HIST 3388
Themes in Environmental History: Cultural Practices and the Natural World
Spring 2013, TTH 2:00-3:15
Social Sciences Building, 2030

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Course Description
In short, environmental history is the study of the interaction between humans and nonhuman nature over time. Environmental historians assume that in order to understand the past we must also understand how people have interacted with the natural world – how they have shaped the nature around them and how they have been shaped by it. We are also interested in ideas about nature, in how our understandings of the natural world have affected our relationships with it. Environmental history takes as a central premise that nature, too, has a history, one profoundly shaped by human beings, and that the record of the human past is incomplete without some account of the role the physical world has played in human events.

As the subtitle of the course suggests, we will take a particular interest in the idea of landscape as a hybrid of nature and culture, the place in which human beings interact with nature to shape their physical surroundings. The course is topically designed and will cover a broad spectrum of material, so if you like your history told chronologically, this course may be a little jarring. We’ll be jumping around from place to place and topic to topic in an effort to cover as much as possible, and still keep some semblance of order. The course is roughly divided into five themes.

Course Objectives
The primary objectives of the course are to 1) introduce you to the thriving field of environmental history, 2) develop your skills as critical readers of primary and secondary historical documents, 3) to learn how to analyze historical relationships between people and their environments, and 4) to improve your skills in oral and written communication.

To accomplish these objectives, we will approach the subject matter in a variety of ways. The traditional stuff of a history course – reading, writing, and discussion – will be central to the student’s workload. I will give mini-lectures to introduce new material and provide background, but we will spend the bulk of our class time discussing the readings. The required reading list includes a balance of good historical writing, primary documents, and memoir, all of which is essential to understanding how we, as historians, tell about the past. This course is reading and writing intensive, so please study the course schedule and plan ahead.
Readings
Our themes are based on four core books, and each theme unit will include several supplementary readings to provide some historical and historiographical context.

Core Books:

**PDFs or Links to supplementary articles are posted under “Content” in D2L.**

Course Requirements
Exams: (30%)
You will have **two exams** this semester (a midterm and a final). They will consist of identification and essay questions, which will be taken from the lectures and assigned readings. The final exam will take place on the designated day for the final in this course, but it will not be comprehensive—it will only cover material since the midterm. We will discuss some strategies for studying for these exams, as well as how to write an effective exam essay in class. You will need to bring a **large blue book** to class for each exam.

Synthetic Essays: (40%)
You will write **three synthetic essays** on your unit readings (choose three from the five units). These essays will focus on a particular theme or question that emerges from the readings, and **I will expect you to use all of the readings from that unit to address your theme.** The essay, then, is to be a **synthesis** of the readings—not a summary or regurgitation, but a synthesis that uses the reading material to advance an argument. It should be **3-5 pages**, double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12pt font (common fonts only please, i.e. Times New Roman, Arial, or Cambria). You will use the Chicago Manual of Style’s “Author-Date” system, found here: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). Scroll down and click the “Author-Date” tab.

I encourage you to make an appointment with the KSU Writing Center if you need further assistance on any writing project. Experienced writing assistants work with you on any aspect of your writing – topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and more. For more information or to make an appointment (appointments are strongly encouraged), visit [http://www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter/), or stop by Room 242 in the English Building.

Quizzes: (15%)
You will have frequent in-class quizzes and writing assignments that assess your progress and understanding of the readings.

**Research Project:** (15%)  
TBA

**Participation:**
In addition to the above, you are expected to fully participate in classroom discussion. You should come to class each day prepared to engage the readings with thoughtful comments and questions. Be ready to present, articulate, and defend your ideas, as well as listen to and comment on the ideas of others. The success of this class depends, in large part, on your willingness to participate in discussion. **Your final grade may be adjusted downward by up to 10 points if you do not participate.**

**Late Work and Make-Ups**
Papers will be submitted at the beginning of class on the date they are due. Late work will lose one letter grade for each day the work is late. You may miss two in-class quizzes without penalty, but you will not have the opportunity to take make-up quizzes. If an emergency results in a missed exam, you should contact me as soon as possible. Under ordinary circumstances, no make-ups will be permitted if you do not contact me within 24 hours.

**Grading**
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final Exam: 15%
- Synthetic Essays: 40%
- Quizzes/Film Reactions: 15%
- Research Project: 15%

**Academic Integrity**
All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of your academic careers. If you have not already read KSU’s Student Code of Conduct, you should do so immediately. You can find it here: [http://www.kennesaw.edu/scai/code_of_conduct.shtml](http://www.kennesaw.edu/scai/code_of_conduct.shtml).

You should pay particular attention to Section II.A., which I have copied here:

**A. Plagiarism and Cheating**
No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior which a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged. No student may submit the same, or
substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s).

**Attendance**
Attendance is mandatory, and I will take role every day. If you are more than fifteen minutes late for class, or if you leave early, it will count as a ½ day. Each absence over **four** will result in **five points** subtracted from your final grade. Your physical and mental presence in the classroom is essential to your ability to do well in this course.

**Contacting Me**
I will hold regular office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:00. If these hours do not work for you, feel free to knock on the door to see if I’m in, or we can make an appointment for a convenient time. You can also contact me via office phone or email, but keep in mind that I sometimes do not check email at night.

**Students with Disabilities**
If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please notify me as soon as possible and provide the necessary documentation from Disabled Student Support Services. You can find their website here: [http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/dsss.html](http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/dsss.html).

**Classroom Rules**
I aim to create a congenial classroom experience guided by the imperative of mutual respect among participants. The ring of the cell phone, the bowed head and hidden hands of the texter, and the disinterested gaze of the web surfer all amount to a breach of that respect. So, turn off all of your electronic devices before entering the classroom; it’s just that simple. I will allow the use of laptops to take notes, but if I see that you are using it for other means, you will not be allowed to use it for the remainder of the semester.

**Course Schedule**

This schedule is a general outline for the semester. If I need to change anything, I will give you plenty of notice.

**Theme #1: What is Environmental History?**

**Week 1**
Tu, 8/20: Course Introduction
Th, 8/22: What is Environmental History?
Read:  
*Donald Worster, “The Vulnerable Earth: Toward a Planetary History”*  
*William Cronon, “The Uses of Environmental History”*

**Week 2**
Tu, 8/27: Doing Environmental History
Read:  
* Donald Worster, “Doing Environmental History”  
*Edmund Russell, “Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field”
Th, 8/29: Environmental Determinism  
Read: *Jared Diamond, “Yali’s Question”

**Theme #2: Movement and Contact**

**Week 3**  
Tu, 9/3: “Pristine Nature” and Indigenous Peoples  
Read: * William Denevan, “The Pristine Myth”  

Th, 9/05: Ecological Imperialism in Global Context  
Read: * Alfred W. Crosby, “Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon”  
*THEME #1 ESSAY DUE

**Week 4**  
Tu, 9/10: Contact in the Americas  
Read: *Cronon, *Changes in the Land*

Th, 9/12: Continued  
Read: *Cronon, *Changes in the Land*

**Week 5**  
Tu, 9/17: Another View: Legacies of Contact  
Read: *Cronon, *Changes in the Land*  
*Hugh Raup, “The View From John Sanderson’s Farm”

Th, 9/19: NO CLASS

**Theme #3: Conservation, Science, and Environmentalism**

**Week 6**  
Tu, 9/24: Wildness and Wilderness  
Read: Henry David Thoreau, “Walking” (entire)  
*THEME #2 ESSAY DUE*

Th, 9/26: Divine Nature  
Read: *John Muir, “Travels in Alaska” (excerpt)*

**Week 7**  
Tu, 10/1: **EXAM #1**

Th, 10/3: Campus Walk  
Read: *Begin Worster, “The Dismal Science: Darwinian Ecology”*  
Read: *Begin Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*
Week 8
Tu, 10/8: The Roots of Ecology
*Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac

Th, 10/10: Modern Conservation
View: *The Plow That Broke the Plains
Read: *Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac

**October 11 is the last day to withdraw without academic penalty**

Week 9
Tu, 10/15: Modern Conservation
Read: *Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac

Th, 10/17: Science, Technology, and Environmentalism
Read: *Leo Marx, “Environmental Degradation and the Ambiguous Social Role of Science and Technology”
*Author McEvoy, “Science, Culture, and Politics in U.S. Natural Resources Management”

*Theme #4: Nature and Culture—Grasslands*

Week 10
Tu, 10/22: What’s so Important about Grasslands?
View: *Grasslands
Read: *John James Ingalls, “In Praise of Bluegrass”
*Ted Steinberg, *American Green

Th, 10/24: From Range to Farm
Read: *Ted Steinberg, *American Green

*THEME #3 ESSAY DUE*

Week 11
Tu, 10/29: From Farm to Lawn
Read: *Steinberg, *American Green
*Way, “Making Hay”

Th, 10/31: No Class – Southern Historical Association

*Theme #5: Cultural Reflections of Nature*

Week 12
Tu, 11/5: Cultural Reflections of Nature
Th, 11/7: Work and Nature
Read:  *White, “Are You An Environmentalist or Do You Work For a Living?”
      *THEME #4 ESSAY DUE

Week 13

Tu, 11/12: Working Class Environmentalism
Read:  *Francis Putz, “Are Rednecks the Unsung Heroes of Ecosystem Management?”
      *Janisse Ray, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*

Th, 11/14: Earth Day Then and Now
Read:  *Janisse Ray, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*

Week 14
Tu, 11/19: Research

Th, 11/21: Research

Week 15
Tu, 11/26: Research

Th, 11/28: No class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 16
Tu, 12/3: Presentations

Final Exam: December 5, 1:00-3:00