

## HIST 473

### North American Environmental History to 1890

Instructor: Steve Leone

Office: 340H McKenzie

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 12-1:30PM or by appointment

Office Phone: 541-346-6407

Email: [sleone@uoregon.edu](mailto:sleone@uoregon.edu)

Meeting Period: 2-3:50PM, MTWR (June 20 – July 17)

Meeting Location: Lillis Business Complex, Room 175

#### **Aims**

At its core HIST 473: North American Environmental History to 1890 is an exploration of the ways that humans and their environments have shaped or been shaped by one another. Strong interdisciplinary interests ranging from geology to geography to name only two mark Environmental History. During our time together, we will ask and explore several larger questions: How has the environment shaped human actions in North America, its cultural systems, and social development? How has the human mind (from the indigenous to the immigrant) conceived of the natural world surrounding them? How have humans altered or changed the natural environment of North America? How have struggles and conflicts, between the various people whom have called North America home, been reordered or shaped by environmental factors? To answer these questions and more, we will read and analyze both primary and secondary source materials and interpret them together through active and daily discussions. Additionally, at two points during our time together we will supplement our daily investigations by going into greater depth concerning larger course themes via short response essays. Ideally, by the end of the course we will have demonstrated the myriad ways that the history of North America is inseparable from its natural environment.

#### **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Trace the history of changes to the American environment over time
- Analyze and interpret “primary” sources of historical information
- Identify an author’s argument or thesis
- Write an essay and develop your own argument and support it with historical evidence

***S. Leone/HIST 473 Syllabus – SUBJECT TO CHANGE (Current as of 5/31/16)***

**Books (Please Purchase if Possible)**

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1983) **[Please Purchase the 2003 Revised Edition]**

Michael Rawson, *Eden on the Charles: The Making of Boston* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010)

**Course Requirements/Grade Components**

1. Two short critical response essays, one for each book listed above (Each 25%)
2. A final in class exam in our last meeting period (30%)
3. Participation (20%)

*Critical Response Essays:* For each of the two major books we are investigating you will write a 1000 word analytical response essay. Within these responses, you will analyze a major thematic idea, the author's argument, or some other issue you find provocative or interesting. The goal is to reflect and think about the works that you are reading, not to write a book report or review. I will provide questions to help guide your reading.

*Final Exam:* The final exam will consist of an identification, short answer section and an Essay component that will cover both the readings and major ideas we have discussed throughout the course.

*Participation:* Participation matters greatly in this course and as such, I have placed a significant value on it to reward those who are active and constructive during our class time together. Key to your participation grade will be keeping up with the assigned readings that will form key parts of our in class discussions. Finally, attendance will be taken each class.

**Late Work Policy**

If you have an emergency, please contact me before the due date of any assignment passes. For each DAY an assignment is late, your grade will drop a half letter grade. No late assignments for the class will be accepted after the date of our final exam.

**Classroom Policies**

- Please refrain from side conversations while in class, any outside conversation will distract the other students who are actively engaged in class.
- Please put your cell phones on silent or turn them off completely before class starts, also no texting/emailing or reading texts/email during class.
- You may use laptops but if you do please place yourself in the back row so you will not distract the other students around you. Additionally, I reserve the right to forbid laptops in the classroom if it becomes apparent that they are being used for purposes other than note taking (social networking I am looking at you).
- Please try your best to avoid being late.

## **Class Preparation**

Like all history classes, this course requires significant reading and preparation. It is critical that you take the time to carefully read the assigned textbook, understand all of the key terms highlighted in each paragraph, and outline the major themes developed in the readings. Everyone reads at a different pace, but you should budget your time wisely to prepare for each class.

## **Academic Integrity**

The University of Oregon has detailed policies regarding academic misconduct. It is critical that you learn these rules, because the consequences of breaking them are severe. Basically, you commit misconduct if you represent another's work as your own (plagiarism). Most students know that when they ask a friend to write (or significantly edit) their papers, cut-and-paste text from a website, hand-in a paper they find or purchase online, or look at another student's answers while taking a test, they are breaking the rules. However, many well-intentioned students do not realize that even borrowing information without properly attributing the source is also a breach of academic honesty. Any evidence of academic dishonesty will result in failure of the assignment and possible further discipline from University authorities.

## **Accommodations**

If you require any accommodation, please inform me as soon as possible. Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, requiring assistance and/or accommodation should speak with Disability Services in as soon as possible. Examples of accommodations include allowances for documented learning differences or disabilities or excused absences for participation in sports or other university-sanctioned extra-curricular activities.

## **Course Websites**

We will be using the Canvas site for this course actively. You will be asked to submit assignments to Canvas/Vericite. If you do not have access to the site, please let me know.

## **Extra Credit – Chat Activity**

As discussion is so important to our class (and your daily lives), I am proposing an additional way for you all to interact with each other and exchange ideas. To receive one point of extra credit each week (to be added to your final grade for the course), you must do two things by each Sunday evening before 8PM (outside of Week 4, where it is Friday night) in the "Discussion" section of Canvas:

1. Post an interesting recent article from the internet that reflects or demonstrates some of the environmental historical themes or ideas we are discussing.
2. Carefully read and respond to a fellow classmates posted article for the week.

**I reserve the right to make any changes to this syllabus at any time with reasonable notice to you. Changes will be announced in class and through Canvas. It is your responsibility to be aware of any changes in assignments, readings, and due dates. For these reasons, it is imperative that you check your email account associated with the University of Oregon frequently, at least once a day.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### *Schedule of Lectures and Readings*

Session 1 – Introductions & A Question: What is Environmental History?

Session 2 – Nature in Native America

Readings:

Matthew Klinge, Chap. 1 “All the Forces of Nature Are on Their Side” (pp. 12-23) from *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* **[Canvas]**

Session 3 – Ecological Imperialism

Readings:

Ted Steinberg, Chap. 2 “A Truly New World” (pp. 22-40) from *Down to Earth* **[Canvas]**

Session 4 – Colonization, Conflicts and the Commodification of New World Nature

Readings:

Virginia DeJohn Anderson, “King Philip’s Herds: Indians, Colonists, and the Problem of Livestock in Early New England” (pp. 601-624) in *The William & Mary Quarterly* (Oct. 1994) **[Canvas]**

Session 5 – The Birth of Nature’s Nation

Readings:

John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, Chap. 5 “Of Property”

<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/locke/locke2/locke2nd-a.html>

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, “Query 13”

<http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/JefVirg.html>

Session 6 – Imagining Nature in the Early Republic

Readings:

Richard W. Judd, Chap. 2 “Rambles in Eden” (pp. 55-93) from *The Untilled Garden: Natural History and the Spirit of Conservation in America, 1740-1840* **[Canvas]**

Session 7 – Revolutions in Industry, Revolutions in Nature

Readings:

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (**entire**)

**Critical Response Essay 1 Due on Canvas via Vericite**

*S. Leone/HIST 473 Syllabus – SUBJECT TO CHANGE (Current as of 5/31/16)*

Session 8 – King Cotton: Domination, Resistance, and Nature in the American South

Readings:

Solomon Northrup, *Twelve Years A Slave*, excerpts [**Canvas**]

Session 9 – The Nature of Disunion

Readings:

Megan Kate Nelson, Chap. 4 “Battle Logs: Ruined Forests” (pp. 103-159) from *Ruin Nation: Destruction in the American Civil War* [**Canvas**]

Session 10 – Animal Extinctions

Readings:

George Catlin, “Buffalo Country” (excerpts) [**Canvas**]

John James Audubon “Missouri River Journals” (excerpts) [**Canvas**]

Session 11 – Redefining Wilderness: Romantics and Transcendentalists

Readings:

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or Life in the Woods* (excerpts) [**Canvas**]

Session 12 – Beautifying the Land: Parks and Cemeteries

Readings:

Aaron Sachs, Chap. 4 “Sleepy Hollow: A Young Nation in Repose” (pp. 96-136) from *Arcadian America: The Death and Life of an Environmental Tradition* [**Canvas**]

Session 13 – Urban Nature

Readings:

Michael Rawson, *Eden on the Charles* (**entire**)

**Critical Response Essay 2 Due on Due on Canvas via Vericite**

Session 14 – Dispossessing Natives in the Name of Wilderness

Readings:

Mark David Spence, Chaps. 3 & 4 “Before the Wilderness” and “First Wilderness” (pp. 41-70) from *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* [**Canvas**]

Session 15 – On the Precipice of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Readings:

William Cronon, “Kenecott Journey: The Paths out of Town,” (pp. 28-51) from *Under and Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* [**Canvas**]

Session 16 – In Class Final Exam

