

Christopher Conte
Graduate Seminar in Environmental History (US and Comparative)
Utah State University, Spring 2004

This course surveys some of the literature from a rapidly growing historical field concerned primarily with the changing relationship between humanity and its environment. That relationship is extraordinarily complex and therefore environmental historians have examined a number of diverse topics, such as the history of conservation, transformations in landscapes, thematic studies of fire and water, and urban environments and industrial sinks, among others. We will devote eight meetings to a discussion of the selected readings in some of these areas and then spend the balance of the seminar discussing your own research.

Weekly Discussion

Each week one student will be in charge of setting the discussion agenda. This entails a short presentation in which the discussion leader identifies the central themes brought out by the common readings and then proposes a series of questions for the class to consider. As a help to the discussion leader, students will be required to email the instructor and the discussion leader two or three questions by noon on the day of our seminar meeting. I expect full participation by all seminar members. This presentation and your general participation in the evening's discussion will constitute 30% of the final grade.

Book Reviews

During the course of the semester, you will choose two books from the works designated for review (see the lists that follow each section). Each review will make up 10% of the final grade. Reviews should contain no more than 750 words. 20%

Research Project

Each student will complete a research project based upon his or her individual interest. The project can be based on primary materials or represent a synthesis of the existing literature. I expect you to meet with me frequently to discuss the progress of your project. Projects should contain 20 pages of text, plus a bibliography. 50%

January 5: Introductions and Syllabus

Key Questions:

- What is Environmental History?
- Who historiographical traditions led to EH?
- What are the field's central thematic concerns?
- What questions motivate environmental historians?
- Is EH truly interdisciplinary?
- How does one "do" EH?

Part I: Definitions, Theories and Approaches

January 12: Approaches.

Pawson, Eric and Stephen Dovers. "Environmental History and the Challenges of Interdisciplinarity: An Antipodean Perspective." *Environment and History* 9 (2003): 53-75.

Beinart, William. "African History and Environmental History." *African Affairs* 99.395 (2000): 269-302. Not Yet Available.

Sutter, Paul. "What Can U.S. Environmental Historians Learn from Non-U.S. Environmental Historiography?" *Environmental History* 8 (2003): 109-129. Xerox

Russell, Edmund. "Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field." *Environmental History* 8 (2003), 204 – 228. ER 3950

Basso, Kenneth. "Quoting the Ancestors." In *Wisdom Sits in Places*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. Xerox

Worster, Donald. "Two Cultures Revisited: Environmental History and the Environmental Sciences." *Environment and History* 2 (1996): 3 - 14. Xerox

Cronon, William. "The Uses of Environmental History." *Environmental History Review* 17.3 (1993): 1-22. ER 3950

For Review:

Journal of American History Roundtable, 76 (1990), pp. 1087-1147 and *Pacific Historical Review* Forum, Volume 70.1 (2001), pp. 55 – 111. Two Xerox Copies.

January 26: Essential Components and Methods: Nature, Climate, Ecology, and Time.

Braudel, Fernand. "Is there a Geography of Biological Man?" In *On History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Crumley, Carole. "Historical Ecology: A Multidimensional Ecological Orientation." In *Historical Ecology: Cultural Knowledge and Changing Landscapes*. Edited by Carole L. Crumley. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994. Week III.2, pp. 10-1.

Worster, Donald. "Nature and the Disorder of History." *Environmental History Review* 18.2 (1994), 2. Week III.1, pp. 2-9.

Flores, Dan. "Nature's Children: Environmental History as Natural History." In *The Natural West: Environmental History in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001. Under Week III.2, pp. 21-11 and last page under Week III. 3, p. 2.

Flores, Dan. "Place: An Argument for Bioregional History." *Environmental History Review* 18.4 (1994), pp. 1-18. Under Week III.3 p. 11.

Chapman, Graham P. and Thackwray S. Driver. "Time, Mankind and the Earth." In *Time-Scales and Environmental Change*. Edited by Thackwray S. Driver and Graham P. Chapman. London: Routledge, 1996. Under Week III.2, pp. 34-23.

Lehtinen, Ari Aukusti. "Modernization and the Concept of Nature: On the Reproduction of Environmental Stereotypes." In *Encountering the Past in Nature: Essays in Environmental History*. Edited by Timo Myllyntaus and Mikko Saikku. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, second revised edition, 2001. Under Week III.1, pp. 32-23.

Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. "The Historical Study of Climate." Chapter 1 in *Times of Feast Times of Famine: A History of Climate Since the Year 1000*. New York: Noonday Press, 1971, 7 - 22.

For Review:

Worster, Donald. *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*. New York, 1977.

Russell, Emily. *People and the Land through Time: Linking Ecology and History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean*, Book I.

Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. *Times of Feast Times of Famine: A History of Climate Since the Year 1000*. New York: Noonday Press, 1971

Crumley, Carole, ed. *Historical Ecology: Cultural Knowledge and Changing Landscapes*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1994.

Coates, Peter. *Nature: Western Attitudes Since Ancient Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Part II: Places

February 2: Mountains/Forests

Hall, Marcus. "Repairing Mountains: Restoration, Ecology, and Wilderness in Twentieth-Century Utah." *Environmental History* 6 (2001): 584-610.

Conte, C.A. "The Forest Becomes Desert: Forest Use and Environmental Change in Tanzania's West Usambara Mountains." *Land Degradation and Development* 10 (1999), 291-309. ER 3950

Flores, Dan. "Islands in the Desert: The Rocky Mountains in Environmental History." In *The Natural West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001

Abrams, Elliot M. Ann Corinne Freter, David J. Rue and John D. Wingard. "The Role of Deforestation in the Collapse of the Late Classic Copán Maya State." In *Tropical Deforestation: The Human Dimension*. Edited by Leslie E. Sponsel, Thomas N. Headland, and Robert C. Bailey. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach. "Reproducing Locality: A Critical Exploration of the Relationship between Natural Science, Social Science, and Policy in West African Ecological Problems." In *Producing Nature and Poverty in Africa*. Edited by Vigdis Broch-Due and Richard A. Schroeder. Stockholm, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000.

Saikku, Mikko. "'Home in the Big Forest': Decline of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker and Its Habitat in the United States." In *Encountering the Past in Nature: Essays in Environmental History*. Edited by Timo Myllyntaus and Mikko Saikku. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, second revised edition, 2001. ER Under Book Title.

Björn, Ismo. "Life in the Borderland Forests: the Takeover of Nature and its Social Organization in North Karelia." In *Encountering the Past in Nature: Essays in Environmental History*. Edited by Timo Myllyntaus and Mikko Saikku. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, second revised edition, 2001.

For Review:

Langston, Nancy. *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995.

Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach. *Misreading the African Landscape: Society and Ecology in a Forest-Savanna Mosaic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Tucker, Richard P. *Insatiable Appetite: the United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Castro, Alphonso Peter. *Facing Kirinyaga: A Social History of Forest Commons in Southern Mount Kenya*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd., 1995.

Sponsel, Leslie E., Thomas N. Headland, and Robert C. Bailey, eds. *Tropical Deforestation: The Human Dimension*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

deBuys, William. *Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985.

Griffiths, Tom. *Forests of Ash: An Environmental History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

February 9: Water

Reynard, Pierre Claude. "Charting Environmental Concerns: Reactions to Hydraulic Public Works in Eighteenth-Century France." *Environment and History* 9 (2003): 251 – 73.

Wilson, Robert. "Directing the Flow: Migratory Waterfowl, Scale and Mobility in Western North America." *Environmental History* 7 (2002): 247-266.

Ward, Evan. "Geo-Environmental Disconnection and the Colorado River Delta: Technology, Culture, and the Political Ecology of Paradise." *Environment and History* 7 (2001): 219-46.

Webster, Barbara. "Nature, Progress and the 'Disorderly Fitzroy: The Vain Quest for Queensland's 'Noblest Navigable River', 1865 – 1965.'" *Environment and History* 9 (2003): 275-99.

Nunn, Partick D. and James M. R. Britton. "Human-Environment Relationships in the Pacific Islands around A.D. 1300." *Environment and History* 7 (2001): 3-22.

Hacquebord, Louwrens. "Three Centuries of Whaling and Walrus Hunting in Svalbard and its Impact on the Arctic Ecosystem." *Environment and History* 7 (2001): 169-185.

For Review:

Fiege, Mark. *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999.

Cioc, Mark. *The Rhine: An Ecobiography, 1815 - 2000*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003.

White, Richard. *The Organic Machine*.

Worster, Donald. *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

McEvoy, Arthur. *The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries, 1850-1980*. New York, 1986.

Char Miller, ed. *Fluid Arguments : Five Centuries of Western Water Conflict*. Tucson : University of Arizona Press, c2001.

Vileisis, Ann. *Discovering the Unknown Landscape: A History of America's Wetlands*. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1997.

Butenwieser, Ann L. *Manhattan Water-Bound: Planning and Developing Manhattan's Waterfront from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*. New York, 1987.

February 17: Rangelands and other Arid Environments

Flores, Dan. "Where All the Pretty Horses Have Gone." In *Horizontal Yellow: Nature and History in the Near Southwest*. University of New Mexico Press, 1999.

Latorre, Juan Garcia, Andres Sanchez Picon, and Jesus Garcia Latorre. "The Man-Made Desert: Effect of Economic and Demographic Growth on the Ecosystems of Arid Southeastern Spain." *Environmental History* 6 (2001): 75-94.

Cronon, William. "The Dustbowl: A Place for Stories." Nature, History and Narrative." *The Journal of American History* 78.4 (1992): 1347 - 76. ER 6460

Broch-Due, Vigdis. "A Proper Cultivation of Peoples: The Colonial Reconfiguration of Pastoral Tribes and Places in Kenya." In *Producing Nature and Poverty in Africa*. Edited by Vigdis Broch-Due and Richare A. Schroeder. Stockholm, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000.

Fish, Suzanne K. "Hohokam Impacts on Sonoran Desert Environment." In *Imperfect Balance: Landscape Transformations in the Precolumbian Americas*. Edited by David L. Lentz. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

For Review:

Lookingbill, Brad D. *Dust Bowl, USA: Depression America and the Ecological Imagination, 1929 – 1941*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001.

Flores, Dan. *Horizontal Yellow: Nature and History in the Near Southwest*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999.

Webb, James L.A. *Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change Along the Western Sahel, 1600 – 1850*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Francaviglia, Richard. *Believing in Place: A Spiritual Geography of the Great Basin*. Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2003.

Brockington, Dan. *Fortress Conservation: The Preservation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania*. London: James Currey, 2002.

February 23: Industrial and Urban Environments

Rome, Adam. "Coming to Terms with Pollution: The Language of Environmental Reform, 1865-1915." *Environmental History* 1 (1996): 6-28.

McCarthy, Tom. "The Coming Wonder?:" Foresight and Early Concerns about the Automobile." *Environmental History* 6 (2001): 46-74.

Colten, Craig E. "Reintroducing Nature to the City: Wetlands in New Orleans." *Environmental History* 7 (2002): 226-246.

Colten, Craig E., "Chicago's Waste Lands: Refuse Disposal and Urban Growth, 1840-1990." *Journal of Historical Geography* 20 (1994): 124-142.

Melosi, Martin V. "The Place of the City in Environmental History." *Environmental History Review* (Spring 1993), pp. 1-23.

Rosen, Christine Meisner, "Noisome, Noxious, and Offensive Vapors, Fumes and Stenches in American Towns and Cities, 1840-1865," *Historical Geography* 25 (1997): 49-82.

Davis, Devra. "Where I Come From." In *When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle Against Pollution*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002.

For Review

Tarr, Joel A. *The Search for the Ultimate Sink: Urban Pollution in Historical Perspective*. Akron, University of Akron Press, 1996.

Rosen, Christine Meisner and Joel Arthur Tarr, eds. *The Environment and the City: A Special Issue of the Journal of Urban History* 20.3 (May 1994).

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1962.

Melosi, Martin. *Effluent America: Cities, Industry, Energy and the Environment*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001.

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

March 1: Wildernesses, Parks, Law, Ethics, and the Land.

Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." with commentary. *Environmental History* 1 (1996): 7-28.

Reich, Justin. "Re-Creating Wilderness: Shaping Narratives and Landscapes in Shenandoah National Park." *Environmental History* 6 (2001): 95-117.

DeLuca, Kevin and Anne Demo. "Imagining Nature and Erasing Class and Race: Carleton Watkins, John Muir and the Construction of Wilderness." *Environmental History* 6 (2001): 541-560.

Abbey, Edward. "Polemic: Industrial Tourism and the National Parks." In *Desert Solitaire*.

Selections from Beinart, William and Peter Coates, *Environment and History: The Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa*.

Selections from John Richards, *Law, Property and the Environment*.

Leopold, Aldo. Part IV of *A Sand County Almanac with Essays on Conservation from Round River*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966.

For Review:

Sellars, Richard West. *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Oelschlaeger, Max. *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Nash, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*.

Richards, John F., ed. *Land, Property, and the Environment*. Oakland, CA: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 2002.

March 8 Spring Break.

March 15: Presentations of Research Prospectus.

Weeks of **March 22 and 29:** Individual Meetings, Schedule One Hour.

April 5, 12 and 19: Presentations.