

MAINE
COAST
SEMESTER
at CHEWONKI



Dear Semesters 65 and 66,

We are excited to welcome you to Maine Coast Semester and to introduce you to your pre-semester reading assignment: **Colin Woodard's *The Lobster Coast: Rebels, Rusticators, and the Struggle for a Forgotten Frontier.***

The **purpose of this pre-semester reading** is twofold; first, to begin to highlight the complexity of this place and our relationship to it over hundreds of years, and second, to preview the themes that will be introduced in your courses and fieldwork. We hope this will set you up for a successful semester.

We also hope that by having you read *The Lobster Coast*, at least in part, we are acknowledging the traditional land of the Wabanaki people, who have stewarded this land and its surrounding waters for generations. Learning about the importance of land acknowledgment will continue throughout your time at Maine Coast Semester.

Themes within the text include:

- The personal relationship we each create with a place.
- The deeply powerful and complex history of indigenous peoples in the region we now call Maine.
- The connections that exist between human and natural communities in coastal Maine.
- The stories of place that have been passed down from generation to generation of Mainers.
- The variety of ways that Maine's past continues to shape the Maine of today.
- The processes used to determine and define the ownership of land and water.
- The interdependent relationship between Maine's economic systems and ecosystems.
- The seasonality of life in Maine and how it influences the way we reside in this place and strive to form sustainable communities.

When you arrive on campus for the opening day of your semester, you should have completed reading *The Lobster Coast* and be prepared to answer at least two of the following questions in writing:

1. In *The Lobster Coast*, you were introduced to the physical characteristics of the woods and waters of Maine. What are two ways the ecosystems and ecology of Maine have impacted or were impacted by human behavior over the centuries?
2. You met a variety of "characters" in this text. Identify two people that captured your attention because of their distinct relationship with Maine and prompted you to wonder

about this place you are coming to? Write one paragraph describing these individuals and their unique relationship to place.

3. The concept and act of ownership (of both land and water) are emphasized and discussed at various points throughout the text. What does it mean to own something? In a paragraph, discuss how your definition of ownership challenges or supports the story Woodard tells his readers about the ownership of land and waters throughout the history of this region.

At the start of the semester, you will be expected to complete your written response to each question, which will then be collected and read by your advisor. Additionally, your English and Science courses, Literature and the Land, and Natural History of the Maine Coast will work with *The Lobster Coast* in the opening weeks of the semester.

Whether this is your first adventure in the incredible state of Maine or you already have your own memories of holidays on the coast, exploring Acadia, or trekking in Baxter State Park, you will soon discover this place is rooted in an important story that knits together the natural world and the human communities that have occupied this environment since the beginning of time. We believe it is important for you to be familiar with this story before you start your semester.

You might be curious to know what Goodreads.com has to say about *The Lobster Coast*:

"For more than four hundred years the people of coastal Maine have clung to their rocky, wind-swept lands, resisting outsiders' attempts to control them while harvesting the astonishing bounty of the Gulf of Maine. Today's independent, self-sufficient lobstermen belong to the communities imbued with a European sense of ties between land and people, but threatened by the forces of homogenization spreading up the eastern seaboard. In the tradition of William Warner's Beautiful Swimmers, veteran journalist Colin Woodard (author of American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle Between Individual Liberty and the Common Good) traces the history of the rugged fishing communities that dot the coast of Maine and the prized crustacean that has long provided their livelihood. Through forgotten wars and rebellions, and with a deep tradition of resistance to interference by people "from away," Maine's lobstermen have defended an earlier vision of America while defying the "tragedy of the commons"—the notion that people always overexploit their shared property. Instead, these icons of American individualism represent a rare example of true communal values and collaboration through grit, courage, and hard-won wisdom."

Please don't hesitate to contact me if anything is unclear to you.



Warm Regards,

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