Liquid History and Floating Archives
An Experiment in Interdisciplinary Learning
ANTH-154 COML-152 ENGL-052 ENVS-152 GRMN-152 HIST-152
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:50, Goddard Labs 102

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she/her

> "I grew convinced that following water, flowing with it, would be a way of getting under the skin of things, of learning something new."
> --Roger Deakin

Climate change transforms natural and built environments, and it is re-shaping how we understand, make sense, and care for our past. Climate changes history; rising waters make it soggy.
This experimental seminar in interdisciplinary, embodied learning explores the Anthropocene, the present age in which humans are remaking earth's systems, with a perspective on/near/in/above/within water. How are rising waters transfiguring our heritage, history and its practice--as well as our present and future? Readings, discussions, and field work invite trans-historical dialogues with a focus on the riverscape of the tidal Schuylkill and the colonial and industrial-era infrastructure that transformed the mid-Atlantic's vast tidal marshes and wetlands.
A series of walking exercises and field note-takings prompt considerations of the research methods and modes of historic, scientific, and artistic inquiry that learning with water invites, elicits, mandates, requires, or promotes. Our final projects, collected in a digital compendium for *Learning with Waters*, consider how we might learn *with* rising waters. We ask how they might be read and investigated as archives, paying attention to what surging seas subsume and hold, whose stories they tell. We'll consider what floats to the surface and ask how the depths are accessible.



Still from Aidan Un's promotional video for Jacob Rivikin's *Floating Archives*. 2018.

Expectations & Evaluations

Our **Code of Conduct** fully incorporates the University's Code of Academic Integrity that states that we, a community committed to upholding academic integrity and the free

pursuit of knowledge, will not accept any form of academic dishonesty. If you are unfamiliar with Penn's Code of Academic Integrity, please consult it here, on the Provost's website.

Furthermore, our seminar's Code of Conduct details that we meet in a harassment-free environment for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age or religion or skill level. We do not tolerate harassment of participants in any form. (Harassment includes verbal comments that reinforce social structures of domination related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.) Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact me immediately.

This statement is derived from Penn's Code of Academic Integrity as well as the Recurse Center's Social Rules and the anti-harassment policy from the Geek Feminism Wiki. It is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Your Work & Its Evaluation

1. Well-Prepared In-Class Participation	10%
2. Reading, Walking, Talking, and Writing Field Notes (300 words weekly)	30%
3. Meditations on Research Methods for Rising Waters	30%
4. Contribution to *Learning with Rising Waters*	30%

1. We aim to foster an open, welcoming, participatory, and collaborative learning community. Guests will join us; Penn students form its nucleus. Your consistent and well-prepared participation are essential to achieving our goal.

2. Once weekly, with a companion from our class or alone, and with our readings in mind, walk from class or alone, and with our readings in mind, walk from campus along Chestnut Street to the Schuylkill River, cross the bridge and descend to the River Trail, follow the Trail downriver and along the boardwalk, follow the ramp up to the South Street bridge, and re-cross the River and return to campus. As you walk and perhaps talk, reflect on our readings and assignments for the week. Notice what you notice and, during and right after your walk, use our course blog to reflect--in words, sounds, and images (photos, sketches, short video clips)--on the interpretive pathways our reading/walking path opens.
Before you set out for the first time, read "Bodies Tumbled into Bodies," the introduction to *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet,* edited by Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt, as well as William Cronon and his students' tips on "How to Read a Landscape" and check out collaborative reading and walking projects, such as *The Walking Reading Group*. These are rich resources, and I suggest you return to them repeatedly before

you walk. And, you may discover further resources to enrich your own embodied research methods. Please feel free to share them with our group, adding them to our list (at the bottom of this syllabus) of "Interdisciplinary Research Methods and Practices for Rising Waters."
I (Bethany) will walk, rain or shine, on Wednesdays, departing Williams 606 at noon. You are always welcome to walk with me should that time work in your schedule.

3. Two formal writing assignments (800-1000 words each) ask you to zoom out from the topical Field Notes and from our class discussions and exercises and to explore our research paths obout/along/above/within waters. A detailed writing prompt will be given ahead of each assignment's due date and helps you attend in your writing to the assigned readings, guest presentations, and our discussions in class and on the course blog.

4. We will use last four weeks of the semester to extend our practices of embodied research methods (walking and field notes), drawing from other practices of embodied research (including swimming, art making, teaching, pedagogy), to craft a compendium of writing and other materials, called *Learning with Waters.* Comprised of individually and collaboratively produced multimedia essays, reading lists and guides, exercises, and more, our compendium will feed PPEH's living archive that you can visit at www.schuylkillcorps.org.

Meeting Schedule (with all assignments)

Week One (8/28 and 8/30) *Rising Waters*
Please purchase these books right away (there may be other materials you also wish to purchase, but these four are essential):

- Natasha Tretheway, *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast*
- Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement*
- Rachel Carson, *The Sea Around Us*
- Roger Deakin, *Waterlog*

Reading/Viewing:
Rising Waters web pages
Rising Waters Vimeo of conference, part 1

Remember: Before you set out walking for the first time, read "Bodies Tumbled into Bodies," the introduction to *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet,* edited by Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt, as well as William Cronon and his students' tips on "How to Read a Landscape" and check out collaborative reading and walking projects, such as *The Walking Reading Group*. These are rich resources to which you will want repeatedly to return over the course of the semester.

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 8/30)

Week Two (9/4 and 9/6) *Rising Waters: Poetry and Vulnerability Assessments*
Reading:
Natasha Tretheway. *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.*
Strauss, B., C. Tebaldi, S. Kulp, S. Cutter, C. Emrich, D. Rizza, and D. Yawitz (2016). *Pennsylvania and the Surging Sea: A vulnerability assessment with projections for sea level rise and coastal flood risk.* Climate Central Research Report. pp 1-30.

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 9/6)
NB: you may want to coordinate your walk in order to see Floating Archives.

9/8 *Floating Archives*. For more on this major public art performance by Mellon PPEH Artist in Residence, Jacob Rivkin, visit http://floatingarchives.com.

Week Three (9/11 and 9/13) *Who has a seat in the boat?*
Reading:
Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement*.
*Optional (from *Fictilis*): TJ Demos, *Against the Anthropocene*. Introduction and one additional chapter.

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 9/13)
NB: you may want to coordinate your walk in order to see Floating Archives.

9/11 Guest Artist *Fictilis*, a research collaborative and recipient of a 2018 PPEH Ecotopian Toolmakers award, attempts to expose and/or bridge the gap between Social and Environmental activism. For more visit http://www.fictilis.com/about-2.

9/15 Floating Archives

Week Four (9/18 and 9/20) *Modernity's liquid bottom*
Reading:
Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator*. {excerpts}
Karen Barad. *Meeting the Universe Halfway.* {excerpts}

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 9/20)
NB: you may want to coordinate your walk in order to see Floating Archives.

9/20 Guest Artist *Environmental Performance Agency,* a research collaborative and recipient of a 2018 PPEH Ecotopian Toolmakers award, has appropriated the acronym EPA, aims to shift thinking around the terms environment, performance, and agency to advocate for all living co-creators of our environment, specifically through the lens of spontaneous urban plants, native or migrant. For more visit http://www.environmentalperformanceagency.com/schuylkill-river/.

EPA suggests we prepare for our workshop by reading a short excerpt from Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

9/22 Floating Archives

Week Five (9/25 and 9/27) *Earth as Archive /A capsule history of the sea's historicity*
Readings:
Shannon Mattern, "The Big Data of Ice, Rock, Sediments, and Soil." *Places*.
Rachel Carson, *The Sea Around Us*. {excerpts}
Listen first to Carson give a twenty-minute talk about the book in this 1951 recording.
First World Ocean Assessment.
"Wilderness is Vanishingly Rare in Earth's Oceans."
Elaine Gan, Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, and Nils Bubandt, "Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene."

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 9/27)

Week Six (10/2) *Wet history, soggy archives*
First more formal writing assignment is due. Please submit it electronically by 10a on 10/2 to: bwiggin@sas.upenn.edu, lsarti@sas.upenn.edu, and mpremoli@sas.upenn.edu

Readings:
Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses."
David C. Harvey and Jim Perry, "Heritage and Climate Change: The Future Is Not the Past"

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 10/4)

10/4 Fall Break

Week Seven (10/9 and 10/11) *Maritime history and/as radical history*
Readings:
Lincoln Paine. *The Sea and Civilization.* {excerpts on google drive}
Markus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, "The Many-Headed Hydra."
Markus Rediker, "History from Below the Water Line: Sharks and the Atlantic Slave Trade." {PDF in google drive}

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 10/11)

Week Eight (10/16 and 10/18) *Maritime history and/as radical history*
Readings:
Paul Gilroy. *The Black Atlantic: HIstory and Double-Consciousness* {excerpts}
John Gillis. *The Human Shore*. {excerpts on google drive}

Suggested:
Tanya Barson. "Introduction: Modernism and the Black Atlantic." This article introduces an exhibit at the Tate Liverpool and an accompanying resource collection curated by the University of Liverpool.

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 10/18)

10/18 Guest Artist *Environmental Performance Agency*
10/19: PARKOUR!

Week Nine (10/23 and 10/25) *Histories of New England and the Mid-Atlantic Littoral*

Readings:
Kimberly Sebold and Sara Amy Leach. *From Marsh to Farm: The Landscape Transformation of Coastal New Jersey.*
Christopher F. Jones. *Routes of Power: Energy and Modern America.* {excerpts}
W. Jeffrey Bolster. *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail* {excerpts}
Christopher Pastore. *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England.* {excerpts}
Brian Black and Michael Chiarappa. *Nature's Entrepot.* {excerpts}

10/23 Guest Artist *Deirdre Murphy*

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 10/25)

10/25 Luna and Martin will be in our classroom and will be introducing the second writing prompt. They will also be available for consultation, discussion, workshoppin,, and brainstorming plans for your second essays as well as our collaborative final project ideas!

Week Ten (10/30 and 11/1) *The Blue Humanities*

Readings:
Ursula Heise. "Planet, Species, Justice--and the Stories We Tell about Them." *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities.*
John Gillis. "The Blue Humanities."
Stacy Alaimo. "The Anthropocene at Sea." *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities.*

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 11/1)

Week Eleven (11/6 and 11/8) *Embodied Research Methods*
First draft of second more formal writing assignment is due. Please submit it electronically by 10a on 11/6 to: bwiggin@sas.upenn.edu, lsarti@sas.upenn.edu, and mpremoli@sas.upenn.edu

Readings:
Isabelle Stengers. *Another Science Is Possible* {excerpts} and *In Catastrophic Times* {excerpts}

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 11/8)

11/6 (No regular class)

Week Twelve (11/13 and 11/15) *Embodied Research Methods*

Readings:
Roger Deakin. *Waterlog*.
Steve Mentz. "Swimming Lessons." http://www.hypocritereader.com/61/swimming-lessons

Walking/Field Notes (post on our course blog by 9a on 11/15)

On 11/13, we will walk together during class time! Prepare for bad weather.

On 11/15, we will edit our shared responses to our walk into a statement about walking and research and co-laboring.

Week Thirteen (11/20) Walking Together

Readings:
Stephanie Springgay and Nikki Rotas, "How Do You Make a Classroom Operate Like a Work of Art?"

Walking/Field Notes: We will co-author a final blog post on walking as an embodied research method. The longer assignment is available in this detailed writing prompt.

11/20 (No regular class) Final version of second more formal writing assignment is due. Send as a word document (not a pdf) to bwiggin@sas.upenn.edu

11/22 Thanksgiving

Week Fourteen (11/27 and 11/29) Learning with Water

11/27 Building on our co-authored final walking note, we will work individually and together in class time to build our collection for the Schuylkill archive called *Learning with Water*.

11/29 Draft co-authored statement for our collection of research outputs, "Learning with Water"

Week Fifteen (12/4 and 12/6) Learning with Water

12/4 Writer in Residence Eric Holthaus, workshop on climate writing and climate grief;

12/6 Studio/Critique: *Quo vadis?*

Further Resources organized thematically: A partial but growing list

Rising Waters and Literary Responses

Natasha Tretheway. *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast*.
https://www.poetrysociety.org/psa/poetry/crossroads/remembering_katrina/

Rising Waters and History

Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement*.
Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History."
David C. Harvey and Jim Perry, "Heritage and Climate Change: The Future Is Not the Past"

Rising Waters and Philosophy

Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator*.
Karen Barad. *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.
Rosie Braidotti.

History and the World Ocean, especially the Atlantic

Lincoln Paine. *The Sea and Civilization*.
Bernard Bailyn. *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours*.
Janet Abu-Lughod. *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350*
John Gillis. *The Human Shore*.
W. Jeffrey Bolster. *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail*
Christopher Pastore. *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England*.
Kimberly Sebold and Sara Amy Leach. *From Marsh to Farm: The Landscape Transformation of Coastal New Jersey*.
Brian Black and Michael . *Nature's Entrepot*.
On the Water, an exhibit of the Smithsonian Institute National Museum of American History

Science and the (un)Changing Sea

Rachel Carson, *The Sea Around Us*.
Listen to Carson give a twenty-minute talk about the book:
https://www.wnyc.org/story/148408-rachel-carson-1951/
State of the Ocean
First World Ocean Assessment.
http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/WOA_RPROC/Chapter_01.pdf
"Wilderness is Vanishingly Rare in Earth's Oceans." https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05866-8
Strauss, B., C. Tebaldi, S. Kulp, S. Cutter, C. Emrich, D. Rizza, and D. Yawitz (2016). *Pennsylvania and the Surging Sea: A vulnerability assessment with projections for sea level rise and coastal flood risk.* Climate Central Research Report. pp 1-30.

Environmental Humanities and Blue Humanities

Steve Mentz. *Shipwreck Modernity*.

John Gillis. “The Blue Humanities.”
https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2013/mayjune/feature/the-blue-humanities
Stacy Alaimo. “The Anthropocene at Sea.” *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*.

Interdisciplinary Research Methods and Practices for Rising Waters

Roger Deakin. *Waterlog*.
Steve Mentz. “Swimming Lessons.”
Stephanie Springgay and Nikki Rotas, “How Do You Make a Classroom Operate Like a Work of Art?”
Stephanie Springgay and Sara E. Truman. “Walking Methodologies in a More than Human World: WalkingLab.”
The Walking Lab
Zoe Kreye. *Make Our Own Air.*
Voices of a Warming Planet
Una Chaudhuri. “Interspecies Diplomacy in Anthropocene Waters: Performing an Ocean-Oriented Ontology.” *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*.
Marina Zurkow *et al*. Dear Climate.
Underwater New York
Works on Water
DUMP! Multispecies Making and Unmaking
The Pedagogical Impulse
The Walking Reading Group
Swale
Fictilis
Environmental Performance Agency