

PASI 2002

Pacific Encounters: An Introduction to History and Culture in Oceania

Semester 2, 2008

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Teaching/learning methods

There will be 2 hours of lectures and one hour of tutorials per week. Tutorials will centre on historical debates and focus on developing students' verbal communication skills through small group interaction, tutorial debates and group discussions.

Lecture Timetable:

Tuesday 11am-1pm LAW G06

Tutorial Timetable:

Thursday 12.00am-1pm Copland GO39

Office Hours:

TBA. The lecturer is available for consultation on essays and any problems you are having with the course during weekly office hours, and by appointment outside of these hours. 3 hours per week will be set aside for student meetings. The hours will be decided in consultation with the class during the first week of lectures.

For 2/2008 Office Hours will be 1-2pm, 3-4pm Tuesday, 1-2pm Thursday

Course Content

This course covers the history of the peoples of the tropical Pacific Islands from their initial settlement of the region until the present day. A major theme throughout is Pacific Islanders' consistent expectation of influences and opportunities from beyond the horizon, and their ability to incorporate these external forces into their own perspectives. Beginning with Islanders' colonisation of the region, the course then moves on chronologically to chart their progressive involvement in the emerging global economy following sustained European contacts with the region. Themes covered include the seafaring and navigational brilliance of the first colonizers of the region, their special relationship with the sea and its marine inhabitants, their struggles to establish colonies on small islands, the mystery surrounding the

destruction of Easter Island society, culture contact with Europeans and the dramatic death of Captain Cook in Hawaii, resistance to European rule, the Pacific War during WWII, decolonization and the problems and benefits of independence, and contemporary issues such as instability, retaining and asserting cultural integrity in the era of globalisation, and the continuing struggle for independence for many.

Because of the diversity of cultures within the Pacific Islands, lectures will be based around general themes backed up by select examples. However, the course bibliography that follows provides a detailed bibliography to enable students to pursue essay themes for the island groups of their choice.

Course objectives

This course seeks to:

Provide an understanding of the historical processes shaping contemporary Pacific communities.

Develop an awareness of the important role external influences have always played in Pacific societies.

Gain an appreciation of the historical origins and development of social institutions, culture and life-ways in the Pacific.

Foster an understanding of history as a complex two-way interaction between historical events and subsequent historical interpretations.

As well as introducing students to the history of Oceania, this course aims to develop skills that are important to historians. These skills all have wider application in areas outside of the study of history. In developing these skills you are also enhancing your value to future employers.

These skills are:

1. Gaining an appreciation of the diversity of perspectives involved in multi-cultural settings.
2. Evaluating conflicting interpretations of events, including the detection of bias and unstated assumptions underlying arguments presented.
3. Effectively arguing your own viewpoint through clearly stated, well-planned essays.
4. Developing clarity and confidence in verbal expression through tutorial exercises.

Assessment

Course assessment is based on the following:

1. Attendance and participation (10%)
2. 1200 word essay (20%) **Due 22 August**
3. 2000 word essay (30%) **Due 26 September**
4. Examination on course lecture material (40%)

NOTE: A review of the exam will be conducted during the last lecture.

Lecture Programme

22 July	Introduction/Oceanic environment
22 July	Hollywood's Pacific: Western images
29 July	The Settlement of Oceania
29 July	Pacific Islanders as seafarers and navigators
5 August	The mystery of Easter Island/Rapanui
5 August	The Melanesia-Polynesia-Micronesia divide: reality or perception?
12 August	Cultural Interaction in Western Polynesia
12 August	The Oceanic cultural world: lifestyles and beliefs
19 August	Culture contact: Film <i>First Contact</i>
19 August	Culture contact: The death of Captain Cook in Hawai'i
26 August	Fatal Impact: muskets and introduced disease
26 August	Missionaries and the conversion
2 September	The impact of the labour trade on the Solomon Islands
2 September	Eroding sovereignty: the case of Hawai'i
9 September	The establishment of colonial rule
9 September	Colonial interactions
16 September	WWII in the Pacific
16 September	The decolonization of Oceania
23 September	Essay research week – no lectures
23 September	Essay research week – no lectures
Lecture Recess	29 September–12 October □ Lecture Recess
14 October	The forgotten colony: West Papua/Irian Jaya
14 October	Political independence & economic dependence
21 October	Divided loyalties: post-independence Fiji
21 October	Modernization: Local needs and global influences
28 October	Big Brother or Good Neighbour: Australia & the Pacific
28 October	Course review/overview

Tutorial Programme

Note: All tutorial readings are contained in either a course book of readings and/or on Web CT depending on student preferences indicated in the first lecture.

Week 1 No tutorials (24 July)

Week 2 Introduction (31 July)

Map exercise/Course outline and requirements/study skills

Week 3 Oceania's Cultural Diversity (7 August)

Readings:

Marshall Sahlins, M., "Poor man, rich man, big-man, chief. Political types in Melanesia and Polynesia", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.5, n0.3, 1963, pp.285–303.

Bronwen Douglas, "Rank, power, authority: a reassessment of traditional leadership in South Pacific societies", *JPH*, vol.14, 1979: 2–27.

Discussion Issues:

Where do the arguments of Sahlins and Douglas differ in their categorization of Oceania's cultures? How appropriate are the terms Melanesia and Polynesia as cultural groupings? How useful is leadership as a focus for analysing cultural divisions within Oceania? What other kinds of criteria could also be used for defining cultural divisions?

Week 4 Culture Contact (August 14)

Readings:

W.H. Pearson, "The Reception of European voyagers on Polynesian Islands, 1568–1797", *JSO*, vol.26, June 1970: 121–152.

I.C. Campbell, "European-Polynesian Encounters: A Critique of the Pearson Thesis", *JPH*, vol.29(2), 1994: 222–231.

Discussion Issues:

How did Polynesians and Europeans perceive each other during their initial encounters? What relative advantages and disadvantages did each party hold? Were cultural differences more or less important than the perceived balance of power in determining the actions of both sides?

Week 5 Navigating the Pacific: printed & archival resources (August 21)
(*Tutorial to be held in the Menzies Library*)

Readings:

Monica Wehner and Ewan Maidment. "Ancestral Voices: Aspects of Archives Administration in Oceania", *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 27, May 1999, pp. 22-41.

Evelyn Wareham, "From Explorers to Evangelists: Archivists, Recordkeeping, and Remembering in the Pacific Islands", *Archival Science*, vol. 2, 2002, pp.187-207.

Discussion Issues: Library and archival staff will raise issues with you on the assumption that you have read the assigned readings above.

Week 6 The Death of Captain Cook (August 28)

Readings:

Greg Dening, "Sharks that walk on the land", in Greg Dening, *Performances*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1996, pp.64-78.

K.R. Howe, "The making of Cook's death", *JPH*, vol.31 (1), June 1996, pp.108-118.

Discussion Issues:

List all the explanations put forward in the articles to explain the death of Cook. Which do you find the most convincing and why – by prepared to defend your position in the tutorial? Do you detect any preferences or bias in the authors' assessments? Are there any other possible explanations they fail to discuss?

Week 7 The Labour Trade (4 September)

Readings:

Deryck Scarr, "Recruits and recruiters: a portrait of the Pacific Island labour trade", *JPH*, vol.2, 1967: 5-24.

Peter Corris, "Pacific Island Labour Migrants in Queensland", *JPH*, vol.5, 1970: 43-64.

Discussion Issues:

What motivated Pacific Islanders to participate in the labour trade? How much was coercion a factor, as opposed to the perceived and real benefits to be gained? What was life like for recruits working in Queensland? What effect did the labour trade have on the Pacific Island societies from where recruits were drawn?

Week 8 Resistance v. Accommodation (11 September)

Readings:

Bronwen Douglas, "Conflict and Alliance in a Colonial Context: Case Studies in New Caledonia, 1853–1870", *JPH*, 15, 1980, pp.21–51.

Discussion issues:

What are the three ways that conflicts between Pacific Islanders and colonial regimes have been represented according to Douglas? What are the problems with these representations? What approach does she propose to overcome these problems? What reasons are given for Kanak groups siding with the French in the various conflicts discussed?

Week 9 Colonial Protest (18 September)

Readings:

Bill Gammage, "The Rabaul Strike, 1929", *JPH*, vol.10(3), 1975: 3–29.

James Griffin et al, "Australian New Guinea", in their *Papua New Guinea: A Political History*, Heinemann, Richmond, Victoria, 1979, pp.48–57.

Discussion Issues:

What did the participants of the Rabaul strike hope to achieve? What influences persuaded them to adopt this form of protest? What does the course of events reveal about the attitudes of the colonized and the colonizer? How feasible were their aspirations, given the attitudes and circumstances prevalent at the time in Australian New Guinea?

Week 10 No Tutorials – Essay Research Week (25 September)

Week 11 Independence and Dependence? (16 October)

Readings:

Stewart Firth, "Sovereignty and Independence in the contemporary Pacific", *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol.1(1–2), 1989, pp.75–96.

Karen Nero, "The End of Insularity", in Donald Denoon (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp.439–451.

Discussion Issues:

How independently have sovereign Pacific Island nations acted since gaining independence? What constraints are there on Pacific Island nations pursuing policies perceived to be in their own self-interest? How should we define "independence" in today's world?

Week 12 The Politics of Ethnicity (23 October)

Readings:

Brij v. Lal, "Towards a United Future: Report of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission", *Journal of Pacific History*, vol.32(1), 1997, pp.71–84.

Alan Ward, "The Crisis of our Times: Ethnic Resurgence and the Liberal Ideal", *Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 27(1), 1992, pp.83–95.

Discussion Issues:

How compatible is "the liberal ideal" with the aspirations of indigenous groups within the Pacific? Did the Fiji Constitution Review Commission recommend a workable solution to Fiji's problems, or were there ways that it could have been improved upon?

Week 13 No Tutorials – & 12am-1pm 30 October as extra exam consultation office hour instead

ESSAY TOPICS

You are required to submit two essays on different topics:

1200 word essay (20%) **Due 22 August**

2000 word essay (30%) **Due 26 September**

The possible questions you can address are listed below.

1. Either (a) How do Pacific Islander constructions of history differ from western concepts of history? How compatible are the two approaches?

 Or (b) How and why has Pacific Island historiography changed since World War Two? What improvements still need to be made to current approaches to Pacific History?
2. To what degree are Thor Heyerdahl's theories concerning Polynesian origins still valid in the light of the evidence available today?
3. Assess the sea-faring achievement of Pacific Islanders in the initial settlement period. How far can the Pacific have been settled by accident as Andrew Sharp claimed?
4. With reference to specific examples, discuss how the peoples of the tropical Pacific coped with the challenges presented by their island environments.
5. Are Melanesia and Polynesia valid cultural entities or merely geographical divisions? Justify your answer.
6. Demonstrate how studies focused on the relatively neglected fields of women's history and gender studies have enriched Pacific historiography over the past two decades.
7. Can the death of Captain Cook at Kealakekua Bay in February 1779 be explained without recourse to traditional Hawaiian politics and ritual?
8. The sandalwood trade was "a trade steeped in human blood and indescribable vice." (J.S. Paton) Discuss.
9. How did the arrival of Western beachcombers and Western goods affect Pacific Island communities in the first half of the nineteenth century? How significant was the flow of Pacific Islanders sailing abroad in Western vessels in the same period.
9. Assess the impact of introduced diseases on Pacific Island communities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
10. Outline and account for the variety of images Pacific Islanders and Europeans held.
11. Why did most Pacific Island societies ultimately accept Christianity?

12. “The common means of change in both Melanesia and Polynesia was commerce initiated and conducted by Europeans ...”. (I.C. Campbell) Discuss in relation to one or more Pacific Island societies in the nineteenth century.
13. What motivated Pacific Islanders to participate in the labour trade? What effect did the labour trade have on the communities from which recruits were drawn?
14. How much change to their pre-colonial lifestyles did Pacific Islanders experience in the colonial era?
15. In what ways did Pacific Islanders seek to resist European domination in the colonial period? How successful were they in these attempts?
16. How did the experience of World War Two alter the outlook and aspirations of indigenous inhabitants and colonial authorities in Oceania?
17. With reference to one or more Pacific Island nations, discuss how well the decolonisation process prepared Pacific Islanders for independence.
18. Why have certain colonial powers been so reluctant to concede independence to their Pacific Island territories?
19. Has the decolonisation process resulted in full political and economic autonomy for the newly created nations of Oceania? Justify your answer.
20. What have been the major issues involved in relations between the independent nations of Oceania, and in relations with the world beyond Oceania? Has a distinctly Pacific Island approach emerged in these relations?
21. Design your own question in consultation with the course coordinator, Paul D’Arcy, to ensure the topic is feasible, manageable, and that there are sufficient sources available. You must gain the course coordinator’s approval for your topic. Exploration of alternative forms of knowledge such as dance and music, and the alternative avenues of presenting history such as film and websites are particularly encouraged.

Assessment Criteria

Your essays will be assessed on the following criteria:

- **Research**
 - Are the sources used relevant to the topic?
 - Do they comprise a reasonable selection of the available sources for this topic?
- **Comprehension**
 - Does the work demonstrate an adequate understanding of relevant concepts?
 - Have these concepts been appropriately used?
- **Explanation**
 - Are important issues, ideas, processes and events clearly explained?
 - Is their relevance to the argument adequately explained?
- **Analysis**
 - Is the analysis coherently structured?
 - Does the analysis demonstrate familiarity with a reasonable range of relevant scholarly interpretations?

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is designed to assist your essay research and to allow you to read more on lecture and tutorial topics that you are interested in. It is advisable to read a source from the general section first to gain an overall impression of the topic, before consulting more detailed studies listed in the thematically structured bibliography. Please note that the references listed here do not conform to the standard outlined in tutorials to prevent them being cut and pasted to bolster essay bibliographies without actually being looked at!

JOURNAL ABBREVIATIONS

AA - American Anthropologist
 AinO - Archaeology in Oceania
 JPH - Journal of Pacific history
 JPS - Journal of the Polynesian Society
 NZJH - New Zealand Journal of History
 PS - Pacific Studies

GENERAL OVERVIEWS

Campbell, I.C., *A history of the Pacific Islands*, Christchurch, 1989
 D'Arcy, Paul (ed.), *Peoples of the Pacific: The History of Oceania to 1870*, Aldershot, 2008
 Denoon, D. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*, Cambridge, 1997
 Howe, K.R., *Where the waves fall*, Sydney, 1984
 Howe, K.R., Kiste, Robert, & Lal, Brij (eds.), *Tides of history: the Pacific Islands in the twentieth century*, St. Leonards, N.S.W., 1994
 Oliver, D.L., *The Pacific Islands* (3rd edition), Honolulu. 1989
 Scarr, Deryck, *The history of the Pacific Islands*, Melbourne, 1990
 Spate, O.H.K., *Paradise lost and found*, Canberra, 1988

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 Davidson, J.W., "Understanding Pacific History: The Participant as Historian", in P. Munz (ed.), *The Feel of truth*, Wellington, 1969
 Dening, G., "Ethnohistory in Polynesia: the value of ethnohistorical knowledge", *JPH*, vol. 1, 1966: 23-42
 Dening, G., "History in the Pacific", *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol. 1(1 & 2), 1989: 134-139
 Hezel, F.X., "New directions in Pacific History: a practitioner's critical view", *PS*, vol. 11(3), 1988: 101-110
 Howe, K.R., "The fate of the 'savage' in Pacific historiography", *NZJH*, vol. 11, 1977: 137-154
 Howe, K.R., "Pacific Islands History in the 1980s: new directions or monograph myopia?", *PS*, vol. 3, 1979: 81-90

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- Maude, H.E., "Pacific History: past, present & future", *JPH*, vol. 6, 1971, 3-24
- Munz, P., "The purity of historical method: some sceptical reflections on the current enthusiasm for the history of non-European societies", *NZJH*, vol. 5(1), April 1971: 1-17
- Neumann, K. "Not the way it really was: writing a history of the Tolai (Papua New Guinea)", *JPH*, vol. 24(2), 1989: 209-220
- Thomas, Nicholas, "Partial texts: representation, colonialism and agency in Pacific History", *JPH*, vol. 25(2), 1990, 139-158

TRADITIONAL HISTORY OF PACIFIC ISLAND PEOPLES

- Denoon, D. & R. Lacey (eds), *Oral tradition in Melanesia*, Port Moresby, 1980
- Geraghty, Paul, "Pulotu, Polynesian homeland", *JPS*, vol. 102(4), 1993, 343-384.
- Gunson, N., "Understanding Polynesian traditional history", *JPH*, vol. 28(2), 1993: 139-158
- Latukefu, S., "Oral traditions: an appraisal of their value in historical research in Tonga", *JPH*, vol. 3, 1968: 135-143
- Mahina, O., "The poetics of Tongan traditional history, tala-e-fonua: an ecology-centred concept of culture and history", *JPH*, vol. 28(1), 1993: 109-121
- Mercer, P.M., "Oral tradition in the Pacific: problems of interpretation", *JPH*, vol. 14(3), 1979:130-153
- Poyer, L., "The Ngatik massacre: documentary and oral traditional accounts", *JPH*, vol. 20(1), 1985: 4-22
- Spear, Thomas, "Oral traditions: whose history?", *JPH*, vol. 16(3), 1981: 133-148
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- Waiko, J., "Oral traditions among the Binandere: problems of method in a Melanesian society", *JPH*, vol. 21(1), 1986: 21-38

SETTLEMENT OF OCEANIA, AND NAVIGATION DEBATE

- Bellwood, P., *Man's conquest of the Pacific: the pre-history of Southeast Asia and Oceania*, Canberra, 1979
- Finney, B.R. (ed.), *Pacific navigation and voyaging*, Wellington, 1976
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- Irwin, G., " Against, across and down the wind: a case for the systematic exploration of the remote Pacific Islands", *JPS*, Vol. 98(2), 1989: 167-206
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- Tyron, D.T., "The peopling of the Pacific: a linguistic reappraisal", *JPH*, vol. 19(3), 1984:147- 159

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- Gunson, N., "Sacred women chiefs and female headmen' in Polynesian history", *JPH*, vol 22 (3- 4), 1987: 139-172
- Hanson, A., "Female pollution in Polynesia", *JPS*, vol. 91, 1982: 333-381
- Jolly, M. & L. Manderson (eds.), *Sites of desire, economies of pleasure: sexualities in Asia and the Pacific*, Chicago, 1997.
- Linnekin, J., "Who made the feather cloaks? A problem in Hawaiian gender relations", *JPS*, vol. 97(3), 1988: 265-280
- Marshall, Y., "Who made the Lapita pots? a case study in gender", *JPS*, vol. 94, 1985: 205-233
- Ralston, C., & N. Thomas (eds), " Sanctity and power - gender in Polynesian History", *JPH* special issue, vol. 22(3& 4), 1987
- Rogers, G., "'The father's sister is black': a consideration of female rank and power in Tonga", *JPS*, vol. 86(2), 1977: 157-182
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- Thomas, N., "Complementarity and history: misrecognizing gender in the Pacific", *Oceania*, vol. 57, 1987: 261-270

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