

History 222A—Introduction to Environmental History—Fall 2012

Lectures M,F 9:05-9:55 Starr-Axinn 109

Discussion X: Wed. 12:30 pm-1:20, Atwater Seminar Room (ATD 102)

Discussion Y: Wed 1:45-2:35, Atwater Seminar Room (ATD 102)

Prof. Kathryn Morse (x2436, kmorse@middlebury.edu)

<http://community.middlebury.edu/~kmorse>

Office Hours: Mondays 10am-12pm, Starr Axinn 240

Thursdays 3pm-4:15 pm, Hillcrest 119 (except Oct. 4).

And by appointment. Please email or see me in person to make an appointment.

Course description and goals: This is a one-semester lecture and discussion course. Its first goal is to introduce students to the major themes, events and ways of thinking and asking historical questions that together make up American Environmental History as an academic field. Environmental History is the study of the ways in which humans have interacted with, shaped, and been shaped by their physical environments in the past. It takes as a central premise that our understanding of the human past is incomplete without some account of the role the physical world has played in shaping the past

The second goal for students is to develop critical reading, writing, and thinking skills with regard to the interactions between humans and their physical environment in the American past. We will follow a chronological set of events, places, and landscapes from the Euro-American conquest and settlement of the part of North America that became the United States, through American industrialization, the U.S. conservation movement, and on into the place of nature and environmentalism in post-WWII American culture.

Within those broad topics, we will focus on the idea of physical landscapes as hybrids of nature and culture, and our study of American landscapes will range far and wide. Another goal of the course is to enable students to apply the knowledge and skills of environmental historians to their own analysis of the landscapes around them, to read the historical interactions of nature and culture embodied in the world they encounter every day.

Course Requirements: Students must complete all written work to earn a passing grade in this course.

- 1) Weekly reading as detailed below in the syllabus and active participation in discussion sections and in-class exercises and writing assignments.
- 2) Attendance at all classes. See attendance policy below for further details.
- 3) Two formal analytical essays, due as detailed below, and one brief written statement of the proposed topic for the second/final paper.
- 4) A 50-minute in-class, closed book mid-term exam, as scheduled below.
- 5) A closed book 3-hour final examination during exam week, as scheduled by the registrar.

Course Policies.

1) Honor Code. The Honor Code is in effect for all formal work in this class: drafts, final papers, and exams. Please state and sign (electronically or by hand) the honor code on ALL work. For papers submitted by email, REMEMBER TO STATE AND SIGN THE HONOR CODE, either within the paper file itself, or in the body of the email to which you attach the paper. In particular, all students are responsible for reading and heeding the statement on plagiarism as written in the Middlebury College Handbook. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism you may re-read the Handbook, talk to a writing tutor at the CTLR, or ask me.

2) Classroom etiquette and technology policy: Cell phones, smart phones, and other mobile devices must be OFF and put away in ALL classes. Laptop computers must be off and put away during DISCUSSION SECTIONS unless we are considering reading in that particular class that is in electronic form (a .pdf article rather than a book). However, it is HIGHLY PREFERABLE to bring printed versions to class, rather than electronic versions.

IF AT ANY POINT the use of laptop computers or tablet computers becomes distracting to myself or others, I will ask you to shut them off and put them away.

Please respect your classmates. Our goal is to critically engage and discuss historical events and ideas, but not to criticize or intimidate each other as human beings. Be kind, be thoughtful, and engage each other as colleagues with respect.

Please do not leave the classroom during class time unless in the event of a physical or personal emergency.

3) Grading: There is no completely set or precise formula for the determination of grades. The course requires two papers, a paper topic statement, attendance and participation, a mid-term exam, and a final examination. In calculating final grades, the first paper will be weighted to constitute roughly 15% of the final grade, the second/final paper 25%, the mid-term examination 15%, the final examination 25%, discussion attendance 10%, and discussion section participation 10% of the final grade. Final grades may also take into account improvement over the course of the semester.

Note on numerical (1-100) vs. letter grades (A, A-, B+ etc.): Grades on exams and papers will take numerical form, as this allows for a more fine-grained approach to evaluating student work (a B may range from 82-86, for instance). However, numerical grades do not represent a specific point value for any given student answer or response to a given question. Example: There is no specific point awarded for a correct date in an essay answer, so missing a date (or a name, or a place, or an idea) does not automatically result in a specific loss of points. Nor do grammatical or proof-reading errors correlate to a specific loss of points on a paper. Grades in this class take in a wide range of factors for any given answer and thus are not always directly correlated with math. Each assignment, however, will include detailed information on the general standards for “A” work, “B” work, etc.

4) Attendance Policy: Attendance at all classes is required, but discussion section attendance, in particular, will be recorded and counted as 10% of the final grade. Students may miss **one discussion section** during the semester, for any reason, without any penalty. **However, if you are experiencing a personal or medical emergency, please do notify all of your professors as well as your dean. The faster you inform relevant faculty and staff of the situation, the better we can work together to address missed work and other academic issues.**

Athletic Absences: If you are a member of a team whose schedule will require you to miss class, either lecture or discussion section, it is **your responsibility** to inform me of your schedule, what work you will miss, and how and when you intend to make up that work. I do not regularly check sports schedules or know team departure times, so it is your job to present me with that information, well in advance of the absence itself.

If at all possible, I would like to know as early as possible exactly when you will be gone, so as to head off any complications well in advance.

As per college policy, absence for athletic commitments are explained rather than excused absences. Again, all students may take one unexcused absence from discussion section without penalty.

5) Office hours: I am available to meet with and advise students during the office hours listed above (note the TWO OFFICES). If these two times do not fit your schedule, email me to make an appointment at another time.

6) E-mail and technology outside the classroom. BEFORE you call or email ANY professor with a specific question about details of the course (or about anything), ask yourself this important question: **Is there ANY other way to gain this information or answer this question without asking a professor? If so, use that other method!** **Independent learning and inquiry is an important skill.**

That being said: Students are welcome to email to make an appointment to see me about any topic, or to attend to course-related matters that need attention. Please be advised that I do not read and answer email constantly or immediately. I will attempt to return your email or call within 24 hours during the week. If you need to communicate with me immediately (i.e. to change or set up a meeting in the very near future), send an email with the “urgent” exclamation point so that I will look at it quickly.

The above does not apply to true emergencies, such as those involving serious illness, personal crisis, or loss. In the event of such an event, I will respond as quickly as possible.

I do assume that you read your Middlebury college email on a regular basis, several times a week. If you do not read your email with any regularity, please remember to ask me in class whether I have sent out any information or updates.

In addition, please familiarize yourself with our class folders on the server. All registered students will have access to the class folder. The “share” folder will contain necessary material for the class.

7) Paper due-date extension policy: Paper due dates are set in the syllabus below. Each student has two (2) “extension days” to use or spend to extend paper deadlines without penalty. As a result a student may turn in one paper two days late without penalty, or both papers one day late without grade penalty. However, the student is responsible for NOTIFYING the professor when turning the paper in that a free “extension days” is in effect. A day is considered 24 hours, and Friday-Monday will count as one (1) 24-hour period.

Beyond those allowed “extension days” any paper turned in after the deadline will be penalized two points (i.e. grade of 80 to grade of 78) for every 24 hours late. Friday to Monday will count as one (1) 24-hour period.

8) The Fine Print: While this syllabus is not likely to change too much, I may make adjustments as the semester proceeds. Any changes will be announced in class and by email in a timely fashion.

Books and Other Assigned Readings: The following books are available for purchase in the bookstore (and many other places, including web-based book-sellers). They will be on two-hour reserve in the Davis Family Library through the end of the semester. Two are also available through Midcat as e-books. In addition, there will be articles available in the class share folder, accessible through the electronic library journal, or handed out as Xeroxes in class or via email.

Books:

William Cronon, Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England

Paul E. Johnson, Sam Patch: The Famous Jumper

William Cronon, Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West

Karl Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poaches, Thieves and the Hidden History of Conservation [available as e-book in Midcat].

Nancy Langston, Toxic Bodies: Hormone Disruptors and the Legacy of DES

Andrew Ross, Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World’s Least Sustainable City [available as e-book in Midcat].

Schedule of Classes and Assignments (subject to change with plenty of advance notice):

Week One:

Mon Sept 10: Class: introduction and logistics.

Wed Sept 12: Discussion: Please bring a hardback notebook of some sort for mobile note-taking (we’ll be taking an extremely short walk outside, weather permitting).

Sept 14: Class. Read: John Winthrop, "Reasons to be considered..." (1629)--.pdf in class share folder and sent by email; **and** Cronon, Changes in the Land, chapters 1-2

Week Two:

Mon Sept 17: Class. Read Cronon, Changes in the Land, chapter 3.

Wed Sept 19: Discussion: William Cronon, Changes in the Land (complete)

Fri Sept. 21: Class.

Week Three:

Mon Sept 24: Class. Read excerpt from Solomon Northrup, Twelve Years a Slave (1854), .pdf in class share folder.

Wed Sept. 26: Discussion: Read 2 .pdfs on E-Reserve (password revealed in class): Mark Fiege, "King Cotton," ch. 3 in The Republic of Nature; Scott Giltner "Slave Hunting and Fishing in the Antebellum South," chapters 2 in Glave and Stoll eds., "To Love the Wind and the Rain": African Americans and Environmental History.

Fri Sept 28: Class: **Work Due:** Essay 1 (details TBA), due by 8 pm by email as attachment (Word document, .doc or .docx) with file name: Your Last Name_HIST222_Paper 1.doc

Week Four:

Mon Oct 1: Class.

Wed Oct 3: Discussion. Read Johnson, Sam Patch, complete.

Fri Oct 5: No class. Read : Chad Montrie, "'I Think Less of the Factory than of my Native Dell': Labor, Nature and the Lowell Mill Girls," Environmental History 9:2 (April 2004)—accessible through Midd. Library subscription to electronic version of journal (details to be explained in class).

Week Five:

Mon Oct 8: Class/discussion of Montrie.

Wed Oct 10: Discussion: Read: William Cronon, Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West. Read: Prologue, chapters 1-3, and 7.

Fri Oct 12: Class.

Week Six:

Mon Oct 15: Break

Wed Oct 17: Discussion, Read: Cronon, Nature's Metropolis, chapters 4, 5, and epilogue.

Fri: Oct 19: In-class: 50 minute closed-book mid-term exam.

Week Seven

Mon Oct 22. Class.

Wed Oct 24: Discussion. Read: Karl Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature. All read Introduction, Part I, and Epilogue. Class divided in half, with half reading Part II, and the other half Part III.

Fri Oct 26: Class.

Week Eight:

Mon Oct 29: Class.

Work Due: Topics and images and sources for final paper due by 8 pm emailed to kmorse@middlebury.edu as an attached word file labeled: Your Last Name_HIST 222_Topic (if you cannot embed your image in a word file, send it as a .jpg or other image file as Your Last Name_HIST 222_Image.jpg).

Wed Oct 31: Discussion. Wed Oct 31: Wed Oct 31: Edmund Russell, "Speaking of Annihilation': Mobilizing for War against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-1945," Journal of American History 82 (March 1996), 1505-1529 [available through Library journal subscriptions in JSTOR]; Colin Fisher, "Outdoor Recreation and the Chicago Race Riot," in Glave and Stoll, eds., "To Love the Wind and the Rain": African Americans and Environmental History [on E-Reserve]

Fri Nov. 2: Class.

Week Nine:

Mon Nov 5: Class.

Wed Nov 7: Discussion of paper topics and research plus Read: TBA.

Fri Nov 9: Class.

Week Ten:

Mon Nov 12. Class.

Wed Nov 14: Discussion. Read: Langston, Toxic Bodies.

Fri Nov. 16: Class.

Week Eleven:

Mon Nov. 19: Class, questions about papers.

THANKSGIVING

Week Twelve:

Mon Nov 26: Class.

Wed. Nov. 28: Discussion: Ross, Bird on Fire, chapters TBA

Friday Nov. 30: Class.

Week Thirteen:

Mon Dec. 3: Class.

Wed. Dec 5: Discussion: Ross, Bird on Fire, chapters TBA.

Fri Dec 7: Last Day of Class

Work Due: Final Paper Due (details TBA) by 8 pm Friday Dec. 7, emailed to kmorse@middlebury.edu attached as Word document with file name: Your Last Name_HIST 222_Final Paper.doc (or .docx)

Final Exam: During exam week as scheduled by registrar: Details TBA.