

History of Water  
IDH 3931-165F/2C97 **Fall 2018**  
Little Hall 117  
Dr. Jack E. Davis  
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Tues 12:50-3:50  
Ofc Hours: T 11:40-12:40; R 12:40-2:40

It courses through our bodies, flows beside and around us, gurgles below our feet, falls on our head, and reaches beyond our horizon. It floats our boat. Water is Earth's most generous endowment and integral to life aboard it. But what do we really know about water, its natural history and active, shaping role in the human experience? We'll seek answers to this question in our course, which explores its subject across time and global geography, from atop and below bounding oceans, amidst the rise and fall of civilizations, through the ups and downs of urban life, over mountains and across crop fields and into factories, huddled in underground sinks and caverns; as it courses through pipes, sheds from roofs, gathers in cisterns; water of all matter mineral, salt, fresh, drinkable, and not so. We'll even learn the histories of the umbrella and raincoat.

**Course Objectives:**

- X Expanding one's knowledge of the universal human experience with water.
- X Expanding one's knowledge of how the non-human world has sustained human life and influenced the course of human history..
- X Promoting critical thinking and developing research and writing skills.

**Class participation:** **10% of the course grade**

\* You must attend class and participate in the class project, a grade in itself. Each absence after one freebie will result in a deduction from your class-participation grade.

**Course Assignments:**

(see assignment descriptions at the end of the syllabus; **each assignment--except the Writing Mechanics Exercise--is worth 15% of the course grade**) Late papers will not be accepted.

Course group Project: A human and natural history of the Floridan Aquifer

Human History and Water paper

Writing Mechanics Exercise

Key Events, People and Places paper 1

Key Events, People, and Places paper 2

Who Was William Mulholland paper

**Course Grading Scale (see the UF grading scale at the end of syllabus):**

A+ =97-100

A =94-96

A- =90-93

B+ =87-89

B =84-86

B- =80-83

C+ =77-79

C =74-76

C- =70-73

D =65-69

Assignments not completed earn a 0

Plagiarized assignment (see plagiarism section below) earn a 0

Assignments not turned in before or by stated due date will not be accepted. All assignments must be made available in hard copy. Emailed assignments cannot be accepted.

**Required Books:**

Cynthia Barnett, *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History*

Jack E. Davis, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*

Brian Fagan, *Elixir: A History of Water and Humankind*

Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World*

Alice Outwater, *Water: A Natural History*

David Owen, *Where the Water Goes: Life and Death Along the Colorado River*

**Course Schedule:**

Week 1: (August 28) **course introduction and class project introduction**

Week 2: (Sept 4) **water for others**

**Writing Mechanics Exercise Due**

Read: Barnett, pages 1-9; Outwater, chapter 1-6

Week 3: (Sept 11) **Human History and Water paper due (discussion)**

Week 4: (Sept 18) **thirsty homo sapiens**

Read: Fagan, chapters 1-5

Week 5: (Sept 25) **water's rise, civilization's rise**

Read: Fagan, chapters 6-10, 15

Week 6: (Oct 2) **Key Events, People, and Places 1 due (discussion); hydrology**

Read: Fagan, 11-14

Week 7: (Oct 9) **a fishy sea**

Read: Kurlansky, prologue through chapter 6; Davis, chapters 6 & 7

Week 8: (Oct 16) **a less fishy sea**

Read: Kurlansky, chapter 7-14, Davis, epilogue

Week 9: (Oct 23) **Key Events, People, and Places 2 due (discussion); rainy skies**

Read: Barnett, prologue through chapter 8

Week 10: (Oct 30) **forecasting the same**

Read: Barnett, chapter 9 through epilogue

Week 11: (Nov 6) **The Sea in Our Backyard**

Read: Davis, all except chapters 6 & 7, and epilogue

Week 12: (Nov 13) **riding the Colorado**

Read: Owen, Introduction-chapter 7

Week 13: (Nov 20) **rafting the final leg of the Colorado/ and Who is William Mulholland paper due (discussion)**

Read: Owen, chapters 7-15

Week 14: (Nov 27) **taking control**

Read: Owen, chapter 16; Davis, epilogue; Outwater, chapters 6-11; Fagan, chapter 17

Week 15: (Dec 4) **catching up, wrapping up**

Presenting our research on the Floridan aquifer

## Writing Assignment Descriptions

All assignments must draw from printed materials. Do not use Internet sources, especially Wikipedia, unless they are Internet databases (such as Proquest or Jstor) from which you can access primary sources or scholarly materials. Newspaper on-line are also fine. For hard-copy sources, use original documents or published works. **Restrict yourself to the page-length limit noted for each assignment.** All papers should be double spaced, computer generated, using default margin and header and footer setting, and 12-point font. Comply with the rules outlined in the Writing Mechanics Exercise. Noncompliance will result in a lower grade for your assignment. Cite all your sources at the end of the paper.

**Floridan Aquifer class project** involves the class working as a team to discover and examine the natural and human history of the aquifer. The class will divide itself into subgroups, with one focusing on the natural history (including the geological history of the aquifer and its ecological significance) and the other focusing on the human history (social, cultural, and political history). Each group will gather research materials, online and archival, present it to and discuss it with the rest of the class, and write a paper using those materials and presenting a historical narrative of the aquifer.

**Human History and Water** Write a one-page paper identifying key ideas one might employ in understanding the role water has played in the course of human history and why it is important to think of water as a historical agent.

**Writing Mechanics Exercise** Find the link to the WME on my web site, print it out, and answer the twenty questions. The assignment will not receive a grade itself. The assignment instead should be used as a guide for writing your papers. Violating the rules outlined on the WME will earn a penalty on your writing assignments. Failure to complete the WME will result in an automatic 5-point deduction from each assignment (save the first) completed before turning in the WME.

**Key Events, People, and Places 1** Define the individual terms writing no more than three sentences for each. Identify the larger historical significance of the event while keeping in mind the central theme of this course. Cite your sources.

1. Gardens of the Queen
2. Sylvia Earle
3. HMS *Challenger*
4. Archimedes' Screw
5. John Taylor (English poet)

**Key Events, People, Places 2** Define the individual terms writing no more than three sentences for each. Identify the larger historical significance of the event while keeping in mind the central theme of this course. Cite your sources.

1. Buck Island Reef National Monument
2. Boyan Slat
3. Salomon de Caus
4. Caddo Lake
5. Black Sea dead zone

**Who Was William Mulholland** Write a one-page brief biography of Mullholland, what he did to become a national figure related to water.

### **Additional Business:**

### **Plagiarism:**

Keep in mind that your written assignments must represent original work. You cannot copy the work of anyone else or text from the Internet. Do not cobble together paragraphs or passages of separate texts and then try to claim that you have done original and legitimate work. You must write with your own ideas and in your own words. If you copy the words of someone else without putting those words in quotation marks, you are plagiarizing. Plagiarism is theft, and it is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is grounds for an automatic failing grade in the course, a grade that is final and that cannot be made up. Please, if you have any questions about how you are citing or using sources, come to me for the answers.

### **Classroom Assistance:**

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office {<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/>}. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide that documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **UF Grading Scale**

This is the university's grading scale, which gives the 4.0 ranking for the letter grade you earn in the class based on the course's numeric scale cited above.

- A = 4.0
- A- = 3.67
- B+ = 3.33
- B = 3.0
- B- = 2.67
- C+ = 2.33
- C = 2.0
- C- = 1.67
- D+ = 1.33
- D = 1.0
- D- = 0.67
- E = 0.0

E1 = 0.0 Stopped attending or participating prior to end of class  
I (incomplete) = 0.0

**Note:** A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

**Sustainability in Class:** Here's the deal: Starting with the syllabus, I will distribute all course materials/handouts electronically, either through email, posting on my web site, or both. I may ask for your assignments to be turned in by email, depending on the number of students in the class. Regarding the assigned texts, as a reader and author, I do not consider printed books "paper waste," especially if you enjoy collecting memorable books or hand-writing impressions in them. That said, e-readers or purchasing used copies of print texts are both practical ways to read more sustainably. Finally, please, **no bottled water** or any beverages in throw-away containers, even those considered so-called recyclable. Give homage instead to durable, reusable containers.

**Course Evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.