

# 407/507 Seminar: *Pacific Northwest Environmental History*

**Professor Marsha Weisiger**

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*Office hours:* MW 3-4 p.m.

*Class Schedule:* Tuesdays, 2-4:50 p.m.,  
475 McKenzie Hall



## ***INTRODUCTION***

***Please read this syllabus carefully, because you must submit all work on time to pass this course.***

Environmental history explores the past through an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates insights from ecology and geography, as well as history. At its essence, it considers how humans and their natural environments have interacted and reshaped each other through time. How has the natural environment influenced human actions, decisions, and cultural and social development? How have people perceived or imagined the natural world? How have they reshaped and even reordered the natural environment? How have they struggled with each other over ways the environment should be treated and understood? What have been the intended and unintended consequences of their actions? What are the ethical implications of those actions?

This seminar will focus on the environmental history of the Pacific Northwest, defined broadly to include Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Idaho, and northern California. You will engage in the craft of creating history through the in-depth exploration of primary sources and the production of a formal research paper of 20-25 pages. This is an opportunity to become a historian, to *make* history rather than merely read it.

We will read about the craft of historical research, interpretation, and writing; the methodological approaches of environmental history; and the broad outlines of the environmental history of the Pacific Northwest. Our main focus, however, will be on actually *doing* research, interpretation, and writing. Beyond attending class and reading assignments, expect to devote about 10 hours per week conducting research in the archives and/or the documents center, reading the secondary literature specific to your topic, and writing your paper. In class, you will also discuss your research and writing with your classmates to generate constructive suggestions, questions, and ideas for revision and refinement.

► **Graduate students** will produce a research paper based on a more ambitious research agenda and a more sophisticated analysis. Your paper should be of publishable quality. Use this as an opportunity to explore a potential thesis topic, write a thesis chapter, or write a paper for the two-paper option. In addition, graduate students must meet with me as a group in weeks 3, 8, and 9, dates and times T.B.A.

## *READINGS*

### **Available at the Duck Store:**

William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (4th ed., 2013)

Jenny L. Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students* (2nd ed., 2013)

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard, marked (B), or accessed through JStor or Internet links. Please check the syllabus each week for upcoming assignments. ***Note that readings are due by the Tuesday class meeting for which they're listed, so you need to look one week ahead.***

## *COURSE REQUIREMENTS*

### ***Participation and Attendance*** (25 percent)

Your participation grade will be based on attendance and your active involvement in class discussions. I have four ground rules for discussion: (1) Come prepared by critically reading all the assigned materials, and always bring the books or articles we read to class. (2) You must *participate* in our conversations with thoughtful discussion. (3) Don't try to lead the conversation astray in an effort to cover your lack of preparedness. (4) Show respect for your classmates' ideas, even—or especially—when they're different from your own. If you fail to engage in the seminar discussion, you will receive a low grade no matter how inspired your other work may be.

In addition to attendance and discussion, the following activities will count toward your participation grade:

- Week 2, you will work in teams to locate three library items as part of a Scavenger Hunt and be prepared to discuss them in class the following week.
- Week 3, you will participate in an on-line discussion of the research proposals submitted by your classmates. Please select at least one proposal and offer constructive suggestions for improvement.
- Week 8, in class you will offer a 5-7 minute discussion of your in-progress paper, focusing on its argument, its evidence, and any challenges or problems you've confronted that you would like help with.
- Week 9, we will hold a writing workshop, for which you will critically read draft papers written by two of your classmates, in advance, and prepare a 5-minute assessment of each paper, which you will offer in a small group session. The purpose of this workshop will be to give and receive suggestions for improving your paper's argumentation and prose.

Attendance each week is mandatory. Any absence will affect your participation grade. **More than one absence will result in an F in the course.** Exceptions will be made only in the event of a documented university-sponsored activity, a contagious illness (such as the flu), an injury, or a major calamity, ***at my discretion***. Please email me in the event of such an illness or crisis. If you fail to contact me in a timely manner, I will not grant you an exception.

### ***Research and Writing*** (75 percent)

You will write a research paper of approximately 7,000 words (20-25 pages), **plus** footnotes and bibliography. This is the standard length for journal articles. Writing a research project involves several required stages. ***Failure to satisfactorily complete any one of these stages on time will result in failure of the course, without exception. I do not accept late assignments. I do not accept emailed assignments.***

◆**April 16:** Proposal for the paper, including the identification of a topic, the big question you seek to answer, a tentative thesis statement, and an annotated bibliography of primary sources and secondary literature. Your sources must follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (16th edition) for bibliographies, available electronically through the UO library. No other style guidelines (such as MLA or APA) are acceptable. ***Please also submit a copy through Blackboard for on-line discussion before coming to class.***

◆**April 30:** Two-page outline of your paper and a copy of a one-page source you intend to use. ***Please post your outline and a scan of your source on Blackboard by 12 noon***, and bring a hard copy to class.

◆**May 7:** Draft of your opening paragraph and your thesis paragraph. Please bring a copy for each member of the class.

◆**May 21:** Draft of your paper. This draft should be as complete as possible and should include your final paragraph. If you submit a partial draft, the comments you receive from me and your colleagues will not be as useful. ***Please bring two copies of your paper. Please also submit your draft through SafeAssign before the beginning of class.***

◆**June 11:** Final paper. This must be a paper of approximately 7,000 words (20-25 pages), **plus** footnotes and bibliography. (To ensure that your paper is of sufficient length, adjust your software's word counter. In MSWord, under the "Review" tab, click on "word count," then uncheck the box beside "include textboxes, footnotes, and endnotes.") The paper must be a polished piece of writing, using proper grammar, punctuation, and formatting. ***Please submit through SafeAssign by 5 p.m.***

### ***Formatting Papers***

All papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and a Times New Roman 12-point font. Indent the beginning of each paragraph by 5 spaces. Do not add a space between paragraphs. (Microsoft's default format is 1.5 spaces with an extra space between paragraphs, so you need to reset those defaults.) Use footnotes to document your research, following the formatting in *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition, available on-line through the library. These should be single spaced, with 6 pt. space between notes. Provide a bibliography. Note that the formatting and punctuation for notes and bibliography differ.

## *Grading*

Attendance and class participation: 25%

Final paper (including all five stages): 75%

Please refer to the grading rubric posted on Blackboard for my standards on grading your final paper.

## *Additional Resources*

- Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research* (available as an e-book through Knight Library)
- William Cronon, *Learning to Do Historical Research: A Primer* (highly recommended)  
<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm>
- Bowdoin College Guide to Reading, Writing, and Researching for History  
<http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>
  
- Kathleen Brosnan, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Environmental History* (Knight Library)
- Douglas Cazaux Sackman, ed., *A Companion to Environmental History* (Knight Library)
  
- University of Wisconsin, Center for Culture/History/Environment, suggested reading lists:  
[http://che.nelson.wisc.edu/cool\\_stuff/readinglists.shtml](http://che.nelson.wisc.edu/cool_stuff/readinglists.shtml)
  
- America: History and Life (library database)
- JStor (library database)
  
- Academic Journals  
*Environmental History* (available through JStor)  
*Oregon Historical Quarterly* (available through JStor)  
*Pacific Historical Review* (available through JStor)  
*Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (available through JStor)

## *Classroom Policies*

Please be sure turn off all electronic devices (including computers, except for a documented disability) while in class.

**I take plagiarism very seriously.** All work that you turn in must be your own. Any work submitted for credit that includes the words or ideas of anyone else must fully and accurately identify your source with a citation. (By the way, submitting the same paper to more than one class for credit is also academic misconduct.) If you are confused about this or do not understand the consequences of academic dishonesty at the UO—or the ethical issues behind these university policies—please read these guidelines:

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>

In the event of an act of plagiarism, I will impose sanctions, as provided in :

[http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx#Academic\\_Misconduct](http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx#Academic_Misconduct). **Any act of plagiarism may result in an F in the course, even for a first offense.**

## *Schedule*

### **April 2: Introduction: What Is Environmental History?**

Introductions • Discussion of readings • How to frame a question

#### **Readings:**

- ◆William Cronon, “Kennecott Journey: The Paths Out of Town,” in William Cronon, George Miles, Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky* (1992) **(B)**
- ◆Richard White, “Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the Right Questions,” in Al Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds., *Major Problems in American Indian History* (2001). **(B)**
- ◆Donald Worster, “Nature and the Disorder of History,” *Environmental History Review* 18 (1994): 1-15. **(B)** (also available through JStor)
- ◆Po-Yi Hung and Abigail Popp, “How to Frame a Researchable Question,” in <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/questions.htm>

### **April 9: Exploring the Library (Meet in Special Collections, Knight Library, 2th Floor N)**

Special Collections and the Document Center (Government Documents, Microforms, Newspapers, Maps) • Library databases • Picking a good topic

#### **Assignments:**

- (1) **Due next week, April 15:** Scavenger Hunt. You will be assigned to teams of two. Working together, look at the Scavenger Hunt list. Notice that it is arranged in four columns. Locate one item from each of three columns and bring it to class. If it is non-circulating, scan it or ask the librarian to scan it for you (or a portion of a long document). Also, please bring a list of the items you found and their citations. Be prepared to discuss in class how you located each item
- (2) **Due next week, April 16:** Paper proposal. This requires you to identify a topic, frame a question, and identify primary sources that will help answer the question. To identify sources, you’ll need to spend some time looking at them to see how useful they will be and any challenges you may face using them.

#### **Readings:**

- ◆Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 1-30 (skip text box on pp. 6-8).
- ◆Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 1-25, 75-103, 112-214



### **April 16: Getting Acquainted with Sources**

Discussion of government documents, census records, statistics • Taking notes

#### **Assignments:**

- (1) **Scavenger Hunt due.** Post your three documents on-line **by 5 p.m. Monday, April 15.**
  - (2) Paper proposal **due at the beginning of class today.** Be sure to post your proposal on-line and bring a hard copy to class.
  - (3) **Due Friday, April 19:** Using the discussion tool on Blackboard, offer constructive criticism regarding at least one of your classmate's proposals. Please complete this discussion by 5 p.m.
- Graduate students: Group meeting, TBA

#### **Readings:**

- ◆ Presnell, *The Information Literate Historian*, pp. 247-84.
- ◆ Joseph Taylor III, "El Niño and Vanishing Salmon: Culture, Nature, History, and the Politics of Blame," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29 (1998): 437-57. **(JStor)**
- ◆ Bob Reinhardt, "Drowned Towns in the Cold War West: Small Communities and Federal Water Projects," *Western Historical Quarterly* 42 (2011): 149-72. **(JStor)**
  - For the articles by Taylor and Reinhardt, examine their sources carefully and think about how they analyze them to develop their analysis.

### **April 23: Broad Outlines of Pacific Northwest Environmental History**

Environmental history themes • Discussion of proposals • Outlining

**Assignment:** Research, research, research! (And prepare for next week's assignments.)

#### **Readings:**

- ◆ Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 75-77.
  - ◆ Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 52-74.
  - ◆ Read one chapter, of your choice, from William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940*, or William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940-2000*, **on reserve** in Knight Library. (We will select these chapters in advance.)
  - ◆ Read three of the following four essays (your choice):
    - Kevin Marsh, "Save French Pete: Evolution of Wilderness Protests in Oregon," in *Natural Protests: Essays on the History of American Environmentalism*, ed. by Michael Egan and Jeff Crane. **(B)**
    - Peter Kopp, "'Hop Fever' in the Willamette Valley: The Local and Global Roots of a Regional Specialty Crop," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 112 (2011): 406-33. **(JStor)**
    - Bradley G. Shreve, "'From Time Immemorial': The Fish-In Movement and the Rise of Intertribal Activism," *Pacific Historical Review* 78 (2009): 403-34. **(JStor)**
    - Ellen Stroud, "Troubled Waters in Ecotopia: Environmental Racism in Portland, Oregon," *Radical History Review* 74 (1999): 65-95. **(America: History and Life)**
- Graduate students: Read two chapters in Robbins and all four articles.



### **April 30: What Do Historians Do With Sources?**

Source criticism • Visual images

#### **Assignments:**

- (1) Outline due. **Please be sure to post this on Blackboard by 12 noon, and bring a hard copy to class.**
- (2) Select one of your sources, no more than one page in length. **Scan it and post it to Blackboard by 12 noon.** Please also bring a hard copy to class.
- (3) Continue research!

#### **Readings:**

- ◆ Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 31-38, 59-74.
- ◆ Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 26-51, 104-11, 215-246.
- ◆ Douglas Cazaux Sackman, ed., *A Companion to American Environmental History* (on reserve in Knight Library)—read one essay that relates to the topic of your paper
- ◆ Kathleen Brosnan, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Environmental History* (on reserve in Knight Library)—read at least one encyclopedia entry that relates to the topic of your paper

### **May 7: Writing and Signposting**

#### **Assignment:**

Continue research!

#### **Readings:**

- Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 39-58, 77-118
- Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 285-91, 308-18 (optional)
- Jennifer Price, “Missed Connections: The Passenger Pigeon Extinction,” in *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America* (2000) **(B)**
- For Price’s essay, consider the following, and be prepared to discuss these points in class:
    - What is the purpose of this article?
    - What is the thesis; that is, what is the author arguing?
    - What are the author’s secondary arguments or points?
    - What are his or her assumptions and evidence?
    - How does s/he structure the narrative? What smaller stories does s/he tell?
    - What’s missing?
    - Does the author convince you? Why or why not?

### **May 14: Writing**

#### **Assignment:**

- (1) Draft opening and thesis paragraphs **due. Please post on Blackboard by 12 noon.** Also bring a hard copy for each member of class, plus one for me and one for you.
- (2) Individual meetings with me this week, by appointment (sign-up sheet)
- (3) Continue researching and writing!

#### **Reading:**

- Mark Fiege, “The Weedy West: Mobile Nature, Boundaries, and Common Space in the Montana Landscape,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 36 (2005): 22-47. **(JStor)**
- For Fiege’s article, consider the questions posted under May 7, and be prepared to discuss.

**May 21: Presentations**

**Assignment:**

(1) You will offer a 5-7 minute discussion of your paper, focusing on its argument, its evidence, and any challenges or problems you've confronted that you would like help with.

(2) Draft of paper due to me and two of your classmates, as assigned, **by Thursday, May 23, at 5 p.m.**

► Graduate students will meet with me in a separate roundtable to discuss your papers, date/time/place TBA.

**May 28: Writing Workshop**

**Assignment:**

You will read drafts by two of your classmates and offer a five-minute oral assessment of each, followed by discussion. Your partners will likely appreciate written comments, too! Graduate students will assist me in facilitating these discussions.

► Graduate students will meet with me in a separate roundtable to discuss your papers, date/time/place TBA

**Reading:**

Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 119-23

**June 4: No Class**

**Assignment:**

Work on your papers!

**June 11: Finals week**

**Final paper due June 11.** Please upload your paper through Safe Assign by 5 p.m. and deliver a hard copy to my office, 363 McKenzie. **REMEMBER, NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED, AND THERE WILL BE NO EXTENTIONS.** Early papers are always welcome.