

History 9833A

Environmental History

Mondays, 9:30-11:30am

LH1218

(fall term only)

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Introduction

Environmental history considers how humans have acted toward and thought about nature through time, and how – sometimes as a result of humans – nature itself has changed. Besides introducing the main concepts and debates in the field, His9833A will trace a global environmental history, with special emphasis on the past two centuries and on Canada.

There are no texts to be purchased. All required readings will be made available on one-day reserve, on the internet, or through the instructor.

Course requirements

Seminar participation – 30%

This is a seminar course, and student participation is essential to its success. Students are expected to read all assigned readings and participate in each class. Note that students will be expected to present their draft reflection piece on 14 October and their draft research essay on 6 December, for class discussion.

Reflection piece – 20%

draft due 14 October / final version due 24 October

Each member of the seminar will write a 1000-1250 word (4-5 page) essay on one of the following works in global environmental history, available from Western Libraries. This is not to be a formal, academic

book review *per se*, but rather a piece of what Stephen Pyne, in the reading for 17 October, calls “serious nonfiction.” The students’ draft pieces, submitted by email to the instructor by 14 October, will be discussed in the 18 October class that considers environmental history in terms both of scale and as literature.

- David Christian, *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
- J. Donald Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World: Humankind's Changing Role in the Community of Life* (London: Routledge, 2009).
- Gilbert F. LaFreniere, *The Decline of Nature: Environmental History and the Western Worldview* (Bethesda, MD : Academica Press, 2007).
- Stephen Mosley, *The Environment in World History* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
- J.R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Norton, 2000).
- Anthony N. Penna, *The Human Footprint: A Global Environmental History* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
- Joachim Radkau, *Nature and Power: A Global History of the Environment*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Washington, DC and Cambridge: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- John F. Richards, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
- Edmund Russell, *Evolutionary History: Uniting History and Biology to Understand Life on Earth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- I.G. Simmons, *Global Environmental History: 10,000 BC to AD 2000* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).
- Vaclav Smil, *Energy in World History* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

Research essay – 50%

draft introduced in class 5 Dec / final essay due 12 December

Students are to write a 5000-6000 word (20-25 page) major research paper, based on primary sources, on a topic to be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. In keeping with the course, the essay can be on any period and place in history, large or small. Bear in mind the importance of having a manageable topic, however, as well as an available and manageable source base.

University Senate’s Statement on Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Schedule and readings

1. 12 September – **Introduction**
2. 19 September – **Methods and Meanings**
 - Donald Worster, "Ice, Worms, and Dirt: The Power of Nature in North American History," *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Toronto: Nelson, 2009), 24-33.
 - Alan MacEachern, "An Introduction: In Theory and Practice," *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Toronto: Nelson, 2009), ix-xv.
 - William J. Turkel, "Every Place is an Archive: Environmental History and the Interpretation of Physical Evidence," *Rethinking History* 10 no.2 (June 2006), 259-76.
 - Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde, "The Problem of the Problem of Environmental History: A Re-reading of the Field," *Environmental History* 12 (January 2007), 107-30.
3. 26 September – **Ideas of Nature**
 - Peter Coates, *Nature: Western Attitudes Since Ancient Times* (London: Polity Press, 1998). [on reserve]
 - Donald W. Meinig, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979), 1-7.
http://www.amazon.com/Interpretation-Ordinary-Landscapes-Geographical-Essays/dp/0195025369#reader_0195025369
 - Clarence J. Glacken, "Preface," *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), vii-xvi.
http://books.google.com/books?id=awy6diM1E9IC&printsec=frontcover&dq=traces+on+the+rhodian+shor+e&hl=en&ei=uBeOTJmhEdC2ngfchMHBDA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false
 - Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science*, 155 no.3767 (10 March 1967), 1203-7.
4. 3 October – **First Nations, Europeans, and Nature**
 - Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, & Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005). [on reserve]
 - Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Voyages, the Columbian Exchange, and Their Historians* (Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 1987). [25 pages]
<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb03124.0001.001>
 - Lyle Dick, "People and Animals in the Arctic: Mediating Between Indigenous and Western Knowledge," *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Toronto: Nelson, 2009), 76-101.
5. 10 October – **Thanksgiving – no class**
14 October – *draft of reflection pieces due*

6. 17 October – **Scale // (Environmental) History as Literature**
discuss draft reflection pieces
- Kenneth Pomeranz, "World History and Environmental History," *The Environment and World History*, eds. Edmund Burke III and Kenneth Pomeranz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 3-19.
 - Dan Flores, "Place: An Argument for Bioregional History." *Environmental History Review* 18, no. 4 (1994), 1-18.
 - Stephen J. Pyne, *Voice and Vision: A Guide to Writing History and Other Serious Nonfiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 1-35 and 277-95.
 - William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative" *Journal of American History* 78 (1992), 1347-76.
7. 24 October – **The Commons**
reflection piece due
- Dean Bavington, *Managed Annihilation: An Unnatural History of the Newfoundland Cod Collapse* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010). [on reserve]
 - Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science*, 162 (1968), 1243-8.
 - Arthur F. McEvoy, "Toward an Interactive Theory of Nature and Culture: Ecology, Production, and Cognition in the California Fishing Industry," *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*, ed. Donald Worster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 211-29.
 - Sean Cadigan, "The Moral Economy of the Commons: Ecology and Equity in the Newfoundland Cod Fishery, 1815-1855," *Labour* 43 (Spring 1999), 9-42.
8. 31 October – **Land and agriculture**
- James C. Scott, "Introduction" and "Nature and Space," *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-52.
 - Thomas F. McIlwraith, "Surveys and Place Names," *Looking for Old Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 50-70.
 - Ronald Rees, "The Survey and the Settlement Plan," *New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home* (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992), 60-7.
 - David E. Nye, "Technology, Nature, and American Origin Stories." *Environmental History* 8 no. 1 (2003), 8-25.
9. 7 November – **Industry**
- Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995). [113 pages]
 - Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 1-23, 53-102, 137-62. [on reserve]
 - John Bellamy Foster, "Ecological Conditions before the Industrial Revolution" and "At the Time of the Industrial Revolution," *The Vulnerable Planet: A Short Economic History of the Environment* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994), 34-68.

10. 14 November – **Science**

- Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985 [1977]). [on reserve]
- David Demeritt, "Ecology, Objectivity and Critique in Writings on Nature and Human Societies," *Journal of Historical Geography* 20 no. 1 (1994), 22-37.
- Edmund Russell, "Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field," *Environmental History* 8 (April 2003), 204-28.

11. 21 November – **Cities**

- *Metropolitan Natures: Environmental Histories of Montreal*, eds. Stephane Castonguay and Michele Degenais (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011). [on reserve]
- Joel Tarr, "The Search for the Ultimate Sink: Urban Air, Land, and Water Pollution in Historical Perspective," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, vol.51 (Washington, DC: Historical Society of Washington, 1984), 1-29.
- Richard Hoffmann, "Footprint Metaphor and Metabolic Realities: Environmental Impacts of Medieval European Cities," *Natures Past: The Environment and Human History*, ed. Paolo Squatriti (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 288-325.

12. 28 November – **Nature and National Identity**

- Richard White, "The Nationalization of Nature," *Journal of American History* (December 1999), 976-86.
- Stephen J. Pyne, *Awful Splendour: A Fire History of Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), xv-69, 135-9, 437-80. [on reserve]
- Joan M. Schwartz, "The Photograph: Between Landscape and Environment," *Environmental History* 12 no.4 (October 2007), 966-93.
- Alan MacEachern, "Lost in Shipping: Canadian National Parks and the International Donation of Wildlife," *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Toronto: Nelson, 2009), 196-214.

13. 5 December – **The Meaning of Environmentalism**

discuss draft research essays

- William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: WW Norton & Co., 1995), 69-90.
- Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006). [on reserve]

12 December – *research essays due*