

**FACULTY OF ARTS
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Department of History**

**UNDERGRADUATE COURSE SYLLABUS
HISTORY 4215**

Title: The History of Environmental Ideas in Canada and the United States

Term: Winter 2008

Description

This course will survey major philosophical, scientific, and popular ideas of nature in Canada and the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Students will examine key historical manifestations of environmental thought such as romanticism, the wilderness idea, ecofeminism, deep ecology, and social ecology. Students will also be exposed to important voices from social groups who are often marginalized in environmental debates such as African-Americans, Aboriginal people, and the working class.

Course Instructor

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Office Hours

Tuesday 12-1:30
Friday 10-11:30

Course Organization and Management

The course will consist of lectures, student presentations, small group work and seminar discussions. Discussion of primary documents is central to the course. There will be several film screenings during the term.

Method of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be based on the following percentages:

Paper Proposal.....	10%
Presentation.....	30%
Term Paper	40%
Participation.....	20%

Assignments

Assignment #1 is a proposal for your research essay. This proposal should be 2-3 pages (500-750 words) of text with a bibliography attached. Your proposal should identify a research topic, your methodology, key sources, and most importantly a key question that you will attempt to answer (this should take the form of a thesis statement). **The proposal is due January 31st at the start of class.**

The Presentation: On a selected date, you will report to the class your research findings on the topic of the week. You are expected to respond to the instructor's lecture and may compare your book to other readings in the course.

The Research Essay is a brief and original assessment of a particular intellectual movement or individual within the field of environmental thought. Students may choose, for instance, to critically assess deep ecology or they may choose to focus on an individual such as John Muir. **The research essay is due March 25th at the start of class.**

Required Texts

All readings are available at the reserve desk of the QEII library

Weeks 2-5 – Folder 1

Weeks 6-9 – Folder 2

Weeks 10-13 – Folder 3

Schedule of Topics and Readings

The following list of lecture topics and readings is subject to change:

Week One (Jan 8, 10)

Introduction to the Course Material

Week Two (Jan 15, 17)

The Romantics and other Proto-Environmentalists in the mid-nineteenth century

Readings:

Henry David Thoreau, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," and "The Ponds," from *Walden* (New York: Bantam, 1982 – first published in 1854): 165-78; 233-53.

Henry David Thoreau, "Walking," in Robert Finch and John Elder, Eds. *Nature Writing: The Tradition in English* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002): 180-205.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in Derek Wall, ed. *Green History: A Reader in Environmental Literature, Philosophy and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1994): 108-10.

George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature* (New York: Scribner's, 1864). 7-52.

Recommended:

Donald Worster, "The Subversive Science: Thoreau's Romantic Ecology," in *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 57-111.

Week Three (Jan 22, 24)

Readings:

Toward a Friendly Nature: Romanticism, the Sublime, the Primitive and the Idea of Wilderness in the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Ann Zwinger, ed. *Writing the Western Landscape: Mary Austin and John Muir* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994). 62-85.

John Muir, *Our National Parks* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press): 76-97.

Mary Schaeffer, *Old Indian trails: incidents of camp and trail life, covering two years' exploration through the Rocky Mountains of Canada* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1911): 1-16; 326-38

Catherine Parr Traill, *Pearls and Pebbles, or, Notes of an Old Naturalist* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1894): 37-48.

Recommended:

Alfred Runte, *National Parks: the American Experience*, Third Edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997): 11-32.

William Cronon, "The Trouble With Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Re-thinking the Human Place in Nature*, William Cronon ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986): 69-90.

Week Four (Jan. 29, 31)

Science and Fiction: Nature Fakers and Natural History at the Turn of the Century

Readings:

Ernest Thompson Seton, from *Wild Animals I Have Known*, in Robert Finch and John Elder, Eds. *Nature Writing: The Tradition in English* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002): 305-312.

Charles G.D. Roberts. "Introduction," and "Savoury Meats," in *Kindred of the Wild: a Book of Animal Life* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1900).

Burroughs, John. "Real and Sham Natural History," *The Atlantic Monthly* 91 (March 1903): 298-309.

Theodore Roosevelt. "Nature Fakers," *Everybody's Magazine* (September 1907): 427-30.

Recommended:

McDonald, Robert. "The Revolt Against Instinct: The Animal Stories of Seton and Roberts," *Canadian Literature* 84 (1980): 18-29.

Week Five (Feb. 5, 7)

Conservation and Preservation: two conflicting ideals?

Readings:

- John Muir, *Our National Parks* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press): 1-36.
Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground* (Washington, D.C.: Island, 1947): 263-81.
C. Gordon Hewitt, *The Conservation of the Wild Life of Canada* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921): 310-330.
Robert Marshall, "The Problem of the Wilderness," in J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, Eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate* (Athens: Georgia, 1998): 85-96.

Recommended:

- Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Third Edition. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). Chapter 13.
Carolyn Merchant, "Women and the Progressive Conservation Crusade," *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (New York: Routledge, 1995): 109-136.
Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2001): 25-46.

Film: *The Wilderness Idea*

Week Six (Feb. 12, 14)

Popular and Working Class Environmentalism in the early Twentieth Century

Readings:

- Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Gospel of the Redman: an Indian Bible* (London: Psychic Press, 1970). Selections.
Jack Miner, *Jack Miner and the Birds and Some Things I Know About Nature* (Toronto: Reilly and Lee, 1923): 39-51; 126-31; 184-88.
Alice Hamilton, *Exploring the Dangerous Trades* (Boston: Little Brown and Co, 1943): 138-60.
Grey Owl, *The Collected Works of Grey Owl* (Toronto: Prospero, 1999): 228-60.

Recommended:

- Karl Jacoby, "Class and Environmental History: Lessons from 'The War in the Adirondacks,'" *Environmental History* Vol. 2:3 (July 1997): 324-34
Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006): 63-92.
Robert Gottlieb, "Reconstructing Environmentalism: Complex Movements, Diverse Roots," in Char Miller and Hal Rothman (eds.) *Out of the Woods: Essays in Environmental History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997): 144-160

Film: Bill Mason. *Death of a Legend*

Week Seven (February 21)

Film: Cry of the Wild

Week Eight (Feb. 26, 28)

Voices from the Cold War: Changing Perceptions of Predators, Pesticides, Nuclear Bombs and the Human Place in Nature

Readings:

- Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1987): 1-37.
Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949): 129-33, 201-26.
Farley Mowat, *Never Cry Wolf* (Boston: Seal Books, 1982): 230-47.
Gary Snyder, *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes and Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (New York: New Directions, 1969): 90-93.
Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (London: Deutsch, 1959): 170-92.
Robert Hunter, *Warriors of the Rainbow: A Chronicle of the Greenpeace Movement* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979): 3-37; 96-114.

Recommended:

- Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006): 149-82.

Week Nine (March 10-14)

The Birth of Radical Ecology

Readings:

- Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle* (New York: Bantam, 1971): 1-10; 29-35.
Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine, 1968): 127-45.
Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: a Season in the Wilderness* (New York: Avon, 1975): 39-59
Bill Devall and George Sessions. *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1985): 63-77; 109-29.
Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom* (Palo Alto, Ca.: Cheshire Books, 1982): 16-42.

Recommended:

- Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: the Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington: Island Press, 1993): 81-116.

Week Ten (March 11, 13)

Considering the Non-human

Readings:

John Livingston, *Rogue Primate: An Exploration of Human Domestication* (Toronto: Key Porter, 1994): 99-118.

Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and Environment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985): 73-102.

Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (London: Cape, 1990): 1-26.

Recommended:

Alexander Wilson, "Looking at the Non-Human: Nature Movies and TV," *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to Exxon Valdez* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991): 117-155.

Week Eleven (March 18, 20)

Ecofeminism

Readings:

Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in *Woman, Culture and Society*, Michael Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974): 67-87

Ynestra King, "Feminism and the Revolt of Nature," *Heresies* 4, 1 (1981): 12-16.

Terry Tempest Williams, "The Clan of the One-Breasted Woman," in *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* (New York: Vintage, 1991): 281-90.

Susan Griffin, "Matter," in Derek Wall, ed. *Green History: A Reader in Environmental Literature, Philosophy and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1994): 186-89.

Recommended:

Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: the Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington: Island Press, 1993): 207-34.

Week Twelve (March 25, 27)

Indigenous Voices

Readings:

Chief Luther Standing Bear, "Indian Wisdom," in J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, Eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate* (Athens: Georgia, 1998): 201-6

Leslie Marmon Silko, "Landscape, History and the Pueblo Imagination," in Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, eds., *The Ecocriticism Reader* (London: Georgia UP, 1996): 264-75.

George Blondin, ed., "Life Before Contact," in *Yamoria: the Lawmaker, Stories of the Dene*, (Edmonton: NeWest, 1997): 18-28.

Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," In J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, Eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate* (Athens: Georgia, 1998): 231-46.

Week Thirteen (April 1, 3)

African-American Environmentalism and the Birth of the Environmental Justice Movement

Readings:

Evelyn White, "Black Women and the Wilderness," in Robert Finch and John Elder, Eds. *Nature Writing: The Tradition in English* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002): 1062-1067.

Alice Walker, "Longing to Die of Old Age 1985," in Derek Wall, ed. *Green History: A Reader in Environmental Literature, Philosophy and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1994): 174-76

Robert Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality* (Westview Press, 2000): 21-36.

Recommended:

Eileen Maura McGurty, "From NIMBY to Civil Rights: The Origin of the Environmental Justice Movement," *Environmental History* Vol. 2, 3 (July 1997), pp. 301-323

Music: Billie Holiday sings "Strange Fruit"

Film: *Koyanisqaatsi*

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Berger, Carl. *Science, God and Nature in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

Birch, Thomas H. "The Incarceration of Wilderness: Wilderness Areas as Prisons," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, eds. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), pp. 443-70.

Bocking, Stephen. *Ecologists and Environmental Politics: A History of Contemporary Ecology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

Botkin, Daniel. *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Bramwell, Anna. *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989)

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

Colpitts, George. *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002).

Cronon, William. "A Place for Stories: Nature, History and Narrative," *Journal of American History* 78 (March 1992), pp. 1347-1376

- Cronon, William. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995).
- Dubasak, Marilyn. *Wilderness Preservation: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Canada and the United States* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990).
- Dunlap, Thomas R. *Nature and the English Diaspora: Environment and History in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Dunlap, Thomas R. *Saving America's Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850-1990* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).
- Evernden, Neil. *The Social Creation of Nature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992)
- Foster, Janet. *Working for Wildlife: The Beginnings of Preservation in Canada*, Second Edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).
- Gottlieb, Robert *Forcing the Spring: the Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington: Island Press, 1993).
- Grove, Richard. *Ecology, Climate and Empire: Colonialism and Global Environmental History* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 1997).
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- Hays, Samuel. 1959. *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: the Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Antheneum, 1959).
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- Lewontin, Richard. 1993. *The Doctrine of DNA: Biology as Ideology* (London: Penguin).
- MacGregor, Sherilyn. *Beyond Mothering Earth: Ecological Citizenship and the Politics of Care* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).
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