

FINAL syllabus

Department of History, Western University

History 3721G – Climate of the Past, Present, & Future

Winter 2018

Fridays 11:30-2:30

~~Social Science Centre 3024~~ Lawson 2270C

Prof. Alan MacEachern

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office hours Wednesdays 12:30-2:30 or by appointment



William Notman, *Young Canada*, 1867

Course description: This seminar course explores the role of climate in history, from the last ice age to the present. Using the tools of environmental history, we examine how the climate has changed, how it has influenced human societies and how, now more than ever, humans are influencing it. Beyond that broad span, the course has three somewhat inter-related emphases:

- ✦ *Canada's relationship with climate.* From Voltaire's description of Canada as "a few acres of snow" to the true North strong and free, climate has figured heavily in our national development and identity.
- ✦ *The development of meteorology and climatology.* Advances in weather-related science in the mid-19th century meant not only that humans were able for the first time to make rudimentary weather predictions, but also that they gained much better understanding of longer-term climate trends.
- ✦ *The discovery of global warming.* Scientists in the 20th century discovered that global temperatures and CO₂ levels were on the rise, coincident with the rise of fossil fuel use. Historical data – whether from ice cores, lake sediments, or more traditional textual sources such as farmer's diaries or photographs showing glacial retreat – has proven critical in documenting and understanding climate change.

Learning outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- ✦ Identify major concepts and periods in the history of climate, climatology, and meteorology,
- ✦ discuss the role of climate in the evolution of Canada's national identity,
- ✦ consider contemporary environmental issues from a long-term perspective,
- ✦ assess and analyze secondary sources, including their argument, methods, strengths, limitations, and significance for the field and/or implications for broader public discourse,
- ✦ assess and analyze primary source texts, utilizing them in two original research essays, and
- ✦ continue to improve your writing skills.

Required text:

- ✦ Spencer Weart, *The Discovery of Global Warming*, revised ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Supplementary course material is available on the course OWL site, on the internet (linked off the syllabus), and/or through the Western Libraries online system.

Grade breakdown:

All assignments will be discussed further in class.

✦ **Participation – 25%**

Student participation is essential to the success of a seminar course. You are expected to read all assigned readings and participate in each class. Attendance is not in and of itself participation: participation demands speaking, and speaking demands knowledge of the material under discussion.

✦ **Primary source research - short essay – 9 February – 10%**

Read a series of excerpts, provided to you by the instructor on the OWL site, of 17th-19th century European explorers, settlers, priests, and others reporting on the weather or climate of Canada. In 750 words, choose one excerpt and discuss how the writer was interpreting Canadian climate and in particular how that interpretation related to understanding of European climate.

or

Read a series of newspaper articles, diary entries, etc. on the web exhibit [Canada's Year without a Summer](#). In 750 words, discuss how the writer(s) interpreted the unusual weather, and climate generally.

✦ **Primary source research - major essay**

Students will utilize primary sources as the foundation of a 2500-word research essay. With the help of the instructor, the student will choose as the source base for the essay one of the [250 journals or letterbooks from the Environment Canada collection at Western Archives](#) or documents related to a defining moment in international discussions on climate change.

Presentation – 9 March – 5%

You will give a 10-minute presentation that introduces your draft research essay, raises any issues you are facing, and opens up discussion where you can seek input for

improvement. No accompanying draft needs to be submitted to either the students or professor, although you are free to provide a handout.

Initial draft – 16 March – 10%

You will submit a draft of your completed essay, which will be graded and returned on 23 March.

Final draft – 6 April – 25%

✦ ***Take-home exam – 13 April – 25%***

This exam will be distributed on 6 April, to be completed and returned within a week.

Students will be given six questions and asked to write essays on three.

The fine print:

Students are required to submit a copy of their written assignment in electronic form through the course OWL site to Turnitin for plagiarism checking. The Faculty of Social Science's policy statement on plagiarism and the use of plagiarism detection software is attached to this syllabus.

No extensions will be granted for late essays, except for reasons defined by Senate regulations. Five percent will be deducted from the essay grade for the first day that any assignment is overdue, three percent each day after (including Saturdays and Sundays).

The [Western Academic Handbook](#) declares that an essay course such as this "must be so structured that the student is required to demonstrate competence in essay writing to pass the course." As such, students must receive a passing grade on the combined value of the two essays to pass the course.

Students with special requirements are advised to contact the [Student Development Centre](#). The SDC will handle all documentation and make arrangements with the instructor for academic accommodation. Students encountering serious problems that might affect their performance in a course should inform Academic Counselling in their home faculty immediately. See also the Faculty of Social Science's policy statement on medical accommodation, which is appended to the plagiarism statement attached.

Schedule and readings:

- ✪ 12 Jan **1. Introduction**
 - Dipesh Chakrabarty, "[The Climate of History: Four Theses](#)," *Critical Inquiry* 35 no.2 (2009), 197-222.

- ✪ 19 Jan **2. Climate: what we know & how we know it**
 - The AAAS Climate Science Panel, [What We Know: The Reality, Risks, and Response to Climate Change](#) (2014).

- ✪ 26 Jan **3. Climate change, adaptability & collapse**
 - Jared Diamond, [Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed](#), revised ed. (New York: Penguin, 2011), ch.8.
 - Joel Berglund, "Did the Medieval Norse Society in Greenland Really Fail?" in *Questioning Collapse: Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire*, eds. Patricia A. McAnany and Norman Yoffee (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 45–70.
 - Claire E. Campbell, "Gateway to a New World: L'Anse aux Meadows," in *Nature, Place, and Story: Rethinking Historic Sites in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 25-53.

- ✪ 2 Feb **4. The Little Ice Age (1): Europe**
 - Morgan Kelly and Cormac Ó Gráda, "[The Waning of the Little Ice Age: Climate Change in Early Modern Europe](#)," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 44/3 (Winter 2014), 301-25.
 - Sam White, "[The Real Little Ice Age](#)," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 44/3 (Winter 2014), 327-52.
 - Morgan Kelly and Cormac Ó Gráda, "[Debating the Little Ice Age](#)," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 45/1 (Summer 2014), 57-68.

- ✪ 9 Feb **5. The Little Ice Age (2): North America**
 - Jason Hall, "[Maliseet Cultivation and Climatic Resilience on the Wəlastəkw/St. John River During the Little Ice Age](#)," *Acadiensis* vol.44 no.2 (Summer/Autumn 2015), 3-25.
 - Thomas Wickman, "['Winters Embittered with Hardships': Severe Cold, Wabanaki Power, and English Adjustments, 1690-1710](#)," *The William and Mary Quarterly* vol.72 no.1 (January 2015), 59-98.
 - Liza Piper, "[Colloquial Meteorology](#)," *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Toronto: Nelson, 2009), 102-23.

- ✪ 16 Feb **6. Climate & identity**
 - Judith Fingard, "[The Winter's Tale: The Seasonal Contours of Pre-Industrial Poverty in British North America, 1815-1860](#)," *Historical Papers of the Canadian Historical Association*, 9 no.1 (1974), 65-94.

- Ken Cruikshank, "[Forest, Stream and ...Snowstorms? Seasonality, Nature, and Mobility on the Intercolonial Railway, 1876-1914](#)," *Moving Natures: Mobility and the Environment in Canadian History*, eds. Ben Bradley, Jay Young, and Colin M. Coates (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2016, 55-78).
- Carl Berger, "The True North Strong and Free," *Nationalism in Canada*, ed, Peter Russell, ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Co., 1966), 3-26.

✿ Reading week

✿ 2 Mar **7. A new science of weather**

- Suzanne Zeller, [Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation](#) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 131-80.

✿ 9 Mar **8. Energy regimes & the birth of the Anthropocene**

- R.W. Sandwell, "An Introduction to Canada's Energy History," in *Powering Up Canada: A History of Power, Fuel, and Energy from 1600* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 3-37.
- Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer, "[The 'Anthropocene'](#)," *Global Change Newsletter* 41(2000), 17-18.

✿ 16 Mar **9. The discovery of global warming (1)**

- Weart, ch.1-4.

✿ 23 Mar **10. The discovery of global warming (2)**

- Weart, ch.5-9.
- Conference proceedings from *The Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security*, Toronto, June 1988, 31-4 and 59-67.

✿ Good Friday

✿ 6 Apr **11. The day after tomorrow**

- James R. Fleming, "[The Climate Engineers](#)," *Wilson Quarterly* 31 (2007), 46-60.
- Laurence C. Smith, "[One if by Land, Two if by Sea](#)," in *The World in 2050: Four Forces Shaping Civilization's Northern Future* (New York: Dutton, 2010), 145-70.
- Selkirk First Nation, [Adapting to Climate Change and Keeping our Traditions](#) (March 2016).

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Prerequisites and Antirequisites:

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

Medical Issues:

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. This site provides links to the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](mailto:MentalHealth@Western), <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or rdashfo@uwo.ca