Subject of the course: The Indian Ocean is a fast emerging new field of study which, covering an area from East Africa, Egypt and the Red Sea to the Spice Islands of Indonesia, is as much Indian, Islamic, and Chinese as it is European overseas and world history. The traditional view of the Indian Ocean area has been profoundly altered by the historical work of the last twenty to thirty years. What once appeared to be a series of isolated trading enclaves on the fringes of vast agrarian civilizations has now been recognized as an integrated commercial system of great complexity, with the Indian subcontinent as its pivot, and taking up a large share of the world's total productive activity. New questions have begun to be addressed relating to the forms of economic, political, social, and cultural organization in the area. What was the relationship between the land-based states and maritime trade and port cities? What was the role of nomads and caravan trade in the arid and semi-arid areas bordering the Indian Ocean? How did, from the earliest times, cities develop, both inland and on the seaboard? What effect did great rivers and rivershifts have on the development of human settlement in India and the lands around the Indian Ocean?

While dealing with such questions in the broadest way, the aim of this course is to cover all periods of history and to give special attention to the geographical context in which historical developments occurred. This will serve to restore a picture of the historical interconnectedness of the Indian Ocean area.

Format: this is a seminar, emphasizing the discussion of reading materials, as well as the writing of book reviews, in addition to lectures presented by the instructor and some presentations by the participants.
Reading list:
8. Additional chapters of books and articles in reader.
PROGRAM

January 5

Introduction

Handout: syllabus

January 12

Medieval Europe and the Indian Ocean; the 'lost' civilisations of the Indian Ocean: environmental change, geography and history; coastlines and the connections of land and sea.


January 19

The Indian Ocean and its islands; the arid zone and the world of nomads; the rise of Islam.


January 26

From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean: medieval history in geographic perspective.


February 2
Trade and navigation in the Indian Ocean prior to the sixteenth century.


**February 9**

Empire, trade and the expansion of Islam.


**February 16**

Conversion to Islam.


**February 23**

MID-TERM EXAM

**March 2**

Ethiopia, Nubia and the Swahili coast of Africa.


**March 9**

The Portuguese *Estado da India*. 

March 16

The Dutch and English East India Companies.


March 30

Southeast Asia in the early modern age.


April 6

European imperialism in the Indian Ocean area.


April 13

South Asia and the world today.


April 20

The new Great Game.

**April 27:**

Concluding remarks.

**May 4:**

FINAL EXAM