



The University of Western Ontario
HISTORY 9833B
Environmental History:
People & Nature through Time
Winter 2021

Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30 (synchronously, on Zoom)

Instructor: Prof. Alan MacEachern

Zoom office hours: Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm

Email: amaceach@uwo.ca

This is a DRAFT syllabus.
(The assignments are unlikely to change but the readings may.)
The final syllabus will be posted on the course OWL site in January.

Course Description:

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 & 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, effectively permanent environmental changes on a global scale.

Course Materials:

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, on the internet (linked off the syllabus), and/or through the Western Libraries online system.

Methods of Evaluation:

Seminar participation – 35%

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. The instructor will give a provisional participation grade to students midway through the course.

Images essay – due 10 Feb – 15%

In week 6, the class discusses images of nature and history, as seen in photographs, film, advertising, etc. Students are to write a 1000-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%

Students are to write a 5-6000 word major research paper, with a primary source component, 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. (Western Library's Archives and Research Collections Centre has a number of collections which connect with environmental history. I will discuss this further in class.)

introduced in class – 17 Mar – 10%

Students will give a 5-minute presentation that introduces their research essay in progress, raises any issues they are facing, and opens up discussion to seek input for improvement. To accompany the presentation, students will provide their classmates and instructor with a single-page, one-sided handout.

final essay – due 14 Apr – 40%

****The fine print:***

All assignments will be discussed further in class.

Essays are to be submitted through the OWL site. There is no need to submit a paper copy.

Late essays are penalized 5% per day. Please come to the instructor with any routine requests for extensions. However, a student's request for accommodation (on medical, non-medical, or compassionate grounds) are to go to the graduate chair, who will consult and communicate with the instructor.

The final date to submit material for the course is 21 April. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Course Schedule and Readings:

1 6 Jan – Introductions

- Graeme Wynn, "Nature and Nation," [*The Nature of Canada*](#), eds. Colin M. Coates and Graeme Wynn (2019), 25-49.
- Timothy LeCain, "Fellow Travelers: The Nonhuman Things that Make Us Human," *The Matter of History: How Things Create the Past* (2017), 1-22.
- Emily O'Gorman and Andrea Gaynor, "More-Than-Human-Histories," [*Environmental History*](#) 25 (2020), 711-35.
- Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde, "The Problem of the Problem of Environmental History: A Re-reading of the Field," [*Environmental History*](#) 12 (2007), 107-30.

2 13 Jan – The Anthropocene

- Selection from Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History, and Us*, trans. David Fernbach (2016 [2015]).
- Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer, "The 'Anthropocene,'" [*Global Change Newsletter*](#) 41 (2000), 17-18.
- Will Steffen, "Commentary," in [*The Future of Nature: Documents of Global Change*](#), eds. Libby Robin, Sverker Sörlin, and Paul Warde (2011), 486-90.

3 **20 Jan – Indigenous People & Nature**

- Selection from Bathsheba Demuth, *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait* (2019).
- 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.
- Shepard Krech, “Beaver,” in *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (1999), 173-209.

4 **27 Jan – Climate**

- Selection from Sam White, [A Cold Welcome: The Little Ice Age and Europe’s Encounter with North America](#) (2017). [reserve]
- Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” [Critical Inquiry](#) 35 no.2 (2009), 197-222.
- Liza Piper, “Climates of Our Times,” [The Nature of Canada](#), eds. Colin M. Coates and Graeme Wynn (2019), 319-34.
- Liza Piper, “Colloquial Meteorology,” [Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History](#), eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (2009), 102-23.

5 **3 Feb – Energy**

- Selection from Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (1995).
- R.W. Sandwell, ed., [Powering Up Canada: A History of Power, Fuel, and Energy from 1600](#) (2016), ch.1.
- Selection from Christopher F. Jones, [Routes of Power: Energy and Modern America](#) (2014).
- Timothy Mitchell, “Carbon Democracy,” [Economy and Society](#) 38 no.3 (2009), 399-432.

6 **10 Feb – Seeing Nature**

- Selection from Finis Dunaway, [Seeing Green: The Use and Abuse of American Environmental Images](#) (2015).
- Joan M. Schwartz, “Photographic Reflections: Nature, Landscape, and Environment,” [Environmental History](#) 12 (2007), 966-93. See also [EH teaching unit](#) for this gallery.
- Colin M. Coates, “Seeing and Not Seeing: Landscape Art as a Historical Source,” [Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History](#), Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel, eds. (2009). 140-57.

Reading Week

7 **24 Feb – Food & Agriculture**

- Selection from George Colpitts, [Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the North American Plains, 1780-1882](#) (2015).
- Donald Worster, [The Good Muck: Toward an Excremental History of China](#) (2017).
- Meredith McKittrick, “Industrial Agriculture,” *A Companion to Global Environmental History*, eds. JR McNeill and Erin Stewart Mauldin (2012), 411-32.

8 **3 Mar – Inequality**

- Selection from Mike Davis, [Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World](#) (2001).
- Selection from Rob Nixon, [Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor](#) (2011).

- Selection from Ingrid RG Waldron, *There's Something in the Water: Environmental Racism in Indigenous and Black Communities* (2018).
 - Watch also *There's Something in the Water*, dirs. Ellen Page and Ian Daniel (2019) on Netflix Canada.

9 10 Mar – Critters

- Selections from Joanna Dean, Darcy Ingram, and Christabella Sethna, eds., [*Animal Metropolis: Histories of Human-Animal Relations in Urban Canada*](#) (2017).
- Erica Fudge, “A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals,” *Representing Animals*, ed. Nigel Rothfels (2002), 3-18.
- Richard Bulliet, “Postdomesticity: Our Lives with Animals,” *Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers: The Past and Future of Human-Animal Relationships* (2005), 1-35.
- Edmund Russell, “Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field,” [*Environmental History*](#) (2003), 204-28.

10 17 Mar – (Environmental) History as Literature / final essay works-in-progress

- Selection from Stephen J. Pyne, *Voice and Vision: A Guide to Writing History and Other Serious Nonfiction* (2009).

11 24 Mar – Environmentalism

- Selection from Tina Loo, [*States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century*](#) (2002).
- William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (1995), 69-90.
- Selections from Jonathan Clapperton and Liza Piper, “In the Shadow of the Green Giants: Environmentalism and Civic Engagement,” [*Environmentalism on the Ground: Small Green and Indigenous Organizing*](#), eds. Jonathan Clapperton and Liza Piper (2019).
- Joanna Dean, “A Gendered Sense of Nature,” [*The Nature of Canada*](#), eds. Colin M. Coates and Graeme Wynn (2019), 281-97.
- Christof mauch, Slow Hope: Rethinking Ecologies of Crisis and Fear,” [*RCC Perspectives*](#) (2019).

12 31 Mar – The Elephant in the World

- Selection from Andreas Malm, *Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency: War Communism in the Twenty-First Century* (2020).
- Selections from “Environmental History in the Era of COVID-19,” [*Environmental History*](#) 25 (2020).

Additional Statements

Accessibility Options:

You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (formerly known as Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. See: <http://success.uwo.ca/academics/sas/index.html>

Request for Accommodations/Medical Issues

Students are entitled to their privacy and consequently they do not need to disclose personal information to their course professors. In the event that students feel the need to discuss personal information, they should see the graduate chair. Unlike undergraduate students, graduate students cannot be referred to Social Science Academic Counselling to have their medical or non-medical circumstances evaluated and to receive a recommendation for accommodation. Those facilities are for undergraduates only, and there is no process beyond the department to secure recommendations for accommodation. Our process is that faculty should deal with routine requests for extensions. However, a student's request for accommodation (on medical, non-medical, compassionate grounds) should go to the graduate chair, Prof. Nancy Rhoden (nrhoden@uwo.ca) who will consult and communicate with faculty. Additionally, faculty and students should communicate with the grad chair about any case in which work is not submitted before grades are due. In the event that the graduate chair is also the course professor, then a request for accommodation can be taken to the department chair.

Copyright

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute lecture notes, wiki material, and other course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without my written consent.

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.

For more information on plagiarism and other scholastic offenses at the graduate level see: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/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 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 are 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 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.

If a History graduate course professor suspects course work of possible plagiarism, or if a graduate supervisor suspects a cognate or thesis of possible plagiarism, the faculty member will meet with the student. If the issue is not resolved, the student then meets with the graduate chair to discuss this situation, and so that the student can present or respond to evidence. Afterwards the graduate chair will make a decision about whether misconduct has occurred and any penalties; this will be communicated in writing to the student within 3 weeks. The student may appeal this decision to the Vice-Provost (Graduate) within 3 weeks of the issuance of the chair's decision. If the student does not

appeal, the Vice-Provost will review the case. The Vice-Provost may confirm, affirm, vary, or overturn the graduate chair's decision or penalty.

Information on the appeals procedures for graduate students can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsgrad.pdf

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their **health and wellness** a priority.

- Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/> and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>
- Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>
- Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

UWO has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social, and academic needs of students, in a confidential environment. The Student Development Centre (SDC) has trained staff and an array of services to help students achieve their personal, academic and professional goals. See: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Heidi Van Galen, Administrative Officer, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84963 or e-mail vangalen@uwo.ca.