed separately from each other.

Required Readings and Videos

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* [selected sections] (Oxford, 2008)

Philip Hoare, *Leviathan, or The Whale* (4th Estate, 2008)

Farley Mowat, *A Whale for the Killing* ???

Linda Hogan, *People of the Whale* (Norton, 2009)

Witi Ihimaera, *Whale Rider* (Raupo, 2002)



Zakes Mda, *The Whale Caller* (Picador, 2006)

Blackfish (dir. Gabriela Cowperthwaite)
The Cove (dir. Louie Psihoyos)
The Dolphin Dealer (dir. Leigh Badgley)
Human Planet (BBC Earth)
Blue Planet (BBC Earth)

Jeff Warren, 'Whales are people too'

Course Schedule

Week 1: Mon-Fri. Whales in Western history: *Moby Dick* and *Leviathan*.

Week 2: Mon-Thu. Indigenous peoples and whales: Hogan and Ihimaera. Fri: essay tutorials. Sat-Sun: overnight camping trip.

Week 3: Mon-Thu. Whales in contemporary culture: Mda and films. Fri: essay tutorials.

Final Examinations:

This course has no final exam.

Further information on Academic Concession can be found under Policies and Regulation in the *Okanagan Academic Calendar* <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>.

Academic Integrity:

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment or exam and more serious consequences may apply if the matter is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences.

A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures for dealing with academic misconduct, may be found in the Academic Calendar at <http://okanagan.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,0>.

UBC Okanagan Disability Resource Centre

The Disability Resource Centre ensures educational equity for students with disabilities, injuries or illness. If you are disabled, have an injury or illness and require academic accommodations to meet the course objectives, please contact Earllene Roberts, the Diversity Advisor for the Disability Resource Centre located in Commons Corner in the University Centre building (UNC 227).

UNC 227A 250.807.9263

email earllene.roberts@ubc.ca

Web: www.ubc.ca/okanagan/students/drc

UBC Okanagan Ombuds Office

The Ombuds Office offers independent, impartial, and confidential support to students in navigating UBC policies, processes, and resources, as well as guidance in resolving concerns related to fairness.



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UNC 227B 250.807.9818

email: ombuds.office.ok@ubc.ca

Web: <http://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca/ubc-okanagan-2/>

UBC Okanagan Equity and Inclusion Office

UBC Okanagan is a place where every student, staff and faculty member should be able to study and work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. UBC prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of the following grounds: age, ancestry, colour, family status, marital status, physical or mental disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or unrelated criminal conviction. If you require assistance related to an issue of equity, discrimination or harassment, please contact the Equity and Inclusion Office.

UNC 227C 250.807.9291

email: equity.ubco@ubc.ca

Web: www.ubc.ca/okanagan/equity

Health & Wellness

UNC 337 250.807.9270

Web: students.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellness/welcome.html

FCCS Calendar of Events

FCCS will host many great events this academic year. Please bookmark this page for future reference:

<http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/fccs/news-events/calendar.html>.