

"History begins only at the point where things go wrong; history is born only with trouble, with perplexity, with regret. So that hard on the heels of the word Why comes the sly and wistful word If. If it had not been for...If only...Those useless Ifs of history...[H]istory is that impossible thing: the attempt to give an account, with incomplete knowledge, of actions themselves undertaken with incomplete knowledge. So that it teaches us no short-cuts to Salvation, no recipe for a New World, only the dogged and patient art of making do. I taught you that by for ever attempting to explain we may come, not to an Explanation, but to a knowledge of the limits of our power to explain. Yes, yes, the past gets in the way; it trips us up, bogs us down; it complicates, makes difficult. But to ignore this is folly, because, above all, what history teaches us is to avoid illusion and make-believe, to lay aside dreams, moonshine, cure-alls, wonder-workings, pie-in-the-sky--to be realistic."---Graham Swift, Waterland (1983)

"**Nature** is perhaps the most complex word in the language....Any full history of the uses of **nature** would be a history of a large part of human thought."--Raymond Williams, Keywords (1976).

History 222--Introduction to Environmental History

Prof. Kathryn Morse
Middlebury College, Fall 1997
Lectures: Tuesday/Thursday 8:25-9:15
Munroe Lecture Hall
Discussion sections: Fridays as assigned.

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Office Hours: Tues 2-4; Wed. 2:30-4; Thurs. 10-12, **And By Appointment.**

Lower Freeman 3 (From parking lot go in front door, turn left and go straight through door directly ahead. First cubicle by door on right).

Course Description: This is a semester-long survey of the environmental history of the United States from European/Native American contact through the modern environmental movement. The first goal of the course is to introduce students to the major themes, periods, and topics of American environmental history, both as an academic discipline and as a way of understanding human interactions with the environment; the second goal is for students to develop critical reading, writing, and thinking skills with regard to the interactions between humans and their physical environment in the American past.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend all lectures and discussion sections, and to complete reading and writing assignments. Active participation in discussions is expected and will be taken into consideration in grading, as indicated below.

Exams: There will be a two-part mid-term exam on Thurs. Oct. 9, consisting of a take home essay exam (questions to be handed out in advance), to be turned in at class time. The in-class portion will consist of brief identifications and map questions. The final exam is on Monday Dec. 15. It will consist of essay questions covering the course as a whole, and identifications and map questions from the second half of the course.

Writing Assignments: Short Essays (2-3 pages, typed/printed, double-spaced). As part of preparation for discussion, you will turn in 3 (three) short essays based on weekly readings, due in section on Friday the week that the chosen readings are discussed (NOT after the discussion has taken place). You may pick the weeks in which you write essays, but at least one essay must be turned in before the mid-term, and a second essay by Thanksgiving break. The third essay must be turned in by the last discussion on Friday Dec. 5. I will not accept three essays at the end of the semester.

The purpose of these essays is to get you to think about the readings, and to put your thoughts down on paper in clear, well-written form, an act that will give you a foundation from which to speak in class. The choice of which essays you write, as well as their subjects, are limited only by your imagination. Be creative! However, each essay must focus in some way on issues or questions raised by the class readings themselves. What questions do the readings raise for you? What is the author's argument, and do you agree with it? Why or why not? Essays may include reference to other readings you have done and to personal experience.

Questions will be handed out each week to guide your reading for the following week. These questions may also serve as a starting point for that week's short essay.

Grades will be apportioned as follows: Mid-Term Exam, 25%; Final Exam, 30%; Short Essays, 10% each (total of 30%); Discussion Participation and Attendance, 15%.

Readings and other materials:

The following required readings are available for purchase at the College Bookstore. They have also been placed on Reserve at Starr Library.

1. Xeroxed reader for HI 222 (contains 7 articles, one to be read the first week).
2. Rand McNally's Cosmopolitan Series Map of the United States
3. Carolyn Merchant, ed. Major Problems in American Environmental History: Documents and Essays (a general reader we will draw from at various points during the course).
4. Alfred W. Crosby, Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900
5. Richard White, Land Use, Environment, and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington
6. Charles E. Rosenberg, The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866
7. William Cronon, Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West
8. Donald Worster, Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s
9. Richard White, The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River
10. Andrew Hurley, Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary,

Indiana, 1945-1980

11. Jonathan Harr, A Civil Action

Schedule and Readings:

Week 1: Sept. 8-12. Introduction and Contact.

Readings: Alfred Crosby, Ecological Imperialism, Prologue, Chapters 1-2, 6-9, 11-12.

In xeroxed reader: Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology" (first reading in packet).

Week 2: Sept. 15-19. Co-invasion and Environmental Change; Natives' Work, Euro-Americans' Work

Readings: Richard White, Land Use, Environment and Social Change, Introduction, Chapters 1-4.

Richard White, The Organic Machine, Chapter 1.

In xeroxed reader: Court Case: Johnson v. McIntosh (second to last reading in packet).

Week 3: Sept. 22-26. Changes in the Land; Industrial Revolutions and Urban Nature

Charles Rosenberg, The Cholera Years, Part 1 (pp. 1-98) and Part 3 (pp. 175-225).

Richard White, The Organic Machine, Chapter 2.

In Merchant, Major Problems, pp. 384-385 (F. Law Olmsted).

Week 4: Sept. 29-Oct. 3. City and Country; Urban Economies, Romantic Reactions

William Cronon, Nature's Metropolis, Prologue and Chapters 1-3; **and EITHER** Chapter 4 (lumber) **OR** Chapter 5 (meat).

Week 5: Oct. 6-10. Tues: Hunters and Hunted

Mid-Term Exam: Thurs. Oct. 9. Bring take-home exam to Thurs. class. In-class portion of exam in Thurs. class (maps and identifications).

Friday sections: Film: "The Wilderness Idea." (for Muir, look at Merchant, Major Problems, 391-392; for Pinchot, pp. 356-357).

Week 6: Oct. 13-15. Tues. lecture only. Conservation I: Responses to the Great Harvest.

Fall Break

Week 7: Oct. 20-24. Conservation II: Progressives and the Gospel of Efficiency

In Merchant, Major Problems, pp. 340-345 (Marsh and Powell documents); pp. 350-352 (T. Roosevelt); pp. 418-420 (Jane Addams); pp. 489-391 (FDR on Boulder Dam).

Richard White, The Organic Machine, ch. 3-4.
Richard White, Land Use, Environment, and Social Change, ch. 5-6.
Film: "The Columbia."

Week 8: Oct. 27-31. Planning and Disaster: Dust Bowl, New Deal, TVA.
Readings: Donald Worster, Dust Bowl, Intro., Parts 1 and 2 (pp. 1-97); Part 5 and Epilogue (pp. 181-243).
In Merchant, Major Problems, pp. 323-336 (Cronon, "Telling Stories.")
Film: "The Plow that Broke the Plains."

Week 9: Nov. 3-7. World War II and Environmental Crisis;
Readings: In xeroxed reader: Edmund Russell, "'Speaking of Annihilation.'" (second item in packet).
In Merchant, Major Problems, pp. 450-460 (Tansley, Lindeman, Leopold, Odum, Pickett and White); pp. 493-496 (Rachel Carson); pp. 498-500 (NEPA, 1969)

Week 10: Nov. 10-14. Wilderness, Cities, and Suburbs
Readings: Andrew Hurley, Environmental Inequalities.

Week 11: Nov. 17-21. Environmentalism and Environmental Conflict: From Earth Day to Forest Crisis.
Readings: In xeroxed reader: James Proctor, "Whose Nature?" (fourth item in packet); Michael Pollan, "The Idea of a Garden" (fifth item in packet).

Week 12: Nov. 24-25. THURS./FRI. Schedule: Lecture and Discussions.
Monday Lecture: Topic TBA
Readings for Tuesday discussion: In xeroxed reader: Lyng vs. Northwest Indian Cemetary Protective Assoc. (last in packet); in Merchant, Major Problems, pp. 500-501 (Hopi Leaders).

Happy Thanksgiving--take Jonathan Harr's A Civil Action with you! A good read!

Week 13: Dec. 1-5. Reagan Era Politics; New Natures and New Values
Readings: Jonathan Harr, A Civil Action.
In xeroxed reader: Jennifer Price, "Looking for Nature at the Mall" (third in packet).

DEC. 15. 9 a.m. Final Examination.