

# The Indian Ocean World: Sailors, Slaves, and Pirates

## HIST 387-003

**Tuesday and Thursdays, 10:30-11:45**

In person: Innovation Hall 131

Online: Zoom (link provided on blackboard)

**Dr. Jane Hooper**

[jhooper3@gmu.edu](mailto:jhooper3@gmu.edu)

### Questions?

- \* Send Dr. Hooper an **email** at [jhooper3@gmu.edu](mailto:jhooper3@gmu.edu) - I will try to respond within 24 hours during the week (it will take more time on weekends).
- \* Write your question on the **discussion board** forum “Ask the Instructor” if you think your classmates would benefit from my response.
- \* Send an email and request a private **zoom meeting**.

### Resources:

- \* For help with online learning, check out GMU Learning Services at this [link](#).
- \* If you’re struggling with mental health issues, reach out to [CAPS](#) – they offer a range of free help for students (including after-hours crisis services). For more resources focused on emotional and mental well-being, click on this [link](#).
- \* Issues with technology? Check out the resources provided at this [link](#). If you can’t find the answers there, you should reach out to the ITS Support Center for help (their contact information is [here](#)). Remember: completion of assignments is your responsibility and technological issues do not constitute an excuse. Reach out the instructor as soon as possible if you run into difficulties.
- \* Need assistance with writing assignments for this class? Make an appointment to work with a tutor online through the Writing Center (instructions for how to schedule a session are found [here](#)).
- \* If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS (their website is [here](#)) and communicated to the professor in a timely manner.

**Note about Communications:** Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information. Blackboard will be used for posting lectures, discussions, and the submission of assignments.

## **Course Description:**

The Indian Ocean constitutes the world's oldest cultural continuum, uniting communities in locations as far flung as Zanzibar and Oman, Madagascar and Borneo, Goa and Mozambique. More than fifteen centuries before Europeans first crossed the Atlantic, sailors, merchants, and migrants traveled across the Indian Ocean, sharing languages, culinary practices, and religious beliefs. This contact, however, was not always egalitarian and peaceful. Millions of people were enslaved and forcibly transported across the ocean. Pirate attacks have plagued the merchants of the ocean since at least the tenth century CE. In this class, we will examine how these different threads, of exchange and violence, have brought populations living on the shores of the ocean together for over two millennia. Students will read a variety of primary and secondary sources, as well as a novel, in order to understand the power that the Indian Ocean has played on peoples' lives and histories.

## **Course Objectives:**

1. You will be able to understand major events that shaped the Indian Ocean world, including the lands of southeast Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa, and gain knowledge about the complexity of human experience from a historical perspective.
2. You will develop concepts of time, continuity, and change in the Indian Ocean in order to understand and reconstruct the past.
3. You will develop a perspective of a world beyond your own personal location and rethink traditional land or continent-focused histories.
4. You will engage with a variety of primary and secondary sources, including novels, digital archives, online sources, and visual material. We will work on reading skills in class to engage, analyze, and interpret these sources using techniques used by historians.
5. You will be able to clearly and concisely express yourself in writing and speaking. You will properly cite print and online material in your papers.

## **Grading and expectations:**

*Participation:* This class is participatory and, in order to get the most from class, you need to attend every class prepared and having thought about the assigned reading(s). When we meet twice a week, you are expected to actively participate – if you're joining us over zoom, preferably **orally and with your camera on** (you may mute your microphone when you are not speaking). The expectations for participation are otherwise the same for in-person and online students: consistent and helpful engagement with the course material. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you are late, please speak with the instructor after class is completed.

The standard participation grade for students who occasionally offer thoughtful opinions in class will be an 80%. Students who are more active participants will receive a higher grade and those who rarely speak will be given a lower grade. If you have questions about your participation grade, please speak with the instructor. If you have poor class participation due to absences – i.e., your non-presence during discussions – your final participation grade will be a zero. **If you are absent for more than four classes** (and do not provide an adequate excuse in a timely manner – i.e., notify the instructor after your second missed class), you will lose points from your class participation grade. Class meetings will be recorded and posted on blackboard. Note that viewing these videos if you miss class is recommended but **will not count toward your participation grade**.

*Discussion Questions:* During the semester, you will be posting discussion questions twice (2 questions each time, for a total of 4 questions). On your appointed weeks, you will post two separate threads with thoughtful analytical questions that concern our readings. These questions must be posted by **midnight on Tuesday** prior to the discussion day (on Thursday). You will be individually graded on the quality of your questions. See guide on blackboard for more details.

*Discussion Posts:* You will respond to at least two discussion questions posed by your classmates each week. These questions should demonstrate a close reading of the assigned texts and engagement with the topics raised by your classmates. You must post at least 20 times (so twice for 10 weeks) to receive full credit. You will be graded (pass/fail) for your posts. Posts

must be made by **midnight on Wednesday** prior to our discussion in order to receive credit. Late posts will not be accepted.

*Reflection Papers:* In these papers, you will briefly summarize (in a page) the most important insight(s) you gained from the previous weeks' discussions and readings. Papers are to be submitted through the course blackboard site **before midnight on Sunday**. You must provide proper footnote citations for each paper. See guide for more details. Out of 10 weekly papers listed on the syllabus, you will be graded on 8 of these papers. Late weekly papers will not be accepted without prior approval. See guide on blackboard for more details.

*Papers:* You will complete **three longer papers of 3-5 pages** throughout the semester. These are intended to provide you with an opportunity to engage with themes from the class at more length. Due dates are indicated on the syllabus; guides to assignments, as well as grading rubrics, are posted on blackboard. Late papers are only accepted with prior approval.

**A note about extensions:** Extensions are **not** possible for discussion board postings. For all other assignments, you need **Dr. Hooper's prior permission** for any extension. It is strongly advised that you keep up with the coursework, as it is easy to fall behind.

**Exam Rules and Deadlines:** In accordance with university regulations, professors in the Department of History and Art History re-schedule exams after receiving documentation of a medical emergency or family emergency; often this documentation must be verified by the Dean of Student Life. **Work-related or personal/family obligations are not adequate excuses for re-scheduling an exam or obtaining any kind of extension.** Note: September 7 is the last day to drop classes with no tuition penalty; you can selectively withdrawal from courses (with 100% tuition liability by October 27). If you have questions about registering for this class, please speak with your academic advisor.

**Final Grade:**

Participation - 15% (based on the quantity and quality of your contributions)

Discussion posts – 10% total (out of 20)

Discussion questions – 5% total (out of 4)

Reaction Papers - 25% total (out of 8)

Papers (3 longer papers) – 15% each

**Final grades will be determined using the following ranges:**

91.8-100 A

90-91.7 A-

88.3-89.9 B+

81.8-88.2 B

80-81.7 B-

78.3-79.9 C+

71.8-78.2 C

70-71.7 C-

60-69.9 D

**Office of Disability Services:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. See <http://ods.gmu.edu>.

**Note about Communications:** Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information. Blackboard will be used to post important messages, links for readings, and grades for papers.

**Other Important Campus Resources:**

The Writing Center: Robinson A114, <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

University Libraries: <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

Counseling and Psychological Services: 703-993-2380, <http://caps.gmu.edu>

### **Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another source without giving that source credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books, articles, and websites is not sufficient. **Plagiarism cannot be tolerated in an academic setting.**

Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited; this is incorrect. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions to this rule include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources—what has been called common knowledge—or the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly."

In other words, **writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might be unfamiliar with and want to investigate or debate further.** Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will not be guilty of plagiarism.

**Cheating means to get help on an assignment without permission.** This includes **asking** another classmate to “see” their paper before writing your own paper OR **hiring** someone to “edit” your paper. Allowing another student to see your work without permission from the instructor is also considered cheating. You must get permission from your instructor before asking anyone outside of your professors, writing center tutors, or teaching assistants for help on assignments. If you don’t understand an assignment, you need to ask the professor for clarification rather than your classmates.

In this course, you will be expected to adhere to the Honor Code at George Mason. It is your responsibility to read and understand the policy (available at <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason->

[honor-code-2/](#)). We will discuss the use of citations and quotations throughout the semester. If you have any questions on how to cite a source, please see the professor or instructor.

### **Mason Diversity Statement**

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.

### **Text Available for Purchase in the Bookstore:**

Shenaz Patel, *Silence of the Chagos*, trans. Jeffrey Zuckerman (Brooklyn: Restless Books, 2005).

Edward A. Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

You are welcome to use alternative editions, but you should ensure they are properly cited. All other readings on the syllabus are found in links given on blackboard or on course reserves.

## **Course Schedule**

Note: all readings should be completed before class on Thursdays, unless otherwise indicated

### **Week 1: Introductions**

#### **Readings:**

\* Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, chapter 1

#### **Assignments:**

\* Discussion board post due August 25 by midnight (introduction post)

**Tuesday, August 24:** Welcome, syllabus, expectations

**Thursday, August 26:** Overview of major themes of Indian Ocean history; discussion of Alpers

---

## **Underlying Unity in the Ocean**

---

### **Week 2: Geography and Historiography**

#### **Readings:**

\* Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, chapter 2

#### **Assignments:**

\* Discussion board post due September 1 by midnight

\* Map assignment – complete and bring to class on September 2 or scan/take a picture and upload to blackboard before class (counts toward participation grade)

\* Reflection paper due September 5 by midnight

**Tuesday, August 31:** Early migration and trade across the ocean: pre-1498 world views

**Thursday, September 2:** Analyzing early written sources (document posted on blackboard)

\* Sign up for discussion questions

---

### **Week 3: Pre-Modern Migrations**

#### **Readings:**

\* Haripriya Rangan, Edward A. Alpers, Tim Denham, Christian A. Kull, and



Judith Carney, "Food Traditions and Landscape Histories of the Indian Ocean World: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections," *Environment and History* 21 (2015): 135–57 (search in library catalog).

\* Philippe Beaujard, "The First Migrants to Madagascar and Their Introduction of Plants: Linguistic and Ethnological Evidence," *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 46, no. 2 (August 1, 2011): 169–89 (search in library catalog).

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion board post due September 8 by midnight
- \* Reflection paper due September 12 by midnight

**Tuesday, September 7:** Lecture on early navigation and migrations in the ocean

**Thursday, September 9:** Discussion on foodways and settlement

---

### **Week 4: Early Piracy?**

**Readings:**

- \* Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, chapter 3
- \* Sebastian R. Prange, "The Contested Sea: Regimes of Maritime Violence in the Pre-Modern Indian Ocean," *Journal of Early Modern History* 17, no. 1 (2013): 9–33 (search in library catalog).

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion board post due September 15 by midnight
- \* Reflection paper due September 19 by midnight

**Tuesday, September 14:** Indian Ocean trading ports and Islam

**Thursday, September 16:** Commerce and pirates before the Europeans

---

### **European Incursions**

---

### **Week 5: Competing Political Powers**

**Readings:**

- \* Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, chapter 4
- \* Giancarlo Casale, "Global Politics in the 1580s: One Canal, Twenty Thousand Cannibals, and an Ottoman Plot to Rule the World." *Journal of World History* 18, no. 3 (2007): 267–96 (search in library catalog).

**Assignments:**

- \* No new assignments – CATCH UP WEEK. Make sure you have completed all assigned readings.

**Tuesday, September 21:** No class – schedule meeting with professor (participation points)

**Thursday, September 23:** European arrivals to the ocean and Ottoman competition

---

## Week 6: Early Modern Piracy and Monopoly Companies

### Readings:

\* Tonio Andrade, “The Company’s Chinese Pirates: How the Dutch East India Company Tried to Lead a Coalition of Pirates to War Against China, 1621-1662,” *Journal of World History* 15, no.4 (2004): 415-444 (search in library catalog).

\* For paper:

“Case of Henry Every,” in *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period*, ed. John Franklin Jameson, pp. 153-187, available online at: [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/24882/24882-h/24882-h.htm#CASE\\_OF\\_HENRY\\_EVERY](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/24882/24882-h/24882-h.htm#CASE_OF_HENRY_EVERY)

Optional Background for paper:

\* podcast - <http://www.masalahistory.com/podcast/episode-13-european-pirates-in-the-indian-ocean>

### Assignments:

\* Discussion board post due September 29 by midnight

\* Paper #1 due October 3 by midnight

**Tuesday, September 28:** European monopoly companies and pirates in the ocean

**Thursday, September 30:** Discussion of Andrade; preparing for paper #1

---

## Histories of Empire

---

### Week 7: Enslavement in the ocean

#### Readings:

\* Jane Hooper and David Eltis, “The Indian Ocean in Transatlantic Slavery,” *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 3 (2013): 353–75 (search in library catalog).

\* Alpers, “The Other Middle Passage: The African Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean,” in *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World*, 20–38 (search in library catalog).

#### Assignments:

\* Discussion board post due October 6 by midnight

\* Reflection paper due October 10 by midnight

**Tuesday, October 5:** Enslavement in the Indian Ocean

**Thursday, October 7:** Slavery within the Indian Ocean and beyond

---

## Week 8: Empire and Unfree Maritime Labor

**Readings:**

- \* Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, chapter 5
- \* Aaron Jaffer, "The Last Voyage of the *Arabella*: Life and Death Aboard a British Country Ship," *Journal for Maritime Research* 2 (2014) (search in library catalog).

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion board post due October 13 by midnight
- \* Reflection paper due October 17 by midnight

**Tuesday, October 12:** no class

**Thursday, October 14:** Unfree maritime labor in the ocean

---

## Week 9: East African Cosmopolitanism

**Readings:**

- \* Erik A. Gilbert, "Zanzibar: Imperialism, Proto-Globalization, and a Nineteenth Century Indian Ocean Boom Town," in *Globalization and the City* (2013): 123-139. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/33877/449477.pdf?sequence=1#page=123>
- \* Larson, Pier M. "Fragments of an Indian Ocean Life: Aristide Corroller Between Islands and Empires." *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 2 (December 1, 2011): 366-89 (search in library catalog).

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion board post due October 20 by midnight
- \* Reflection paper due October 24 by midnight

**Tuesday, October 19:** Transitions in nineteenth century East Africa

**Thursday, October 21:** East African cosmopolitanism: Madagascar, Zanzibar, and the Mascarenes

---

## Week 10: Zanzibar, a Case Study

**Readings:**

- \* Emily Ruete, *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar*, available online at: <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/ruete/arabian/arabian.html#>  
Read Chapter 1: Family History; Chapter XIII: Social Customs; Chapter XVI: Slavery
- \* Jeremy Prestholdt, "From Zanzibar to Beirut: Sayyida Salme bint Said and the Tensions of Cosmopolitanism," in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print* (focus esp on page 11 to 28 of the PDF) (search in library catalog).

Suggested viewing:

- \* Pictures of "Swahili Coast Daughters," available online at: <http://indian-ocean.africa.si.edu/swahili-coast-daughters/>

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion board post due October 27 by midnight
- \* Reflection paper due October 31 by midnight

**Tuesday, October 26:** Introducing Emily Ruete/Sayyida Salme bint Said

**Thursday, October 28:** Mobility and gender in the nineteenth century Indian Ocean

---

## **Week 11: Indian Ocean Empires in Asia**

**Readings:**

- \* Eric Tagliacozzo, "Southeast Asia's Middle East: Shifting Geographies of Islam and Trade across the Indian Ocean," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, no. 3 (2014): 565–73 (search in library catalog).
- \* Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 68-101 (PDF posted on blackboard).

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion board post due November 3 by midnight
- \* Reflection paper due November 7 by midnight

**Tuesday, November 2:** European imperialism in Asia

**Thursday, November 4:** Examining perspectives on empires in southeast Asia and India

---

## **Week 12: Evading Empire**

**Readings:**

- \* Devleena Ghosh, "Under the Radar of Empire: Unregulated Travel in the Indian Ocean." *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 2 (2011): 497–514 (search in library catalog).
- \* Fair, Laura. "Dressing up: Clothing, Class and Gender in Post-Abolition Zanzibar." *The Journal of African History* 39, no. 1 (1998): 63–94 (search in library catalog).

**Assignments:**

- \* Paper #2 due November 14 by midnight

**Tuesday, November 9:** No class – schedule meeting with instructor to answer questions and work on paper

**Thursday, November 11:** Evading imperial rule in the Indian Ocean

---

## **Cultural Connections in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries**

---

### **Week 13**

**Readings:**

- \* Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, chapter 6
- \* Mike Miller, "Pilgrims' Progress: the Business of the Hajj," *Past & Present*, no. 191 (2006): 189-228 (search in library catalog).

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion board post due November 17 by midnight
- \* Reflection paper due November 21 by midnight

**Tuesday, November 16:** The twentieth century in the ocean and ending of empires

**Thursday, November 18:** Islam and the Hajj in the twentieth century Indian Ocean

---

## Week 14

**Readings:**

- \* David Vine, *Island of Shame: the Secret history of the U.S. Military Base on Diego Garcia*, chapter 8 (available in library catalog)
- \* Video, "Chagos - Madagascar to the Seychelles: Indian Ocean, with Simon Reeve" (search in library catalog).
- \* Patel, *Silence of the Chagos*, afterword.

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion post due November 22 by midnight
- \* Start work on reading novel and writing paper #3.

**Tuesday, November 23:** Introduction to small islands in the Indian Ocean

**Thursday, November 25:** no class. Happy Thanksgiving!

---

## Week 15

**Readings:**

- \* Patel, *Silence of the Chagos*

**Assignments:**

- \* Discussion board post due December 1 by midnight
- \* Reflection paper due December 5 by midnight

**Tuesday, November 30:** Discuss Patel, *Silence of the Chagos*

**Thursday, December 2:** Review and reflect on the course

---

Paper #3 due December 12 by midnight