History 9414B
Landscape and History: England from 1700

Professor Allyson N. May
Office hours: Mondays 11:30-1:30
Tuesdays, 4:30-6:30 pm
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This half-course examines both the forces which created the modern English landscape, from empire and agricultural revolution through urbanization and industrialization, and reactions to the changes themselves, which included a new appreciation of wilderness as well as the long-standing affection for pastoral, cultivated landscapes which continues to underpin definitions of ‘Englishness’ today. It exposes the way in which a rural landscape now celebrated as traditional was in fact the relatively recent product of radical and much-resented innovation, and explores responses to the new reality of a heavily populated industrial urban England. The dual emphasis throughout the course is on the intersection of man and nature and changing perceptions of their combined influence on the English landscape.

Grading scheme:

- Book review (1500 words) 15 %
- General participation 25 %
- Introduction of readings 15 %
- Research paper (6000 words) 45 %

Seminar attendance is mandatory and does not in itself contribute towards the general participation mark. Students are expected to keep weekly reading notes; submission of these notes may be requested at the end of term.

Required texts:


1) Introduction: Man and the ‘Natural’ World

2) The eighteenth-century naturalist: Gilbert White
   Gilbert White, *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789; illustrated ed. London: Thames and Hudson, 2007; also available online)

3) Botany and empire: The gardens of England
   Thomas, chapter V
   Philip Miller, *The Gardener’s Dictionary containing the Methods of Cultivating and Improving the Kitchen Fruit and Flower Garden* (1731; various revised editions available online)

4) ‘Capability for improvement’: The 18th c landscape gardeners

5) Hedgerows and the closure of the landscape
   Whyte, chapters 4 and 5
   John Clare, ‘The Mores’ and ‘The Fallen Elm’

6) ‘Bewailing the rural past’: William Cobden’s *Rural Rides*
   *Rural rides in the counties of Surrey, Kent, Sussex; Hants, Berks, Oxford, Bucks, Wilts, Somerset: Gloucester, Hertford, Salop, Worcester, Stafford, Leicester, Hertford, Essex; Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Nottingham, Lincoln, York, Lancaster, Durham, and Northumberland, in the years 1821, 1822, 1823, 1825, 1826, 1829, 1830, and 1832: with economical and political observations relative to matters applicable to, and illustrated by, the state of those counties respectively* (London: J.M. Dent, [1957–66]; also available online in various editions)

7) Cities and suburbia

8) The railway revolution

9) ‘England is no longer what it was’
George Bourne, *Change in the Village* (London: Duckworth, 1912)

10) ‘Must England’s Beauty Perish?’: G.M. Trevelyan and the countryside
G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History: A survey of six centuries, Chaucer to Queen Victoria* (London: Longmans, Green, 1943)
G.M. Trevelyan, *Must England’s Beauty Perish: A Plea on Behalf of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty* (London: Faber & Gwyer, [1929])

11) Steeple-chasing: England’s Christian landscape
Gerald Cobb, *English cathedrals, the forgotten centuries: restoration and change from 1530 to the present day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980)

Philip Larkin, ‘Church Going’

12) Naturalists and New Romantics?
Roger Deakin, *Notes from Walnut Tree Farm* (London: Penguin, 2009)