

Syllabus

His. 253.01

U.S. Environmental History

*Eastern Connecticut State University
Spring 2008*

Mon. & Wed. 11:00-11:50pm
Web 214

John (**Kinch**) Kincheloe

Ofc. Hrs.:.....Tue. & Thu. 4:00-5:00 pm

Library Coffee Shop

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- History is an attempt to understand the stories of the past. We must not ignore dates and facts, but interpretations define the way we view the world around us.

Course Description

This course is an examination of North American through the lens of the relatively new discipline of Environmental History. The natural world has always played an active role in the events and movements of America, but only recently have historians begun to explore the changing relationships between people and their environments over time. By bringing nature into the study of human history and the human past into the study of nature, we will begin to see the connections and interdependencies between the two that are often overlooked. Focusing on themes of *Consumerism*, *Land usage*, *Industrial expansion*, and *Activism*, we will examine both the impacts that humans have had on nature and the role that nature has played in the actions of humans. It is not the goal of this course to make any of you into environmental fanatics bent on ecotage campaigns. We are simply going to look at mostly familiar events and periods of American history from a different perspective, so as to expand your ability to question everything you know from approaches you may not have previously considered.

Objectives

By the end of the semester you will:

- Construct your own understanding of what role the natural world has played in shaping American history and American society in the 21st century.
- Organize your own ideas on the importance of "Nature," and be able to actively challenge all sides of today's environmental debates and those to come.
- Develop your ability to view events, movements, and issues from multiple perspectives and angles, and be able to argue your ideas from an informed position.

Expectations

- All written and verbal work should demonstrate your best effort to develop your own ideas and arguments on any given subject, and prove your assertions with the evidence you have available.
- The course will be primarily discussion based accompanied by some lecture. Before every class, you are expected to have read the assigned material listed on the syllabus and be ready to take an active part in discussion.

***Quizzes will be given if there is a need to enforce this expectation.*

- Attendance: The Classroom experience is an integral part of this course, and will only serve to benefit you. In addition, it is very difficult to earn a participation grade when one is not present to participate. If legitimate problems arise be sure to contact me promptly so that we may work around them before you get behind.
- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due dates.
Late work will suffer a penalty of one letter grade per day unless a valid excuse is provided BEFORE the assignment is due.
- Any **Cheating or Plagiarism** will result in an immediate **failure** of the course, and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students.
=I do not care what you did before.....this is College and dishonest work will not be tolerated.
Plagiarism = Any utilization of others *language or ideas* (including internet sources) without properly citing the author and the passage from the work.
- All cell phones, pagers, I-pods, Blackberrys, personal video games, and GPS systems must be turned off before the start of class. Students who ignore this policy may be asked to leave the classroom.
- Any students needing special arrangements in test taking or other work need to talk to me well in advance.

Course Materials

- Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History*, Ted Steinberg
- Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, William Cronon
- My First Summer in the Sierra*, John Muir
- U.S. Environmentalism Since 1945: A Brief History with Documents*, Steven Stoll

Assessment *All grades are assigned on a 10 pt. scale.*

20%= Participation

This course will be centered on active engagement of the readings, and therefore requires regular attendance. Students should come to class prepared to contribute with questions and thoughts on the readings.

10%= Annotated Journal

I want you to begin collecting current news and magazine articles addressing only 1 of our major themes in this course (your choice): *Consumerism, Land usage, Industrial expansion, or Activism*. With each clipping, I want you to attach your own typed analysis, no longer than 1 paragraph. Use this opportunity to free-write (still with proper grammar) on ideas that interest you. Keep these annotated clippings bound in a 3-hole paper folder; bring it to every class so we can discuss your findings at any time (even at your own initiative). I will periodically collect these journals without notice or announcement to evaluate your findings.

20%= 2 - 2-4 page essay papers

-Questions will be distributed exactly two weeks before due date, and deal with class readings

25%= 1 – 7-9 page Historical Object Analysis Paper

You will pick 1 “primary thing” and write a mini research paper based upon the object and analyze its historical or practical importance, and how the object can change our understanding.

-Both a proposal and a resource list of 4 secondary sources will be due over the course of the semester.

5%= Presentation

5-10 minute presentation on your research project at the end of the semester.

20%= Final Examination

You will complete a take-home final that will consist of 3 essay questions.

Content:

@ = On WebCT

Jan. 23 W- Intro / Themes

Jan. 25 F- What is Environmental History?

-@-Donald Worster, “Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History,” *Journal of American History*. Vol.76, No. 4 (March, 1990).

Week 1

Prehistory

before 1492

Jan. 28 M- Geography and Geology
-Steinberg: Preface & Prologue

Jan. 30 W- American Indian land use and the myth of the ecological Indian

-Steinberg : Ch. 1= 1-20

-Charles C. Mann, “1491,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 2002): 41-53.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200203/mann>

Feb. 1 F- Discussion Cronon

-Cronon: 3-53

Week 2

European Colonial America and the formation of a new land ethic

1492 - 1820

Feb. 4 M- Ecological Imperialism

-@-Alfred W. Crosby, “Ecological Imperialism,” pp.14-21.

Feb. 6 W- Contact, Jamestown, and the Southern Colonial Experience

-Steinberg: Ch. 2 = 21-38

Feb. 8 F- Struggling agriculture and the New England Colonial Experience

-Cronon: 54-107 & 157-170

Week 3

Feb. 11 M- Wood and Waste: The Forest in early America

-Steinberg: Ch 3: 39-51

-Cronon: 108-126

Feb. 13 W- New England Husbandry (Debate)

-Cronon: 127-156

-@-Brian Donahue, *The Great Meadow*. “Introduction,” pp.1-23.

Receive Paper 1 assignment

Feb. 15 F- NO CLASS

Week 4

Feb. 18 M- NO CLASS

Divergent Regional Economic Environments

1820 - 1870

Feb. 20 W- Market Revolution and the changing landscape of the North

-Steinberg: Ch. 4 = 55-70

-@-Theodore Steinberg: "Dam-Breaking in the 19th-Century Merrimack Valley: Water, social Conflict, and the Waltham-Lowell Mills," *Journal of Social History*. Vol. 24, No. 1, (Autumn, 1990).

Feb. 22 F- Utopianism, and Romanticism

-@-Emerson & Thoreau: pp. 183-188

- Thomas Cole paintings: Examine and be prepared to discuss

<http://www.isu.edu/~wattron/ArtIntro.htm>

Week 5

Feb. 25 M- Agricultural Expansionism and the changing landscape of the South

-Steinberg: Ch. 5 = 71- 88

-Mart Stewart, "From King Cane to King Cotton: Raising Cane in the Old South," *Environmental History*. Vol. 12, No.1.

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/12.1/stewart.html>

Feb. 27 W- The Great War of Resource Control

-Steinberg: Ch. 6 = 89-98

-Lisa Brady, "The Wilderness of War: Nature and Strategy in the American Civil War," *Environmental History*. Vol. 10, No. 3.

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/10.3/brady.html>

Age of Industry

1870-1920

Feb. 29 F- Southern Agricultural survival

-Steinberg: Ch. 7 = 99-107

Paper 1 Due

Week 6

March 3 M- Industrial North

-Steinberg: Ch. 12 = 190-205

Mar. 5 W- City and Country = Chicago

-@-William Cronon, "The Busy Hive," *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. Ch. 7, pp. 310-340.

Choose Historical Object

Mar. 7 F- Wrestling and Resource extraction in the West

-Steinberg: Ch. 8 & 11 = 116-137 & 175-189

-Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." (ch. I)

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/TURNER/>

Week 7

Rise of the Reformers

1870-1920

Mar. 10 M- Engineering an Efficient Urban Environment

-Steinberg: Ch. 10 = 157 - 172

Mar. 12 W- Conservation vs. Preservation

-Steinberg: Ch. 9 = 138-156

- Mar. 14 F- John Muir and the Scientific Romantic Revival
 -Muir: *My First Summer in the Sierras* (All)

-----**Spring Break**-----

Week 8

Struggle in the best and worst of times

1914-1950

- Mar. 24 M- War and the Public Recycling Effort
 -@-Susan Strasser, "Having and Disposing in the new Consumer Culture," *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash*. Ch. 4, pp. 161-201
Receive Paper 2 assignment

- Mar. 26 W- Nature as a consumer resource in the age of Automobiles
 -Steinberg Ch. 13 = 206-225

- Mar. 28 F- Natural Disasters /or/ New Deal
 -@- Donald Worster, "Haskell County Kansas," *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. part 4, pp. 140-180.

Week 9

Post War Era of Consumption and Waste

1945-1962

- Mar. 31 M- Consumer Conformity
 -Steinberg: Ch. 14 = 226-248

- Apr. 2 W- Suburban Sprawl
 -@- Adam Rome, "Introduction," & "Levitt's Progress," *Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*. pp.1-44.

- Apr. 4 F- A Third age of Romanticism
 -Stoll: Ch. 1 = documents 1-6 = 29-53

Week 10

A New Scientific Awareness

1962-1980

- Apr. 7 M- Fears and Dangers
 -Stoll: Intro = 1-27

Paper 2 Due

- Apr. 9 W- Silent Spring- Video
 -Stoll: Ch. 2 = documents 7-9 = 54-66

- Apr. 11 F- Ecology at work
 -Stoll: Ch. 3 = documents 11-15 = 72-91
 -@- Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*. ??????????????????

Week 11

The Green Revolution: Public Involvement

- Apr. 14 M- Student movement
 -Steinberg: Ch. 15 = 239-262
 -@- (New Left) ??????????????????/?

- Apr. 16 W- Green Politics going mainstream
 -Stoll: Ch. 4 = documents 18-21 = 104-116
Secondary sources due for Object Analysis Paper

- Apr. 18 F- Extremism and direct action
 -Stoll: Ch. 4 = documents 22 & 23
 -@- Ecodefense ??????????????????/?

Week 12**Consolidation of the Environmentalism in a Conservative Age****1980-2000**

- Apr. 21 M- Surviving the Regan Revolution
 -@-Robert Gottlieb, "Professionalization and Institutionalization: The Mainstream Groups," *Forcing the Spring*. Ch. 4, pp. 117-161.
- Apr. 23 W- Local movement
 -Stoll: Ch. 5 = documents 24-28 = 127-144
- Apr. 25 F- Issues of Gender, Ethnicity, and Class
 -Stoll: Ch. 5 = documents 29-30 = 144-155
 -@-Suellen Hoy, "Women and City Wastes in the Early Twentieth Century."
 -@-Andrey Hurley, "Blacks and City Wastes in the Late Twentieth Century." pp.434-444.

Week 13

Apr. 28 M- Presentations 1

Apr. 30 W- Presentations 2

- May 2 F- Cold War Fallout and the Environment
 -Lackenbauer and Farish, "The Cold War on Canadian Soil: Militarizing a Northern Environment," *Environmental History*. Vol. 12, No. 4.
<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/12.4/lackenbauer.html>
 -Andrew Jenks, "Model city USA: Then Environmental Cost of Victory in WWII and the Cold War," *Environmental History*. Vol. 12, No. 3.
<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/12.3/jenks.htm>

Week 14

- May 5 M- Rise of Awareness
 -Stoll: Ch. 2 & 3 = documents 10, 16, 17
 -@-Richard White "The Nationalization of Nature," *Journal of American History*. Vol. 86, No.3, (Dec. 1999).

OBJECT ANALYSIS PAPER DUE

- May 7 W- Activism in a world of Global Awareness
 -Ch. 31: 957-970, 975-986
 -Kyoto Agreement: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>

Final Exam

-----I reserve the right to modify this Syllabus at any time during the semester-----

Kinch's Writing Guidelines

The purpose of writing is to communicate ideas to the reader in a clear and straightforward way. You should express yourself in the briefest manner possible, while using significant evidence to prove the main thesis. What follows is a general outline of rules that, if followed, will produce a quality paper worthy of an Eastern student.

(Summaries do not cut it here. Your ideas should be original!)

- Before writing:
 - Decide on the main thesis of the paper.
(What you are trying to prove.)
*To write an effective paper you must make an **Argument**.*
Original ideas (no regurgitations)
 - Decide what evidence you are going to use.
You have limited space. *Use it well.*

- Structure
 - Title
Catch the reader's attention
 - Introduction
Begin the paper by stating your thesis (*state your argument*).
Explain what you are arguing.
 - Body
Prove you argument, using examples from the readings.
Focus your information on proving your thesis.
 - Conclusion
Do not just restate your thesis, drive the nail into the coffin of your argument.

- Paragraphs
 - The paper should consist of several paragraphs.
 - =Begin them with a topic sentence.
 - =The following sentences should prove the topic sentence.
 - =The last sentence should smoothly transition into the next paragraph.

- Flow
 - When you have finished writing, **read the paper aloud** to yourself, or have someone else read over it.
This will help you catch any unclear sentences or poor wording.

Another technique is to change the font of the paper before you revise it.
 - Use your spellchecker.
****Check your Grammar.****
You will be graded down for severe grammatical mistakes.

- Quoting
 - There should be quotes and examples from the documents in the paper.
 - Do not fill the paper with quotes: 2 per page max.
 - It is better to put the writers ideas in you own words and cite him/her.
 - A **full citation** of the sources in footnote form is **necessary**.

- John's Pet Peeves.
 - Necessities of formal writing
 - Always use **past tense** when discussing the past.
 - Never write in the first person: "I" or "we."
 - Never use contractions: *can't / shouldn't / it's*.
 - Never begin a sentence with the word "Because."
 - Never use the phrase: "In conclusion."

- Follow the directions of the assignment.
 - Answer the question completely.
 - Use: 12 font
Times New Roman
1 in. margins
Double spacing

I will not read any papers in excess of the assigned page limit. Brevity is the key to good writing!

TREES NEED LOVE TOO!

+You will need to use material from the lectures and previous readings, but you should focus upon the assigned reading, and the majority of your examples should come from this reading.

+Do not be afraid to ask me for help at any time.

Your grade will reflect any failure to observe the rules of this Guide.