

Jonathan Spiro
The Conservation Movement in the U. S.
Castleton College, 2004

"We have met the enemy, and he is us."
(Pogo)

Employing the premise that we can learn a great deal about both history and the environment by studying the two together, this course explores the shifting attitudes toward nature held by Americans as the United States expanded across the continent. We will become familiar with the seminal works and activities of the nation's leading conservationists, and thereby trace the history of the movement as it evolved through the stages of conservationism, preservationism, and environmentalism.

History 3170 is an officially designated Writing-Intensive course, which means that (a) you will have many opportunities this semester to express yourself in writing, and (b) passing this course satisfies part of Castleton's writing requirement. To improve your chances of meeting that requirement, the professor may direct you to meet regularly with a tutor at the Writing Clinic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Quizzes and Written Assignments (50%)
- 2 Historiography Exercises (10%) (Oct. 14, Dec. 5)
- Film Assignment (5%)
- Attendance and participation (20%)
- Final (15%) (Dec. 16)

Note: There are no make-up quizzes; if you miss a quiz you will receive a score of 0.

: Written Assignments are due at the beginning of class; one letter grade is deducted for every day an Assignment is late.

READINGS

Purchase:

- Carolyn Merchant, *Major Problems in American Environmental History*
- Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*
- William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*
- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*
- John Muir, *The Wild Muir*
- Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*
- Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*
- James Lovelock, *Gaia*

On Reserve:

- George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature*
- Frederick J. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier"
- Robert Marshall, "Wilderness"
- Wallace Stegner, "The Meaning of Wilderness"

- Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*
- Club of Rome, *The Limits of Growth*
- Gerald O. Barney, “A Troubled Future”
- E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*
- Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*
- Paul Ehrlich, “Nuclear Winter”
- Edward O. Wilson, “Species Extinction”
- Edward Abbey, “Monkeywrenching”
- John H. Adams, “Future Environmental Challenges”

GRADING SCALE

90-100 = A
 80 - 89 = B
 70 - 79 = C
 50 - 69 = D

SCHEDULE

(Readings must be completed before class on the day they are assigned)

INTRODUCTION

Tues, Aug 26: Introduction

THE NEW WORLD

Thur, Aug 28: Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism* (chs. 1, 2)

Tues, Sept 2: Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism* (chs. 7, 8, 9)

THE COLONISTS

Thur, Sept 4: William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (chs. 2, 4)

Tues, Sept 9: William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (chs. 6, 8)

THE EARLY REPUBLIC

Thur, Sept 11: Avery Craven, “Exhausted Soils” (MP4)
 : Eugene Genovese, “Soils Abused” (MP7)

PROTO-CONSERVATIONISTS

Tues, Sept 16: Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Economy, Where I Lived, Solitude, Baker Farm, Spring)

Thur, Sept 18: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "On Nature and Wealth" (MP6)

Tues, Sept 23: George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature*

THE CONQUEST OF THE WEST

Thur, Sept 25: Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History"

Tues, Sept 30: Robert Kelley, "Miners Encounter Farmers" (MP8)

Thur, Oct 2: Donald Worster, "Cowboy Ecology" (MP9)

THE CONSERVATIONISTS

Tues, Oct 14: Bernhard Fernow, "The Economics of Forestry" (MP10)

: Theodore Roosevelt, "Conservation" (MP10)

: Gifford Pinchot, "Origins of the Conservation Movement" (MP10)

Thur, Oct 16: Samuel Hays, "Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency" (MP10)

THE PRESERVATIONISTS

Tues, Oct 21: John Muir, *The Wild Muir* (Blind!, The Brink of Yosemite Fall, An Interview with a Bear, The Snow Avalanche Ride, Rattlesnakes, A Geologist's Winter Walk, The Tree Ride, Stickeen)

Thur, Oct 23: Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac* (January Thaw, The Geese Return, Draba, Sky Dance, Back from the Argentine, Prairie Birthday, The Green Pasture, A Mighty Fortress, Home Range)

Tues, Oct 28: Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac* (Marshland Elegy, Thinking Like a Mountain, Cheat Takes Over, The Land Ethic)

Thur, Oct 30: Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac* (Wilderness)

: Robert Marshall, "Wilderness"

: Wallace Stegner, "The Meaning of Wilderness"

THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Tues, Nov 4: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (chs. 1-8)

Thur, Nov 6: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (chs. 11, 12, 14). [In-class writing-intensive essay]

Tues, Nov 11: Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*

: Club of Rome, *The Limits of Growth*

: Gerald O. Barney, “A Troubled Future”

THE ENVIRONMENTALISTS

Thur, Nov 13: Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*

Tues, Nov 18: E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful*

Thur, Nov 20: Paul Ehrlich, “Nuclear Winter”

CONSERVATIVE BACKLASH

Tues, Nov 25: Truax

Tues, Dec 2: The Environment: different viewpoints

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Thur, Dec 4: Edward O. Wilson, “Species Extinction”

Tues, Dec 9: James Lovelock, *Gaia* (chs. 1, 3, 4, 7, 9)

Thur, Dec 11: John H. Adams, “Future Environmental Challenges”
: Edward Abbey, “Monkeywrenching”