Environmental history considers how humans have acted toward and thought about nature through time, and how nature itself has changed. Besides introducing the main concepts and debates in the field, “People and Nature through Time” traces a global environmental history, with special emphasis on the concept of the Anthropocene - the era in which humans have made intense and effectively permanent environmental changes on a global scale.

Seminars are built around a series of readings, together averaging around 300 pages per week. Readings have been made available on the course Owl site, by the instructor, on 1-day reserve in Weldon Library, on the internet (linked off the syllabus), and/or through the Western Libraries online system.

**Course requirements**

**All assignments will be discussed further in class.**

**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 every class.

Also, every student will be discussion leader for one class, introducing the readings briefly; posing a few questions to start discussion; offering, when necessary, counter-readings of the works under discussion (that is, challenging works that the class accept uncritically, or championing elements of works about which the class have been overcritical); and, at end of class, giving a brief summary of the discussion.

**Images essay – 10% – due 14 Feb**
In week 6, the class discusses images of nature and history, as seen in photographs, film, advertising, etc. Students are to write a 750-word essay on an environmental image of their choice (not discussed in detail in any of the assigned readings for that week’s class), treating the images, as Joan Schwartz suggests, “not as illustrations but as primary sources.”
Major essay – 50% –
draft introduced in class 14 Mar (5%)
final essay due 11 Apr (45%)

Students are to write a 20-25 page major research paper, based on primary sources, on an environmental history topic to be determined 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.

Please note that Western Archives holds a massive Environment Canada archival collection related to climate history. The collection could be the basis of any number of potential essay topics.

Schedule and readings

1 10 Jan – Introductions …& so as not to bury the lede, the Anthropocene
\[ JR McNeill and Peter Engelke, The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene since 1945 (2014), 1-6. [also reserve] \

2 17 Jan – Introducing Environmental History
\[ Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde, "The Problem of the Problem of Environmental History: A Re-reading of the Field," Environmental History 12 (Jan 2007), 107-30. \

3 24 Jan – Indigenous People & Nature
\[ 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 (2009), 76-101. \

4 31 Jan – The Commons
\[ Dean Bavington, Managed Annihilation: An Unnatural History of the Newfoundland Cod Collapse (2010). [also reserve] \
\[ Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” Science, 162 (1968), 1243-8. \
5 7 Feb – Energy
   McNeill and Engelke, *The Great Acceleration*, 7-40. [also reserve]
   Timothy Mitchell, “Carbon Democracy,” *Economy and Society* 38 no.3 (2009), 399-432.

6 14 Feb – Seeing Nature

Reading Week

7 28 Feb – Food & Agriculture

8 7 Mar – Inequality

9 14 Mar – (Environmental) History as Literature / works in progress

10 21 Mar – Cities
    Joanna Dean, Darcy Ingram, and Christabella Sethna, eds., *Animal Metropolis: Histories of Human-Animal Relations in Urban Canada* (2017), introduction, ch.1, 2, 3, 7, 9, and epilogue.


McNeill and Engelke, The Great Acceleration, 103-28. [also reserve]

11 28 Mar – Climate

Sam White, “Introduction” and “Death Follows Us Everywhere,” in A Cold Welcome: The Little Ice Age and Europe’s Encounter with North America (2017), 1-9 and 186-228. [reserve]


Deborah R. Coen, “Big is a Thing of the Past: Climate Change and Methodology in the History of Ideas,” Journal of the History of Ideas 77 no.2 (Apr 2016), 305-21.

McNeill and Engelke, The Great Acceleration, 63-82. [also reserve]

12 4 Apr – Nature & Nation

Claire Elizabeth Campbell, Nature, Place, and Story: Rethinking Historic Sites in Canada (2017). [reserve]


13 11 Apr – Thinking about Nature & History


McNeill and Engelke, The Great Acceleration, 184-211. [also reserve]

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. 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.