



Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

INSTITUTE
OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES

Instructor: **Jolene Mathieson**
Title: **Maritime Matters: Writing and Reading the Ocean in Anglo-American Literature & Culture**
Course: **Seminar II** [ENG-6, ENG-6a, ENG-7, ENG-7a, ENG-12, ENG-13, AA7, AA10, AA11, LAA10, LAA12, LAA13, AA-MA3, AA-MA4]
Number: **53–560**
Time: **Mondays, 12–14h + Excursion**
Room: **Ü35 – 01016**
Starts: **09.04.2018**

Course Description:



The ocean is a realm of primordial power, a world populated by both the tiniest of microbes as well as the planet's largest animals. It is a place of jutting rocks, vast trenches and hydrothermal vents, of extreme pressure and non-prismatic light. And it is a complex environment that challenges and often denies human conceptions of time, space and scale; meaning that it continues to be an elusive domain for scientific inquiry. However, the ocean, the creatures who thrive there and the science that studies them have long served as a source for the literary imagination, and that imagination, in turn, has long been a source of scientific inspiration. This seminar will hence study how literary form can shape the epistemic function of the ocean and how oceanographic knowledge can shape the epistemic function of the literary text. To this end, this seminar is divided into three interlocking phases.

1) The seminar phase includes discussions of Arthur C. Clarke's short story "The Deep Range" (1954) and two short novels written by oceanographers — Peter Watt's *Starfish* (1999) and Charlene D'Avanzo's *Cold Blood, Hot Sea* (2016). Common to these texts are varying degrees of soft- and hard-science modes of knowledge production enmeshed with the tropes of the monstrous and the mysterious. We will also examine very short, excerpted theorizations on the science-literature nexus and the quality and type of knowledge it produces (e.g. from Karen Barad's *Meeting the Universe Halfway* and Timothy Clark's *Ecocriticism on the Edge*).

2) The lab phase puts these theorizations into practice by gaining first-hand knowledge of how the ocean is experienced and narrativized not only in literature but also in oceanographic discourses. This seminar will thus visit the Ozeaneum / Deutsches Meeresmuseum in Stralsund as well as the Helmholtz-Zentrum für Polar- und Meeresforschung at the Alfred-Wegener-Institut in Helgoland. This phase consists of lab work designed to address the ways in which we make sense of our encounter with both the material practice of studying the ocean as well as with the ocean itself.

3) The evaluation phase consists of one 5-page academic essay on one novel of your choice and two 5-page collaborative essays based on the excursions.

For organizational reasons, registration for this course is not possible through STiNE. Please send a one-page letter of motivation, in English, with your module designation and Matrikel-Nr. to jolene.mathieson@uni-hamburg.de for the second registration phase by 20.03.2018.