

# History 9833A

## People and Nature through Time: Environmental History

Thursdays, 9:30-11:30am, Fall 2014 in 2270D Lawson Hall

Prof. Alan MacEachern

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### Introduction

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

Seminars are built around a series of readings, which together average around 250 pages per week. Copies of all texts will be made available by the instructor, on one-day reserve at Weldon Library, or through the Western Libraries system online. You may wish to consider purchasing any books we read in their entirety.

### Course requirements

#### **Seminar participation – 40%**

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.

#### **Research essay – 50%**

**draft introduced in class 6 November (5%) /**

**final essay due 4 December (45%)**

Students are to write a 20-25 page major research paper, based on primary sources, on a topic to be determined in consultation with me. 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.

Please note that Western Archives has recently received a massive [Environment Canada archival collection](#) related to climate history. The collection could be the basis of any number of potential essay topics.

Also, I am working on an (unrelated) research project into Canada's experience of the 1816 "[Year without a Summer](#)," and would welcome collaborators for what I hope would eventually become a co- or team-written article. If you are interested in writing your research essay on, for example, Nova Scotians' or fur traders' experience of that year, let me know. Of course, it is entirely up to each student whether he/she takes this route, and absolutely no preference will be given to students who do.

### **Research post – 10% due 15 December**

Students are to write a 750-word essay springing from their research essay in some way – whether a direct précis or a deviation from it – for posting on the NiCHE: Network in Canadian History & Environment website, <http://niche-canada.org>. This is not to be a formal, academic essay per se, but rather a piece of what Stephen J. Pyne in *Voice and Vision* (week 10) calls "serious nonfiction." Although the instructor is the director of NiCHE, he does not edit the website, and will leave it to the editor whether the post is considered publishable.

## **Schedule and readings**

Readings are available on the course Owl site, on reserve, on the internet (linked off this syllabus), in the *Method & Meaning* textbook, and/or are available for borrowing from the NiCHE library, through me.

1. **11 Sept – Introduction / 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.
  - ✚ Donald W. Meinig, "[Introduction](#)," *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979), 1-7.
  
2. **18 Sept – First Nations, Europeans, and Nature**
  - ✚ Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, & Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 3-124. [on reserve]
  - ✚ Alfred Crosby, [The Columbian Voyages, the Columbian Exchange, and Their Historians](#) (Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 1987).
  - ✚ Shepard Krech, "Beaver," from *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: WW Norton and Co., 1999), 173-209.



- ✦ Richard White, "The Nationalization of Nature," *Journal of American History* (December 1999), 976-86.
  - ✦ Andrew Baldwin, Laura Cameron, and Audrey Kobayashi, "Introduction: Where is the Great White North? Spatializing History, Historicizing Whiteness," *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 1-15; and Margaret Went, "[They hijacked the humanities, then my canoe](#)," *The Globe and Mail*, 22 Oct 2011.
  - ✦ 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.
8. 30 Oct – **Beasties**  
***Dr. Rebecca Woods, a Lecturer in History at Columbia University, will attend. Dr. Woods is the author of the forthcoming The Herds Shot Round the World: Native Breeds and the British Empire, 1800-1900.***
- ✦ Herbert Guthrie-Smith, *Tutira: The Story of A New Zealand Sheep Station* (U Washington Press 1999 [1921]), prefaces and 179-95.
  - ✦ Philip Armstrong, "Sheepishness," in Annie Potts, Philip Armstrong, and Deidre Brown, *A New Zealand Book of Beasts: Animals in our Culture, History and Everyday Life* (Auckland UP 2013), 33-60.
  - ✦ Rebecca J. H. Woods, "From Colonial Animal to Imperial Edible: Building an Empire of Sheep in New Zealand, c. 1880-1900," forthcoming in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* (35:1) 2015.
9. 6 Nov – **(Environmental) History as Literature**  
***Draft research essay introduced in class***
- ✦ Stephen J. Pyne, *Voice and Vision: A Guide to Writing History and Other Serious Nonfiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009). [on reserve]
  - ✦ William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *Journal of American History* 78 (1992), 1347-76.
10. 13 Nov – **Energy**
- ✦ Vaclav Smil, "World History and Energy," *Encyclopedia of Energy*, vol.6, ed. C. Cleveland (ed. Elsevier, Amsterdam), 549-61.
  - ✦ Richard W. Unger and John Thistle, *Energy Consumption in Canada in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Statistical Outline* (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche Istituto di Studi sulle Società del Mediterraneo , 2013).
  - ✦ Andrew Nikiforuk, "Carbon: A Wedding and a Funeral," *Tar Sands: Dirty Oil and the Future of a Continent* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2008), 117-28.
  - ✦ Sean Kheraj, "Histories of Canadian Environmental Issues, Part 8: Tar Sands," [Nature's Past](#) podcast (38).
11. 20 Nov – **Climate**  
***Dr. Dagomar Degroot, a SSHRC postdoctoral fellow, will attend. Dr. Degroot is the founder of [historicalclimatology.com](#).***
- ✦ Brian Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300-1850* (New York: Basic Books, 2000). [on reserve]

✦ Mark Carey et al., "Forum: Climate Change and Environmental History," [\*Environmental History\*](#) 19 (April 2014): 281-337 and 354-64.

12. 27 Nov – **Meanings of Environmentalism**

✦ George Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 11(1976): 21-36.

✦ 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]

5 Dec – **Research essay due**

15 Dec – **Research post due**

### Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf) .

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 for such checking 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> .