

History 222—Introduction to Environmental History—Spring 2015

Prof. Kathryn Morse

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Lectures M/W 8-8:50, Axinn 219

Discussion X: Thurs 1:55-2:45, Freeman 2

Discussion Y: Thurs 3-3:50, Freeman 2

Office Hours, Spring 2015: Mon./Wed. 9am-12pm and Wed. 1-3pm, except Wed. March 18

And by appointment (please email)

Course description and goals: This is a one-semester lecture and discussion course. The goals of the course include, but are not limited to the following.

- 1) 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 deep understanding both of the role the physical world has played in shaping the past, and of the ways in which human thought and action have transformed the physical environment.
- 2) For students is to develop critical reading, writing, thinking, analysis, discussion, and research skills with regard to the interactions between humans and their physical environment in the American past.
- 3) For students to become curious about the physical world around them as the product of history, to ask historical questions about the world as both document and text, and to see in current landscapes (defined very broadly) some of the key elements and processes of environmental history through which humans have changed those landscapes.
- 4) For students to engage both collaboratively and independently in research and analysis, using both primary and second sources, and to use those sources to ask historical questions and make historical arguments.

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 technology policy: Cell phones, smart phones, and other mobile communication devices must be OFF and put away in ALL classes. E-readers and tablets used as readers must be in airplane mode while in use (unless otherwise indicated during class). 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.

3) Please avoid leaving the room during class. Unless you are experiencing a physical or emotional emergency, please do not leave the classroom during our 50 minute classes once we have begun class. If you need to leave a specific class early, please let me know at the beginning of class, and sit near the door so as to minimize disruption. Again, **Please do not leave the classroom during class time unless in the event of a physical or personal emergency.**

4) Technology outside of class: 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? Is the answer on the syllabus or on other class handouts? Might a classmate know the answer? You will see your professor in class soon...might you ask the question then? Independent learning and inquiry is an important skill. THINK BEFORE YOU EMAIL.**

That being said: Students are welcome to email to make an appointment outside office hours, or to attend to course-related matters that need attention. Please be advised that I try to limit work-related email to the hours of 9 am-5pm, and 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. During the semester, at 5 pm on Fridays, I usually declare an “email Sabbath” and take a break from email until Monday morning. 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 my contain materials for some of our collaborative work in class

5) Being respectful with each other. I expect students to behave as professional adults usually do: to treat each other (and me) with courtesy and respect; to address all persons with the form of address they prefer (and to ask what that is, when you don’t know); to address emails in a polite and formal manner (no: “hey prof” or “hey there”). Although the classroom is open to

vigorous and thoughtful debate, and to disagreement on topics under discussion (some of them contentious and difficult) we all must work to critique each other's ideas, and not each other as fellow students and scholars. If at any time you feel limited by me or others in your ability to express your ideas openly, or feel that standards of professional and courteous behavior has been breached or compromised (by me or anyone else), please let me know in person or by email.

6) Accessibility, Accommodations, Abilities:

We all have varying abilities; we all carry various strengths and weaknesses. Some of these might even be "documented" with a place like the ADA Office. If so, please just let me know. With or without documentation, it is my intent to make our learning experience as accessible as possible. With documentation, I am especially interested in providing any student accommodations that have probably been best determined by the student and the ADA Coordinator (Jodi Litchfield) in advance. Please let me know as soon as possible at the start of the semester what I can do to maximize *your* learning potential, participation, and general access in this course. I am available to meet with you in person or to discuss such things on email.

The ADA Office is located at Meeker House 003. [46 Porter Field Road]

Jodi Litchfield, coordinator: 802.443.5936; litchfie@middlebury.edu

<http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/doc/ada/about>

7) Grading: There is no completely set or precise formula for the determination of grades.

The course requires two short essays, a mid-term take-home exam, and a final collaborative project with a final individual component. The basic but not fully binding formula will be: first essay: 10%; second essay 15%; mid-term take home exam, 15%; collaborative work for final project, 20% independent component of final project, 20%; attendance 10%; discussion participation and/or leadership 10%.

8) Late Papers and Extensions:

Each student may take two (2) "extension days" during this semester in this class to use or spend to extend paper or mid-term take-home (but not final project) deadlines without penalty. As a result a student may turn in one paper two days late without penalty, or both papers 1 day late each, to make a total of two "late days." However, the student is responsible for NOTIFYING the professor when turning the paper in that their free "extension days" are in effect. A day is considered 24 hours, and Friday-Monday will count as one (1) 24-hour period. The half-day codicil: Students may consider a 12-hour extension a one-half (1/2) day extension. Papers turned in past the deadline without extension-day-benefits will lost 2 points (85 to 83) for each 24 hour period of lateness.

Required Work for HIST 222, Spring 2015

1) Assigned readings, as detailed in this syllabus. **These are subject to change (though I am unlikely to add more). Listen for announcements in class.** Readings are listed for both "lecture" classes (Mon/Wed) AND "discussion sections" (Thursdays). In Thursday discussion sections, with smaller groups of 15, we will have in-depth discussions of the readings assigned for those days, and I will expect participation from everyone. Mondays and Wednesdays will be different. We cannot have the same sort of discussion in a lecture room with 25-30. Not everyone will be able to comment on the readings assigned for Mondays and Wednesdays. However, I will ask for your thoughts and reactions on Mondays and Wednesdays, and may call on various students each class to contribute thoughts.

2) Attendance: Attendance at all classes is required, but **discussion section** attendance (on Thurs), 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 which leads you to miss class, 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.** As per college policy, absence for athletic commitments are explained rather than excused absences (see further policy details below). Again, all students may take one unexcused absence from discussion section without penalty.

3) Active and engaged participation in discussion sections on Thursdays.

4) Short essays: Two short formal historical essays on assigned reading, due Friday March 6, and Friday March 20 (with extension day policy in effect).

5) Mid-term take home exam: Due 8 pm Monday April 13, by email or in hard copy at Axinn 240 (slide under door)

6) Collaborative history research project with individual component: **Fifty Years of Green: A History of Environmental Studies at Middlebury College** (details—many, many details—to be announced).

Books and Other Assigned Readings: The following books are available for purchase (or will be soon, in the case of Dunaway) 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. One is also available through Midcat as e-books.

In addition, there will be articles and documents available through the library E-Reserve page (password TBA), accessible through electronic library journals, or handed out as Xeroxes or pdfs class or via email. E-Reserve password: 2623km.

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]

Finis Dunaway, Seeing Green: The Use and Abuse of American Environmental Images
(forthcoming from University of Chicago Press in time for us to read).

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

Events and public lectures are listed as information—attendance is encouraged but not required!

Readings are listed the day we will discuss them (i.e. read them BEFORE class that day).

Week 1

Mon. Feb. 9: Introducing History and Environmental History.

Wed. Feb. 11: Read for class: William Cronon, “The Uses of Environmental History” (1993) and Sean Kheraj, “Scholarship and Environmentalism,” (2014) both handouts in class and/or emailed and/or on E-Reserve (details TBA in class Monday). Password: 2623km

Thurs. Feb. 12: For discussion: Listen to podcast *Nature's Past*, Episode 43: Environmental Scholarship and Environmental Advocacy,” from Sean Kheraj and colleagues, echoing discussion of his 2014 article. Podcast available on the web and through I Tunes. On the web go to: <http://niche-canada.org/2014/07/03/natures-past-episode-43-environmental-scholarship-and-environmental-advocacy/>

Or search in iTunes for Nature's Past and click on Episode 43

Week 2

Mon. Feb. 16: Read Cronon, Changes in the Land, Preface, Chapter 1, Chapter 8.

Topics: How to Read a Book; and The Native New World

Wed. Feb. 18: Read Cronon, Chapters 2-3.

Topics: A Market in Animals

Wed. Feb 18: Special Event: Annual Scott Margolin Lecture, Program in Environmental Studies, Prof. Tyrone Hayes, 7:00 pm, MBH 216. *From Silent Spring to Silent Night: A Tale of Toads and Men*

Thurs Feb. 19: Discussion: Read Cronon, Changes in the Land, complete.

Thurs. ES Colloquium: Hillcrest 103, 12:30: Carolyn Dash, *Alaskan Boreal Forest in a Changing Climate*

Revisions for Week 3-13, Spring 2013

Week 3:

Mon. Feb. 23: Topic: Historiography: Cronon, Donahue, Great Meadows, Great Debates

Wed. Feb 25: Topic: The Nature of Horses and Rivers

Thurs. Feb 26: Discussion: Read Paul Johnson, Sam Patch: The Famous Jumper, Preface, and entire book through p. 162 (can stop there, skip last 20 pages if you want).

Week 4:

Mon. Mar. 2: 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), 275-295. Accessible through library electronic subscription and on E-Reserve. Password: 2623km

Wed. Mar. 4: No reading assigned. Topic: Introduction to “Fifty Years of Green,” our collaborative digital research project.

Wed. Mar. 4: Speaker not-to-be-missed, Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Atlantic Magazine*, Mead Chapel, 7 pm.

Thurs. Mar. 5: In class writing workshop, bring full draft of paper #1 with citations for peer review.

Thurs. Mar. 5: ES Colloquium, Hillcrest 103, 12:30: Diego Thompson, *Exploring Social Justice and Sustainable Agriculture*

Fri. Mar. 6: Paper #1 due, emailed by 8 pm to kmorse@middlebury.edu, as .docx or .pdf with file name Your Last Name_HIST 222_Paper #1.docx or .pdf.

Week 5:

Mon. Mar. 9: Finalize FYG research teams. Read for class: Karl Jacoby, “Slaves By Nature? Domestic Animals and Human Slaves,” Slavery & Abolition 15:1 (April 1994), 89-99, on E-Reserve; Password: 2623km; Topic: Nature, Race, and Slavery.

Wed. Mar. 11: In class group visit to Special Collections/Archives. MEET ON LOWER FLOOR of Davis Family Library, at bottom of steps!

Thurs. Mar. 12: Read for discussion : Excerpt from Solomon Northrup, Twelve Years a Slave (1854); Mark Fiege, “King Cotton,” ch. 3 in The Republic of Nature (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 100-138—both on E-Reserve. Password: 2623km

Thurs. Mar. 12: ES Colloquium, Hillcrest 103, 12:30: Joni Adamson, *Life Overlooked: Humanities for the Environment*.

Week 6:

Mon. Mar. 16: Energy and Capitalism: A Brief Introduction

Wed. Mar 18: In class organizing session: Fifty Years of Green; questions on papers.

Thurs. Mar 19: No class (Annual Conference of the American Society for Environmental History).

Friday. Mar. 20: Paper #2 due by 8pm by email to kmorse@middlebury.edu as .pdf or .docx with file name: Your Last Name_ HIST 222_Paper #2.docx or .pdf

SPRING BREAK!

Week 7:

Mon. Mar. 30: In class: Group Work: Collaborative Research Project: Fifty Years of Green.

Tues. Mar 31: 50th Anniversary of Selma Civil Rights March, Wilson Hall, 4:30-6.

Wed. April 1: Read for class: Cronon, Nature’ Metropolis, Prologue and Epilogue.

Thurs. April 2: Read for Discussion: Cronon, Nature’s Metropolis, chapters 1-2, and 5 (Meat); **then pick either chapter 3 or 4 (grain or lumber)**

Thurs. April 2: ES Colloquium, Hillcrest 103, 12:30: Mini Girgis, The Nile Project, *Civic Engagement and the Management of Water Resources* (ethnomusicology, music, and the Nile River)

Week 8:

Mon. April 6: Topic: Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency; Plus: Work on FYG.

Wed. April 8: Read: Karl Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature, Introduction and Epilogue. Topic: Progressive Conservation continued.

Thurs. April 9: Read Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature. For each discussion: Class divided in three, each third reads either Part I (Adirondacks); Part II (Yellowstone); or Part III (Grand Canyon).

Thus. April 9: ES Colloquium, Hillcrest 103, 12:30: Ingrid Nelson, Geography and ES, UVM, *Wasting or Making Time and Space? Sweeping and Tattooing in the Mozambican Woodlands*

Week 9

Mon. April 13: In Class: First Omeka Workshop about uploading and documenting sources in Omeka.

PLUS: Due by 8 pm: Take home midterm on reading landscapes as environmental historians (details to be announced).

Wed. April 15: Topic: The Second Industrial Revolution.

Thurs. April 16: Read for Discussion: 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; W.E.B. DuBois, Excerpt from "On Beauty and Death," from Darkwater (1920). All on E-Reserve. Password: 2623km

Thurs. April 16: ES Colloquium, Hillcrest 103, 12:30: Bryan Wentzell, '96, App. Mountain Club, *Landscape-Scale Conservation and Community Development in Maine's North Woods*

Week 10:

Mon. April 20: Group work: **Have all sources/documents uploaded to your Omeka group site.** In class: Second Omeka workshop on designing exhibits in Omeka.

Wed. April 22: Earth Day! Read Dunaway, Seeing Green, pages TBA; Topic: From Conservation to Environmentalism, plus in-class check-in on Fifty Years of Green.

Thurs. April 23: Read Dunaway, Seeing Green, pages TBA; in-class analysis of primary sources, work on FYG.

Thurs. April 23: ES Colloquium, Hillcrest 103, 12:30: David Bond, *Ethical Oil: The Moral Economy of Nature and Culture in the Tar Sands of Canada*

Week 11.

Mon. April 27: Environmentalism. In-class check-in on FYG. Read primary document, EPA, "Our Endangered Peoples," pages TBA. On E-Reserve. Password: 2623km

Tues. April 28: Talk: Alison Kafer, *Breath, Skin, Fog: Disability and Environmental Justice*, 4:30-6, Axinn 232.

Wed. April 29: Check-in and in-class work on FYG.

Thurs. April 30: For discussion, Read Dunaway, Seeing Green, pages TBA; plus possible primary sources.

Week 12:

Mon. May 4: In class: Groups present results of FYG research.

Wed. May 6: In class: Groups present results of FYG research.

Thurs. May 7: Last Class: possible presentations; wrap up list of tasks to be done.

Thurs. May 7: ES Colloquium, Hillcrest 103, 12:30: Stephanie Kaza, UVM, *Finding a Path of Hope and Sustainability: Rachel Carson as Inspiration*

Monday May 11: No class, finish all changes to FYG in Omeka.

Due Friday May 15th, by 5 pm, by email: Independent Component of “Fifty Years of Green” (details to be explained—in detail!)