

HIST 597E (202)
Topics in Comparative History (Environmental History)
Thursdays, 10-12

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Course Description:

This seminar will explore a range of approaches to environmental history using exemplary readings on North America, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. Themes covered will include the natural and cultural construction of landscapes, the evolution and impact of global and regional energy regimes, war and the environment, ecological consequences of empire, and the structures and implications of “modern” thought about nature and the environment.

Required Texts (will be on reserve at Koerner Library as well):

David Blackbourn. *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany*. Norton, 2006.

Paul Josephson. *Industrialized Nature: Brute Force Technology and the Transformation of the Natural World*. Island Press, 2002.

J.R. McNeill. *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World*. Norton, 2001.

Edmund Russell. *War and Nature*. Cambridge, 2001.

James Scott. *Seeing Like a State*. Yale, 1999.

Judith Shapiro. *Mao's War Against Nature*. Cambridge, 2001.

Peter Thorsheim. *Inventing Pollution*. Ohio, 2006.

Other Readings

Readings marked with an * are available on reserve in the lockers in the history lounge on the 11th floor of Buchanan Tower. Please do not remove them from the lounge area, except to make copies (and then please return them immediately). A list of the full citations for these sources follows the syllabus.

Course Requirements:

- Regular attendance and participation in seminars
- Two collaborative presentations on a week's readings
- Think piece (3-4 pages) on teaching global environmental history
- Research or historiography paper of 20-30 pages

Schedule

Week 1

Introductions (Jan. 11)

Reading: *McNeill article on historiography of global environmental history

Week 2

Modernity (Jan. 18)

Readings: Scott, intro & chpts 1 & 3; Blackbourn, 3-188; Paul Josephson, prologue, chpt 2

Nature/History/Society (NHS) talk on Jan. 18, 5pm: Bill Turkel, Department of History, University of Western Ontario, "Environment and the Contested Past of the Chilcotin Plateau"

Week 3

Colonial Environments (Jan. 25)

Readings: Scott, chpt 8; Josephson, chpt 3; *Richard Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite*, Intro, chpts 1 & 4 (sugar & coffee); *McCann, McNeill, & Dunlop articles in *City, Country, Empire* (chpts 7, 9 & 10)

Week 4

Communist Environments I: China (Feb. 1)

Readings: Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature*

Week 5

Human and Natural Landscapes in Germany (Feb. 8)

Readings: *Germany's Nature, intro & chpts 1 & 5; *How Green Were the Nazis, chpt 6 & 7; *Zeller article on Autobahn; *Josephson & Zeller article; Blackbourn, chpt 5; *Groening & Wolschke-Bulmahn article

Gert Groening NHS talk (date TBA)

Week 6

Megaprojects/Dams (Feb. 15)

Readings: Josephson, chpt 1; Blackbourn 189-249; *Heggelund on 3 Gorges, selections

[Break week from Feb. 19-23]

Week 7

I will not be here on Mar. 1—if you're interested, I'll try to get a copy of "Manufactured Landscapes," a documentary film on the rapid modernization of China.

Week 8

War and Environment I: Chemicals (Mar. 8)

Readings: Russell, *War and Nature*

Optional: *Gladwell *New Yorker* article; *Tucker articles in *Natural Enemy*

Week 9

War and Environment II: Migration (Mar. 15)

Readings: Blackbourn, chpts 6 (251-364); *Glassheim (article & work in progress); *Kreike chpt 1, 3, 4?

Nature, History, Society Roundtable (Mar. 15, 5pm)

Week 10

No class on Mar. 22 (make-up in joint session on Mar. 30)

Week 11

Coal in Britain (Mar. 29)

Readings for Mar. 29: Thorsheim, Inventing Pollution

Joint meeting with Matthew Evenden's class (Mar. 30, 10-12)

Readings for Mar. 30: TBA--Russell work in progress?

Edmund Russell Talk: "The Fierce, the Fleet and the Fancy: How Gambling, Social Relations, and Dogs Co-evolved in Nineteenth Century Britain" (Mar. 29, 5pm)

Week 12

Communist Environments II: The Soviet Empire (Apr. 5)

Readings: Scott, chpt 6; *Josephson article in City, Country, Empire; *Kotkin chpt from Armageddon Averted (Soviet Union); *Dominick article; *Diaz-Briquets on Cuba, chpts 1, 4, 7; *Nelson, Cold War Ecology excerpt?

Mirovitskaya and Soroos article on USSR & Russia?

Week 13

Global Environmental History, Large Processes (Apr. 12)

Readings: McNeill book

Assignment: think piece on teaching global environmental history (3-4 pgs)

Reserve Readings

- J.R. McNeill, "Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History," *History and Theory* 42 (December 2003): 5-43.
- Richard Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World* (University of California Press, 2000), Intro, chpts 1 & 4.
- Jeffry Diefendorf and Kurk Dorsey eds., *City, Country, Empire* (Pittsburgh, 2005), McCann, McNeill, & Dunlop articles (chpts 7, 9 & 10).
- Thomas Lekan and Thomas Zeller, eds., *Germany's Nature: Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History* (Rutgers, 2005), intro & chpts 1 & 5.
- Franz-Josef Bruggemeier, Mark Cioc, and Thomas Zeller eds., *How Green Were the Nazis: Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich* (Ohio, 2005), chpt 6 & 7.
- Thomas Zeller, "The Landscape's Crown: Landscape, Perceptions, and Modernizing Effects of the German Autobahn System, 1934-1941," in David Nye, ed., *Technologies of Landscape* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 218-238.
- Paul Josephson and Thomas Zeller, "The Transformation of Nature under Hitler and Stalin," in Mark Walker, ed., *Science and Ideology: A Comparative History* (Routledge, 2003), 124-155.
- Gert Groening and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, "Some Notes on the Mania for Native Plants in Germany," *Landscape Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1992): 116-126.
- Gorild Heggelund, *Environment and Resettlement Politics in China: The Three Gorges Project* (Ashgate, 2004), selections.
- Malcolm Gladwell *New Yorker* article on DDT (citation TBA).
- Richard Tucker and Edmund Russell, eds., *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally: Toward an Environmental History of Warfare* (Oregon, 2004), Tucker articles.
- Eagle Glassheim, "Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945-1989." *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 78, no. 1 (March, 2006): 65-92.
- Eagle Glassheim, "Most, the Town that Moved: Coal, Communists, and the "Gypsy Question" in Post-War Czechoslovakia" (article draft).
- Emmanuel Kreike, *Re-creating Eden: Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia* (Heinemann, 2004), chpt 1, 3, 4 (possibly less).
- Josephson chapter in *City, Country, Empire*.
- Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000* (Oxford, 2001).
- Raymond Dominick, "Capitalism, Communism, and Environmental Protection: Lessons from the German Experience," *Environmental History*, vol. 3, no. 3 (July 1998): 311-332.
- Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Jorge Perez-Lopez, *Conquering Nature: The Environmental Legacy of Socialism in Cuba* (Pittsburgh, 2000), chpts 1, 4, 7.
- Arvid Nelson, *Cold War Ecology: Forests, Farms, and People in the East German Landscape, 1945-1989*, excerpt TBA.
- Mirovitskaya and Soroos article on USSR & Russia? (need to find citation)