Globalization is a phenomenon that seems to be occurring everywhere around us and yet seems to have no origin. Is the world really flat? Or have certain places, people and things become better connected than others? This course seeks to answer these questions by exploring when and why certain places became better connected, people became more mobile and things gained wider circulation. Since the Indus valley civilization started trading with the Mesopotamian civilization four millennia ago, the Indian Ocean has been an important space of economic and cultural exchange. Technological innovations were pioneered within the Indian Ocean littoral and others were imported from other parts of the world. We can then see where and how ideas, commodities and people became incorporated into the Indian Ocean world and those which were resisted.

The readings and assignments in the course are designed to make you think about how economics, politics, culture interact to make connections stable or fragile. Each week you will be asked to submit one criticism and one question on the weeks’ readings by 8pm the evening before the seminar meets. These can be as little as a sentence and not more than a brief paragraph. You should clearly state a criticism of the arguments put forth in one or more of the week’s readings. And you should ask a question which either connects different readings or expands upon some facet of the week’s readings. This is meant to facilitate a high level of class discussion rather than add to your workload, so long and involved comments are discouraged: save such thoughts for the seminar discussion.

The course is divided into four thematic sections: technology and exchange, politics and space, people and mobility, and culture and representation. Each theme will cover three to four weeks and end with a writing assignment. You may skip one of the four assignments or drop your lowest grade.

**Weeks 1-4: Technology and Exchange**
Assignment: Pick two objects (i.e. the dhow, pepper, the astrolabe, shipping container etc.) and compare how they contributed to the greater inter-connection of the Indian Ocean. Discuss in particular what were the socio-political obstacles or facilitators which made these objects so powerful. (5-7 pages)

**Weeks 5-7: Politics and Space**
Assignment: Draw a map of the Indian Ocean. Pick a particular time and person who is making the map and consider carefully, what they would represent on the map, and how they would represent these different things. Explain in 3-5 pages why you chose to draw certain things and not others and why you chose to represent them in these particular ways.

**Weeks 8-10: People and Mobility**
Assignment: Write a Captains’ Log, or a journal. Describe the difficulties and joys of the journey, as if you were a historical traveler on the Indian Ocean. Think in particular about how they view other people and other landscapes as well as how a person’s perspective shifts over the course of a journey. (5-7 pages)
Weeks 11-13: Culture and Representation
Assignment: Write a detailed analysis of a work of art, this could be a close reading of selections of poetry, short stories or a novel, or an analysis of several pieces of artwork or a film. Discuss in particular how oceanic spaces, different cultures and peoples are represented. Pay close attention to language or artistic technique. A list of films, artwork and literature will be available for you to use or you can use other works after confirmation with the course instructor. (5-7 pages)

Evaluation Criteria
Class Participation: 25%
3 Writing assignments 75% (25% each)

COURSE READINGS

Technology and Exchange

Week 1 – Shipping
Marc Levinson, The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger, Ch. 9 Vietnam.

Week 2 – Sailing and Smuggling
Eric Tagliacozzo, Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States Along a Southeast Asian Frontier 1865-1915, Ch. 13 Contraband and the Junk Kim Ban An.
Erik Gilbert, Dhows and the Colonial Economy in Zanzibar, 1860-1970, Ch. 4 Cloves, Dhows and Steamers: the Twentieth Century Struggle between the Official and Unofficial Economies in Zanzibar.

Week 3 – Commodities and Consumers

Week 4 - Finance
Charles Schaeffer “Selling at a Wash;” Competition and the Indian Merchant Community in Aden Crown Colony” Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall 1999), pp.16-23.
Politics and Space

**Week 5 - Pirates**
Jay Bahadur *The Pirates of Somalia: Inside their Hidden World*, Chapter 4, Of Pirates, Coast Guards and Fishermen.

**Week 6 – Empires**
Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade 1740-1800*, Ch. 2 The Monopoly of Travancore.

**Week 7 – Third World Rebels**
Sugata Bose *His Majesty’s Opponent: Subhas Chandra Bose and India’s Struggle Against Empire*, Ch. 8 Roads to Delhi, pp. 238-303.

People and Mobility

**Week 8 – Slaves**

**Week 9 – Coolies**
Marina Carter and Khal Torabully *Coolitude* “Thrice Victimized: Casting the Coolie,” pp. 45-87
Week 10 - Pilgrims

**Culture and Representation**

Week 11 - Intellectuals
Sugata Bose *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*, Ch. 7 A Different Universalism? Oceanic Voyages of a Poet as Pilgrim, pp. 233-271

Week 12 - Literature
Ronit Frenkel “A History of Cultural Negation in Indian Ocean Literature: Julia Blackburn’s The Book of Color and Lindsey Collen’s The Rape of Sita” and Amitav Ghosh “Of Fanás and Forecasts: The Indian Ocean and Some Lost Languages of the Age of Sail” in Pamila Gupta, Isabel Hofmeyer and Michael Pearson (eds.) *Eyes Across the Water: Navigating the Indian Ocean*

Week 13 - Fiction
Amitav Ghosh, *River of Smoke*, Selections