

Course Title	: A CULTURAL HISTORY OF WATER
Course Code	: HST3269
Recommended Study Year*	: 1, 2, 3
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional approach
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category in Major Prog.	: Elective
Prerequisite(s)	: None
Co-requisite(s)	: None
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

This course examines the changing relationship between water and humankind across civilizations, with particular emphasis given to the period from the 17th century to the present. We will explore how the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and the public health movement originated in the West have profoundly transformed people's attitudes towards Mother Nature and their concepts of cleanliness, and how technological advancement has increased the extent of the exploitation of our water resources. The repercussion of such changes on Asian countries and the overall impact of human exploitation of water on the environment will also be examined.

Aims

This course aims to show the interplay between ideas and material culture in cross-cultural and historical perspectives, and the historical process through which modern daily lives have come about.

Learning Outcomes

The students will be able

- (1) to analyze current water issues from historical and cross-cultural perspectives.
- (2) to gain a better knowledge of the inseparable relationship between human survival and clean water sources, and thus develop a stronger sense of responsibility for the natural environment.
- (3) acquire oral and written communication skills.

Indicative Content

- I. River and civilization
- II. Cities and the acquisition of fresh water
- III. From gratification to cleanliness: a history of bathing
- IV. Water and the public health movement in the 19th century: running water and water closets
- V. Water and spiritual purification
- VI. Damming the rivers and its environmental impact
- VII. Water, environmental crisis, and the future of human race

Teaching Method

This course is taught partly as lectures, partly as seminars with assigned readings and discussions.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

- (1) essays: evaluate students' writing skills and the ability to understand current water issues from historical and cross-cultural perspectives.
- (2) class discussion: evaluate students' comprehension of reading materials, and their understanding of current water issues in comparative historical perspective.
- (3) examination: evaluate students' writing skills and their understanding of major issues and themes discussed in lectures and readings.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment: 60%

Examination: 40%

Required Readings

- Alley, Kelly D. *On the Banks of the Ganga: When Wastewater Meets a Sacred River*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Clark, Scott. *Japan: A View from the Bath*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.
- Dai Qing; edited by John G. Thibodeau and Philip B. Williams. *The River Dragon Has Come! The Three Gorges Dam and the Fate of China's Yangtze River and its People*. Armonk, N.Y.; London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.
- Hodge, A. Trevor. *Roman Aqueducts & Water Supply*. London: Duckworth, 1992.
- Melosi, Martin V. *The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- Palmer, Roy. *The Water Closet: A New History*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973.
- Pearce, Fred. *When the Rivers Run Dry: Water, the Defining Crisis of the Twenty-first Century*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.
- Tvedt, Terje, et.al, eds. *A History of Water*. 3 vols. London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006.
- Vigarello, Georges; translated by Jean Birrell. *Concepts of Cleanliness: Changing Attitudes in France since the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Supplementary Readings

- Baker, M.N. and Taras, Michael J. *The Quest for Pure Water: The History of the Twentieth Century*, volume 1 and 2. Denver: AWWA, 1981.
- Cudahy, Brian J. *Box Boats: How Container Ships Changed the World*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006.
- Dodgen, Randall. *Controlling the Dragon: Confucian Engineers and the Yellow River in Late Imperial China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.
- Elvin, Mark and Liu Ts'ui-jung eds. *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Eveleigh, David J.. *Bogs, Baths and Basins: The Story of Domestic Sanitation*. Stroud: Sutton, 2002.
- Ho, Pui Yin. *Water for a Barren Rock: 150 Years of Water Supply in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 2001.
- Horan, Julie L. *The Porcelain God: A Social History of the Toilet*. Secaucus: A Birch Lane Press Book, 1996.
- Juuti, P. *Environmental History of Water: Global Views on Community Water Supply and Sanitation*. London: IWA Publishing, 2007.
- Kennedy, Greg, ed. *The Merchant Marine in International Affairs, 1850-1950*. Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000.

- Magnusson, Roberta J. *Water Technology in the Middle Ages: Cities, Monasteries, and Waterworks after the Roman Empire*. Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Oestigaard, Terje. *Water and World Religions. An Introduction*. Bergen: University of Bergen, 2005.
- Rogaski, Ruth. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Smith, Bruce & Yoshiko Yamamoto. *The Japanese Bath*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2001.
- Van Slyke, Lyman P. *Yangtze: Nature, History, and the River*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1988.
- Wehr, Kevin. *America's Fight over Water: The Environmental and Political Effects of Large-scale Water Systems*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Wright, Lawrence. *Clean and Decent: The Fascinating History of the Bathroom & the Water Closet and of Sundry Habits, Fashions & Accessories of the Toilet, Principally in Britain, France & America*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.
- 殷偉、任玫：中國沐浴文化（昆明：雲南人民出版社，2003）

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.