

The Urban Ocean

Instructor: Kelly Luis
Teaching Assistant: Sarah Bistany
Class Time: M/W 4:00-5:50 p.m.
Zoom URL: Available on Blackboard

Course Description:

With the Atlantic Ocean on UMass-Boston's doorstep, this place-based course immerses students in the history, culture, and science of Boston Harbor and its Islands to understand the natural and anthropogenic factors shaping our waterfront. The impacts of anthropogenic development and climate change extend from the bustling city of Boston to the outer reaches of Boston Harbor Islands and the consequences of these impacts are shared across UMass-Boston's neighboring communities (e.g., Quincy, Dorchester, and East Boston) and abiotic and biotic communities. Thus, this course will investigate the evolving relationships between people, plants, and animals across this aquatic landscape from a transdisciplinary basis, the integration of knowledge systems to move beyond discipline specific problem-solving approaches. Students will learn how to conduct archival research and scientific experiments, participate in service-learning opportunities, and engage in roundtable discussions with local indigenous communities, environmental organizations, and researchers. The culmination of these activities will introduce students to methods they can employ for their final project: a proposal on a research topic they would like to lead at the Living Laboratory on Rainsford Island, Boston Harbor Islands. Throughout the course, students will reflect on their own relationships with water and their surroundings and the role they want to play as stewards of Boston Harbor, its Islands, and UMass-Boston. ENVSCI 185GL and ENVSTY 285GL are the same course.

Course Goals:

Students will develop the General Education Capabilities of (a) Careful Reading of a variety of non-scientific and scientific texts; (b) Clear Writing of observations, reflections, and scientific reports; (c) Critical Thinking in transdisciplinary terms about the historic, social, and natural environment; (d) Use of Information Technology and Library Resources in their course work; (e) Oral and Written Communication of their observations and learning; (f) Teamwork in course activities; and (g) Academic Self-Assessment of their progress.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will learn about interdisciplinary research methods and apply these methods to understand the impacts of anthropogenic activities and climate change on the Boston Harbor waterfront.
2. Students will be able to explain the ecosystem of relationships connecting Boston Harbor's inhabitants
3. Students will develop a deeper connection with UMass-Boston, Boston Harbor, and the Boston Harbor Islands.

Remote Learning Expectations:

I understand these strange, heightened times make participating in an active, synchronous course challenging and to foster a supportive and collaborative virtual community, I have outlined remote learning expectations below:

Zoom:

1. *Camera:* **I strongly encourage you to have your camera on during class.** If your camera needs to be turned off due to poor bandwidth or needing privacy occasionally, please feel free to flicker your camera off as needed. If you foresee your camera being off for an extended period of time, send me a private chat so I know you're ok.
2. *Microphone:* Unless you're speaking, please keep yourself on mute.
3. *Recording:* Courses will be recorded, and the recordings will be available on Blackboard. **If you have recording concerns, please let the instructor know as soon as possible.**
4. *Chat:* If you are waiting to say something aloud, feel free to use the chat to add your thoughts, comments, and opinions to a discussion topic. It will be our collective responsibility to address comments raised in the chat.
5. *Background Distractions:* I recommend reducing as many background distractions as possible; however, I understand this isn't feasible for everyone, especially for the full two-hour block. I encourage you to try your best with little stress and I'll provide some fun, Boston Harbor themed virtual backgrounds to help.

Blackboard:

Blackboard will be the primary medium for our course, so all course materials, Zoom recordings, grades, and course announcements will be available on Blackboard. Important announcements will also be shared via UMB email addresses. If email notifications are preferred, students can set up Blackboard notification emails:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Stay_in_the_Loop/Notifications.

Email:

I will use email to send important announcements and to communicate with you individually, when necessary. **If you foresee missing a class or need to communicate with me, please email kelly.luis001@umb.edu.** Your engagement in this course is my top priority and if I do not respond to you within 48 hours, please feel free to ping me again.

Office Hours:

Since a majority of writing assignments will be due on Friday, weekly office hours will be scheduled for Thursdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m. and if this time block conflicts with your schedule, appointments for different blocks can be requested. **To best help me help you, I highly encourage you to email me at least 12 hours in advance with a brief description of what you would like to discuss.**

IMPORTANT LAST NOTE:

I fully understand that it might not be possible to meet all of the above expectations during these times and that is completely fine. If you have concerns, we will have individual check-ins during the first two weeks of class where we can make a game plan for your participation.

First-Year Seminar

This course is a First-Year Seminar (FYS). First-Year Seminars welcome new students (with **fewer than 30 transfer** credits) to UMass Boston. These small-sized courses are designed to prepare students for a successful college experience. Students may choose from a variety of FYS courses, reflecting a wide range of topics and disciplines. A major goal of First-Year Seminars is to practice the following habits of mind essential to university level educational success: careful reading; clear writing; critical thinking; use of information literacy and technology; working in teams; oral presentation; and academic self-assessment.

All First-Year Seminars meet 4 hours per week and carry 4 credits. A mentor and a staff academic advisor are ordinarily assigned to each seminar. Among other things, the mentor can help you with computer accounts, e-mail, and with library research. The advisor will visit the class once or twice during the semester and can be contacted for help with choosing courses and major, with financial aid, and any problems with university life in general. UMass Boston is a wonderfully diverse community. We hope that you will take advantage of the opportunity to learn about the rich array of opinions and experiences that will inevitably be present in this class.

If you entered UMB with 30 or more transferable credits, you should not be enrolled in this course. If you entered UMB with fewer than 30 credits but have more than 30 credits now, you still need a First-Year Seminar (a G100 or 100G course, like this one) if you have not yet taken one. Note: If you have taken another G100- or 100G-level course in any department at UMB, or if you have completed the two-term Gateway Seminars in the College of Science and Mathematics (Inter-d 187S and 188S) you should not be taking this course. Please note also that courses taken at UMass Boston before matriculating do not count as transfer credits. Thus, for example, if you took 36 UMass Boston credits as a special student and then applied for admission, you still need to take a First-Year Seminar.

Student Referral Program

If it appears to the instructor that you might not pass this First-Year Seminar, and if the instructor cannot figure out how to support your success in the course, the instructor might inform the director of the Student Referral Program (CC-1100; 287-5500). The staff in this program will attempt to help you address the difficulties that are interfering with your success in the class. If you do not want your instructor to let the Student Referral Program know that you are having difficulty, please let your instructor know.

Accommodations

Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. The Ross Center for Disability Services at UMass Boston (617.287.7430) provides resources for students with disabilities. You will need to provide documentation of disability to them in order to receive official university services and accommodations.

Student Conduct

Students are required to adhere to university policies on academic honesty and student conduct. The current Code of Student Conduct, including information about academic dishonesty is available online at: https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/dean_of_students/student_conduct

Assessment of These Courses

In addition to a Student Self-Assessment form to be completed at the end of each First-Year Seminar, an assessment committee will look at randomly chosen student writing from First-Year Seminars. Please save all your writing in this course so that if you are randomly chosen you will have your work available. The purpose of this is to improve the program and to improve particular courses, as necessary. You may remove your name from your papers if you choose to submit them anonymously. Your instructor will let you know later in the semester whether your portfolio has been selected.

Limitations on Repeating this Course

Given the specialized nature of some of the topics in First-Year Seminars, many are dependent upon faculty availability and might not be offered very often. If you are not pleased with your grade in this course it might be impossible to retake it. Thus, I encourage you to do your best to achieve a satisfactory grade this semester in case retaking the course is not a possibility in the future. If you feel you cannot do so, please talk with me about options.

Assignments & Projects

1) Readings: We will primarily read selections from the *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis* (AWCS) edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katherine K. Wilkinson. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

2) Islands the Harbor Paper and Presentation: An 3-4 page paper and 2-minute oral presentation on a cultural, historical, or ecological event on the Boston Harbor Islands. Two primary sources from traditional or digital archives are required for the paper and the oral presentation must focus on one of the primary sources.

3) Rainsford Island Research Proposal: A 5-page research proposal on a study you would like to lead at the Living Laboratory on Rainsford Island. The research proposal will include the background, importance, and methods of your proposed study.

4) Field Journals: We will make meteorological and oceanographic observations of Boston Harbor to understand environmental and anthropogenic factors impacting Boston Harbor. We will keep track of our group observations on Google Maps.

5) Short Writing Assignments: Students will submit two short writing assignments (300 words) on ‘How has water shaped your life?’ and ‘How should we live with our Urban Ocean?’ In addition, students will post to the course’s Blackboard discussion board about our conversations with guest speakers.

Grading:

The grade percentage breakdown for this course can be found below:

Attendance/ Participation:	15%
Islands of the Harbor Paper & Presentation	25%
Field Journals	20%
Short Writing Assignments	15%
Rainsford Island Research Proposal	25%

Submitting work:

All coursework will be submitted on Blackboard. **Plan to submit your work on time as I will do my best to give you feedback within 48 – 72 hours of submission.** I understand this might not be possible during these times and to help out, you will get two freebie discussion posts with no questions asked. For assignments submitted after the deadline, I will give a 5% grade deduction for each day late. **If you don’t want a want a penalty and recognize certain due dates will be a problem for you, send me an email proposing a new potential deadline.** You do not need to explain the full extent of the problem, just let me know and we can plan for a new deadline.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic
Week 1: Jan 25-29	<p><i>First Perspectives: You and Water</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> How has water shaped your life?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: Begin by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine Wilkinson & Calling In by Xiye Bastida <i>Optional Readings:</i> AWCS: The Big Picture</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Field Journals, Class Advisor Visit, Individual Check-Ins</p> <p><u>Due: First Short Writing Assignment</u></p>
Week 2: Feb 1-5	<p><i>First Perspectives: You and UMB</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> What resources do we have at UMB to investigate Boston Harbor?</p>

	<p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: Harnessing Cultural Power by Favianna Rodriguez & Wakanda Doesn't Have Suburbs by Kendra Pierre-Louis</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Artifact Activity, Archive Introduction, Field Journal, Individual Check Ins</p>
Week 3: Feb 8-12	<p><i>First Peoples: First Peoples</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> How should we acknowledge Boston Harbor's tribal communities today?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: Indigenous Prophecy and Mother Earth & Sacred Resistance by Tara Houska</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Massachusetts Indigenous Communities Discussion with Dr. Cedric Woods (UMB), RWSSC Visit, Land Acknowledgements Discussion</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Islands of the Harbor Event Selection</p>
Week 4: Feb 15-19	<p><i>Travelers & Settlers: Plants</i> *No Class on February 15</p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> What grows around Boston Harbor?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: Mending the Landscape by Kate Orff & Solutions Underfoot by Jane Zelikova</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> OCEAN Seminar with Alia Al-Haj (BU), Floating Forests Discussion with Isaac Rosenthal (UMB)</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Archive and Citation Selection</p>
Week 5: Feb 22-26	<p><i>Travelers & Settlers: Plants & Marine Life</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> What lives in Boston Harbor?</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Discussion with Dira Johanif (UMB), Field Journal, AWCS Discussion</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Islands of the Harbor Paper- First Draft (2/26)</p>
Week 6: March 1-5	<p><i>Travelers & Settlers: Marine Life & Triangle Trade</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> Who lived around Boston Harbor?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: At the Intersections by Jacqui Patterson & Black Gold by Leah Penniman</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> OCEAN Seminar with Dr. Fatma Goma'a (Harvard), Field Journal, Islands of the Harbor Peer Review</p>

<p>Week 7: March 8-12</p>	<p><i>Travelers & Settlers: Today</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> Who lives around Boston Harbor?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: An Offering from the Bayou by Colette Pichon Battle & Like the Monarch by Sarah Stillman; Views that Matter: Race and Opinions on Climate Change in Boston Area Residents</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Islands of the Harbor Presentations, Views that Matter Discussion with Katsyris Rivera Kientz, AWCS Discussion</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Islands of the Harbor Presentations (3/8) & Islands of Harbor Paper Revision (3/12)</p>
<p>Week 8: March 14-21</p>	<p>Spring Break</p>
<p>Week 9: March 22-26</p>	<p><i>Perspectives on Pollution: Harbor of Shame</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> How has waste impacted Boston Harbor?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: How to Talk About Climate Change by Katherine Hayhoe & A Handful of Dust by Kate Marvel; Boston Harbor, Boston, Massachusetts, USA: Transformation from ‘the harbor of shame’ to a vibrant coastal resource</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Boston Harbor Discussion with Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, AWCS Discussion, Field Journal, Individual Check-Ins</p>
<p>Week 10: March 29- April 2</p>	<p><i>Perspectives on Pollution: Measuring Water Quality</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> Why should we measure water quality?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: Water is a Verb by Judith D. Scharwartz The Boston Harbor Project, and large decreases in loadings of eutrophication-related materials to Boston Harbor. Taylor, D. I. (2010).</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Field Journal, Water Sampling Discussion with Shannon Davis (UMB)</p>
<p>Week 11: April 5-9</p>	<p><i>Living with Our Urban Ocean: Environmental Solutions</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> What types of environmental solutions can be found at sea?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: Solutions at Sea by Emily Stengel, The Politics of Policy by Maggie Thomas, A Green New Deal for All of Us by Rhiana Gunn-Wright</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Field Journals, Stone Living Lab Discussion with Lucy Lockwood (UMB), AWCS Discussion</p>

	<p><u>Due:</u> Rainsford Island Research Proposal Topic</p>
<p>Week 12: April 12-16</p>	<p><i>Living with Our Urban Ocean: Environmental Justice</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> How does environment and social justice intersect?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: Beyond Coal by Mary Anne Hitt; Boston Globe Article on Carson Beach Riots, Gundogan, B., Koshy, K., Kurar, L., & Whitehurst, K. (2016).</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Field Journals, Carson Beach Riots Discussion, AWCS Discussions</p>
<p>Week 13: April 19-23</p>	<p><i>School for the Environment Annual Earth Day Symposium -Tentative</i> *No Class on April 19</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Attend Research Symposium</p>
<p>Week 14: April 26-30</p>	<p><i>Living with Our Urban Ocean: Citizen and Community Scientists</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> Who are citizen and community scientists?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: Becoming a Climate Citizen by Kate Knuth & We Are Sunrise by Varshini Prakash</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Guest speaker from the National Park Service, City Nature Challenge (CNC), Field Journal, AWCS Discussion</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Rainsford Island Research Proposal First Draft (4/30)</p>
<p>Week 15: May 3-7</p>	<p><i>Living with Our Urban Ocean: Individuals</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> What is our personal responsibility to our Urban Ocean?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: The Adaptive Mind by Susanne C. Moser, On Fire by Naomi Klein, Under the Weather by Ash Sanders</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Microplastics Discussion with Lee Mabry (UMB), Field Journal, AWCS Discussion</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Field Journal Reflection (5/7)</p>

<p>Week 16: May 10-14</p>	<p><i>Living with Our Urban Ocean: Society</i></p> <p><u>Class Question:</u> What is our collective responsibility to our Urban Ocean?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> AWCS: A Field Guide for Transformation by Leah Cardamore Stokes & Community is Our Best Chance by Christine E. Nieves Rodriguez</p> <p><u>Class Activities:</u> Field Journal, AWCS Discussion, Individual Check Ins, Evaluations</p> <p><u>Due:</u> Second Short Writing Assignment (5/14)</p>
<p>Week 17: May 17-21</p>	<p><i>No Class – Finals Week</i></p> <p><u>Due:</u> Rainsford Island Research Proposal Revision (5/21)</p>