

Stewart

Office: 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor /Bond Hall  
Phone: 650-3455

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### *American Environmental History*

This course will address basic problems in American environmental history, and will proceed both chronologically and topically. "Environmental history," conceived broadly, is the history of the role and place of nature in American culture. We will read and discuss several standard works in environmental history and will consider environmental history as a developing field. The course will serve as an introduction to this new but now well-established field and will also help you acquire the toolbox in the field you may need to add environmental history to your research and writing in other fields.

#### *Requirements:*

The following books are required, are available in the campus bookstore as well as on reserve:

- 🌐 J.R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (W.W. Norton, 2001).
- 🌐 Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1998).
- 🌐 Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge, 2001).
- 🌐 Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (University Press of Kansas, 2001).
- 🌐 Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (University of California Press, 1997).
- 🌐 Jennifer Price, *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America* (Basic Books)

Nine class sessions are scheduled: The first eight will be devoted to discussions of the required readings; the last to presentation of your papers.

1) Sixty percent of your grade will be contingent on your participation in seminar discussions and on the quality of two 2-4 page, single-spaced typed papers: one on one of the required readings, and another on the one supplementary reading you will be required to read (marked with an \* below). These papers should review succinctly the main argument and content of the reading and connect this reading to related historiography and to larger questions in the field. The paper should be especially attentive to questions that we will discuss during the relevant class meeting.

I will provide you in advance with questions to focus your preparation for the seminar sessions and will also advise about the supplementary readings. You will also be required to prepare a short (ten minutes) presentation to the seminar on the supplementary reading you have reviewed.

2) You will also be required to complete a 15-20 page paper and present a summary of your paper to the seminar at the last class session. The content of this paper will be located around an environmental history document of your choice, which should be related to one of the topical areas we review during our seminar meetings. You will need to edit the document, place it in its historical context, and interpret it in terms of larger questions and of several related studies in environmental history. You can use titles listed in the "recommended reading" sections to get you started on secondary readings; I will be glad to provide suggestions upon request. You must discuss and clear with me the document that will be the focus of your paper, and should do so *before the end of the fifth week* of the quarter. Please follow a standard guide to humanities or social science footnotes and bibliography.

I am aware that some of you are graduate students in fields other than history, and will work with you to accommodate your disciplinary orientation - environmental history is an interdisciplinary field, and your perspective can add something to those brought to the subject by historians.

Your presentation at the end of the quarter should be no more than ten minutes long (remember that a double-spaced, typed page takes 2 - 2 1/2 minutes to read at a reasonable pace). Though this presentation should be based on your paper, it should constitute a separate preparation. I will explain in class the guidelines for this presentation.

### *I. Introduction to Environmental History*

#### Required:

Stewart, "Environmental History: Profile of a Developing Field" *The History Teacher* 31 (May 1998): 351-368 (copy also on reserve).

#### Recommended:

Ted Steinberg, "Down to Earth: Nature, Agency, and Power in History," *American Historical Review* 109 (2002).

Hal Rothman, "Conceptualizing the Real: Environmental History and American Studies," *American Quarterly* 54 (September 54): 485-497.

Michael Williams, "The Relations of Environmental History and Historical Geography," *Journal of Historical Geography* 20 (1994): 3-21.

Char Miller and Hal Rothman, eds, *Out of the Woods: Essays in Environmental History* (1997).

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

Peter Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America*.

Donald Worster, "Doing Environmental History," in Worster, ed., *Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*, 289-308 (look also at other essays in this collection).

Virginia Scharff, "Are Earth Girls Easy? Ecofeminism, Women's History and Environmental History," *Journal of Women's History* 7 (Summer 1995): 164-175.

Melissa Leach and Cathy Green, "Gender and Environmental History," *Environment and History* 3 (October 1997): 343-70.

James O' Connor, "What is Environmental History? Why Environmental History?" *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 8 (June 1997): 3-29.

Alfred W. Crosby, "The Past and Present of Environmental History," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 1177-1190.

Alan Taylor, "Unnatural Inequalities: Social and Environmental Histories," *Environmental History* 1 (1996): 6-19.

Jeffrey Stine and Joel Tarr, "At the Intersection of Histories: Technology and the Environment," *Technology and Culture* 39 (1998): 601-640.

Mart Stewart, "Southern Environmental History," in *A Companion to the American South* (Blackwell, 2002).

## II. The Big Picture?

### Required:

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

### Recommended:

\*Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*.

J. Donald Hughes, *And Environmental History of the World: Humankind's Changing Role in the Community of Life* (2001)

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (1998).

Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*.

Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility*, 51-91.

Peter J. Bowler, *The Norton History of the Environmental Sciences*.

Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England*.

Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests, the Shadow of Civilization*.

Steven Pyne, *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire* (1982); *World Fire: The Culture of Fire on Earth* (1995); and *Vestal Fire: And Environmental History, Told through Fire, of Europe and Europe's Encounter with the World* (1998).

Richard Grove, *Ecology, Climate and Empire: Colonialism and Global Environmental History 1400-1940* (1997).

## III. And the Small One

### Required:

Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1998).

### Recommended:

\*Richard Preston, *The Hot Zone* (1994).

Suellen Hoy, *Chasing Dirt: The American Pursuit of Cleanliness* (1995)  
 Vera Norwood, *Made From this Earth: American Women and Nature* (1993)  
 Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the 'Immigrant Menace'* (1994)  
 Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1999).  
 Alice Hamilton, *Exploring the Dangerous Trades* (1943).

#### IV. Purity and Danger: Making Toxins and Discovering Pollution

##### Required:

Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring* (2001)

##### Recommended:

\*Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966).

Thomas R. Dunlop, *DDT: Scientists, Citizens, and Public Policy*.

Martin V. Melosi, *Garbage in the Cities* (1981).

Martin V. Melosi, *Effluent America: Cities, Industry, Energy, and the Environment* (2001)

Joel Tarr, *The Search for the Ultimate Sink: Urban Pollution in Historical Perspective* (1996).

Hugh S. Gorman, *Redefining Efficiency: Pollution Concerns, Regulatory Mechanisms, and Technological Change in the U.S. Petroleum Industry* (2001).

Craig Colten and Peter Skinner, *The Road to Love Canal: Managing Industrial Waste Before EPA* (1996).

Andrew Hurley, *Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980* (1995)

Christopher Sellers, *Hazards of the Job: From Industrial Disease to Environmental Health Science* (1999).

#### V. Environmental Thought and Politics in Twentieth Century America

##### 1. Required:

Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (2001).

##### Recommended:

\*Warren J. Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry, 1966-1988* (1989)

Adam Rome, "'Give Earth a Chance': The Environmental Movement and the Sixties," *Journal of American History* 90 (September 2003).

Papers in "The Emergence of Ecology in the Twentieth Century," in Carolyn Merchant, ed., *Major Problems in American Environmental History*; and Worster, *Nature's Economy* (2d edition!), 189-434, with especial attention to 339-434.

Richard Grove, "Origins of Western Environmentalism," *Scientific American* 257 (July 1992): 42-47.

Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*.

Robert Gottlieb, *Environmentalism Unbound: Exploring New Pathways for Change* (2001)

Thomas Dunlap, *Saving America's Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850-1990*.

John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*.

Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (3d ed.).

Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985*.

Frank B. Vinson, *Conservation and the South, 1890-1920*.

Lawrence Rakestraw, *A History of Forest Conservation in the Pacific Northwest, 1891-1913*.

Susan Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs: Earth First! and the Environmental Movement* (1993)

John F. Flancher, "Salmon, Dams, and Concepts of Nature on the Columbia Plain, 1930-1980" (unpub. M.A. thesis, Western Washington University, 1993).

#### ***VI. Environmentalism and Tourism in Modern America***

##### **Required:**

Hal K Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (2000).

##### **Recommended:**

\*Marquerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (2001).

Margaret Lynn Brown, *The Wild East: A Biography of the Great Smoky Mountains* (2001).

Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature from Disney to the Exxon Valdez*.

Bill McKibben, *The Age of Missing Information*.

#### ***VII. Imagine American Environmental History with the "America" Removed***

##### **Required:**

Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian-Atlantic Forest* (1997). (selected portions)

##### **Recommended:**

\*Arundhati Roy, *Power Politics* (South End Press, 2001).

Richard Tucker, *Insatiable Appetites: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World* (University of California Press, 2000).

#### ***VIII. Nature and Culture in Postmodern America***

##### **Required:**

\*Jennifer Price, *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America* (1999).

##### **Recommended:**

- \*Greg Mitman, *Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film* (1999).
- Mike Davis, *The Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (1997).
- Benjamin Botkin, *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*.
- Andrew Ross, *Strange Weather*.
- Dan Carter, "The Transformation of a Klansman," *New York Times*, October 4, 1991, A19.
- Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature*.
- Ralph H. Lutts, "The Trouble with Bambi: Walt Disney's Bambi and the American Vision of Nature," *Forest and Conservation History* 36 (1992): 160-171.
- Ross Gelbspan, *The Heat is On* (1997)
- Mart Stewart, "'Let Us Begin with the Weather?': Climate, Race, and Cultural Distinctiveness in the American South," in *Nature and Society in Historical Context*, ed. Mikuláš Teich and Roy Porter (Cambridge, 1997).
- Annie Gilbert Coleman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Skiing," *Pacific Historical Review* 65 (November 1996): 583-614.
- William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* (1995).
- Reid Coen, "Nature Prescribed: The Initial North Cascades National Park Complex Interpretive Program," Unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of History, Western Washington University.