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2004. *Oceanography* 17(1):118–119, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5670/oceanog.2004.76>

IN THE OCEANOGRAPHY CLASSROOM | Planning for General Oceanography: Course Thoughts

Excerpted in part from Tom Garrison's Oceanography, an Invitation to Marine Science, Fifth edition. Permission to reprint granted by Brooks-Cole Publishing Company, 2005. All rights reserved.

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First Paragraphs

It seems to me that we are living in the golden age of marine science. Our interdisciplinary field is benefiting from great advances in basic science and applied technology, and our students are bringing to class an unprecedented enthusiasm for things oceanic. We professors find ourselves cheerfully in the middle between a burgeoning body of knowledge and a growing number of citizens eager to know about it. It is the best of times.

More and more students are now selecting marine science classes to fulfill part of their undergraduate science requirements. Chances are good that many readers of this column are anticipating that most pleasing of academic prospects: teaching a general education introductory oceanography course. Perhaps the most difficult task facing us is to draw the diverse threads of marine science into some coherent whole. What theme will you choose to unify the class? Will it be environmental issues? Plate tectonics? Origins and ends? The ocean's direct influence on your students? Food and resources? History? A personal research emphasis? Marine economics? Local marine highlights and their explanations? Departmental equipment strengths? Ecology? Whatever route you take, you will forever influence the students who travel with you. You are the topic for them, and your background and preparation, your choice of topics and depth of coverage, your lecture organization and style, and the daily transmission of your own enthusiasm will serve you well.

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