

**History 473/573 • Fall 2013**  
**American Environmental History:**  
**Progressive Era-Present**

*Lecturer: Professor Marsha Weisiger*

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*office hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 3-4 p.m., or by appointment*

*Lecture and discussion schedule: Tuesday/Thursday, 10-11:20, 16 Pacific*

**TIP:** Read this syllabus carefully and refer to it often. It offers a “road map” to this course, explaining grading policies, providing weekly reading assignments, and alerting you to in-class activities and lectures requiring advanced preparation. Adjustments to the lecture schedule, however, may occur at my discretion and will be announced in class.

***Introduction***

Environmental history explores the past through an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates insights from ecology, geography, anthropology, and cultural studies, as well as history. At its essence, it considers how humans and their natural environments have interacted and reshaped each other through time. In this class, we'll follow several paths of inquiry: 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? As a recurring theme, we'll also pay special attention to the marks people leave on the physical landscape, and we'll consider how we might learn more about human history by using those marks as clues.

This class satisfies the core humanities requirement for Environmental Studies and Environmental Science.

***Course Objectives:***

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

- Trace the history of changes to the American environment over time
- Trace the history of environmental politics 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

## **Marsha Weisiger/Environmental History Syllabus/2**

### **Readings**

The readings for this course are extensive, but they're also highly readable. We will read three analyses of the history of forestry, fisheries, and environmentalism in their entirety, most of a collection of short primary sources (the documents that historians use to write history), and a portion of the classic primary source, *Silent Spring* (a favorite with students). In addition, short readings (primary sources and journal articles) will be posted on Blackboard. Anticipate reading 100-120 pages per week (roughly 25 pages per day).

Nancy Langston, *Forest Dreams/Forest Nightmares*

Connie Y. Chiang, *Shaping the Shoreline: Fisheries and Tourism on the Monterey Coast*

Finis Dunaway, *Natural Visions: The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform*

David Stradling, *Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts*

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

If all this reading seems daunting, be aware that reading history is different from reading, for example, a geology textbook, because I do not expect you to commit the text to memory. Rather, you must read for argument and evidence. A primer on how to read history books is posted on Blackboard, under "Resources."

► **Graduate students:** In addition to completing all components of the course at a graduate-level standard of analysis, graduate students will participate in two group meetings to discuss the additional readings, which we will schedule for weeks 6 and 10.

### **Grading**

Below are the course requirements and their value in determining your final grade. Failure to complete any one of these requirements will be grounds for failure in the course. In addition, **class attendance is required**. A more complete description of each graded component follows.

Short Analytical Papers on the Books	150 pts.
Journals on Primary Sources	75 pts.
Term Project	100 pts.
Final Exam	100 pts.
Class Participation	25 pts.
Field Trip	25 pts.
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>475 pts.</b>

### **Grading Scale**

466-475 = A+	442-465 = A	428-441 = A-
418-427 = B+	394-417 = B	380-393 = B-
371-379 = C+	348-370 = C	333-347 = C-
285-332 = D	<285 = F	

Failure to complete any component of the course may result in failure of the entire course.

## ***Marsha Weisiger/Environmental History Syllabus/3***

### ***Grading Rubric***

The following rubric provides guidance when grading your essays.

A (Superior essay) – Your thesis is clear and insightful. Your argument is identifiable and sound, and all of the ideas in the paper flow logically. You have selected appropriate evidence and/or quotations and analyzed them well. You support every point with more than one example. You anticipate and successfully defuse counter-arguments. You recognize different points of view in your analysis. You make insightful connections between the past and the present, when appropriate, and yet you focus on the past. Each paragraph has a solid topic sentence, and your conclusion is persuasive. Your sentence structure, grammar, and spelling are excellent. You are not over-wordy. You have cited all quotations and evidence.

B (Good essay) – Your thesis is clear, but it may not be particularly insightful or original. Or it may not be easily identified, except by the end of the essay. Or it may be implicit, not explicit. You do a solid job of synthesizing material, but you do not develop your own insights. Your argument usually flows logically and makes sense, but gaps in logic exist. You give evidence to support your argument, but perhaps it's not the best evidence you could have chosen or it's skimpy. Your writing style is clear, but you overuse passive voice or are wordy or redundant. Your sentence structure, grammar, and spelling are generally clear, but there are occasional lapses. You have cited all quotations and evidence.

C (Fair essay) – Your thesis is unclear, vague, or difficult or impossible to identify and provides little structure for the paper. Or it is a statement of an obvious point. Your understanding of the topic is simplistic. Your paper is a loose collection of statements, rather than a cohesive argument. It wanders from one thing to the next without logic. You have few or no topic sentences, and you have not organized your paragraphs into a coherent framework. Your examples are few, weak, vague, inappropriate, or inaccurate, so that you fail to support your argument. You offer quotations but do not analyze their meaning or show how they support your argument. Your writing is unclear, padded, and riddled with problems in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Nonetheless, it's clear you made a good-faith effort.

D (Poor essay) – Your paper shows a lack of effort or minimal comprehension of the subject. It's not absolutely clear that you have read the material you're writing about. Your paper is simply a rant about an issue. You focus on the present, not the historical issue at hand. Your argument is extremely difficult to understand and confusing, owing to major problems in structure and analysis.

F (Failure) – You clearly did not read the material you're writing about, or you plagiarized part or all of your paper.

This grading rubric is based on standards adopted by the history department. For the department's official standards, see: <http://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/index.php>.

### ***Short Analytical Papers (150 pts.)***

For each of the three major books (*Forest Dreams*, *Forest Nightmares*; *Shaping the Shoreline*; and *Natural Visions*), you will write an analytical paper of approximately 750-1000 words. Analyze a theme or issue you think is important, interesting, provocative, or surprising in the book. The point is to think deeply about one of the issues that the author raises, or perhaps the book's argument or "big idea," and analyze it. I will give you some ideas to think about as you read each book. **Tip:** I am not looking for a "book report," a synopsis of the book, or a discussion of whether or not you liked the book. I want analysis. You will upload these papers through SafeAssign.

### **Formatting Papers**

All papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins and a Times New Roman 12-point font and **saved in Word**. Indent the beginning of each paragraph by 5 spaces. Do not add a space

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between paragraphs. (Microsoft's default format is 1.5 spaces with an extra space between paragraphs, so you need to reset those defaults.)

Citations: If you're identifying a quotation within an assigned reading that is the sole focus of the assignment (as with the short papers and journals), you should simply cite the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. In all other instances, please use the Chicago Manual of Style citation method (see Blackboard).

### ***Journals (75 pts.)***

As indicated in the syllabus, for the readings of primary sources in *Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts, Silent Spring*, and on Blackboard, you will write a journal entry of perhaps 350 words on Blackboard. Your entry must be posted before the class discussion on the given reading, as the assignment portal will "close" at 10 a.m. You may skip the journal entry for two sets of readings. I strongly encourage you to reserve those skips for when you really need them, as I will not accept late entries. You will be penalized for failing to post a journal entry for at least three sets of readings and will be rewarded for recording strong journal entries for four or five.

For each set of readings, select one interesting aspect (preferably one that covers all the readings in the set), and record your reflections, thoughts, and insights. The journals do not need to be formal essays; they need to show thoughtful reflection on relevant themes. They should be neither rants nor reviews. Do not gush. In assessing journals, I look for the following:

- Reading comprehension
- Uses evidence to support points
- Integrates all the readings (though not necessarily dealing with each individual document)
- Thoughtful reflection
- Evidence of critical and/or creative thinking
- Evidence of synthesis, analysis, and evaluation

I will provide on-line comments and post a grade on the totality of the journals after the last journal entry is due.

### ***Term project (100 pts.)***

#### **Undergraduates**

For your term project, each of you will examine a set of primary sources regarding the history of logging and forestry in the Pacific Northwest. This project has three general components: (1) In preparation for this project, you will read Nancy Langston's *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares*, which we will discuss in class. This will help provide context for your paper. (2) You will participate in a field trip in Week 3, which is also mandatory. (You may sign up for the trip for Friday or Saturday, though there will be a limit of 25 students on each trip. Please make whatever arrangements are necessary for participating in the field trip. There will be no opportunities to make it up.) In recognition of the extra effort necessary for participating in the field trip, you will receive 25 points of credit. (2) You will select, read, and analyze a set of primary sources in one of the collections in the archives at Knight Library, using questions that I provide as guidance. (In Week 2, we will visit the archives and discuss how to analyze primary sources.) You will then write a paper of

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approximately 2,000-2,500 words (8-9 pages), plus a bibliography, that analyzes the documents and places them within their broader historical context. You will likely need to do some additional reading in the journal literature to develop that context. Please save the document in Word, and upload through SafeAssign by Friday, Dec. 6. Early submissions are welcome!

### **Graduate students**

You will write two 1,500-word critical review essays on U.S. environmental history, 1890-1990. Each of the reviews will cover a pair of books on a subject, and each review must cover a different subject. One of each of those pairs must be a classic in the field, and the other must have been published within the last ten years. For help in selecting your topics and books, consult: Kathleen A. Brosnan, ed., *The Encyclopedia of American Environmental History*; Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *A Companion to American Environmental History*; the bibliographies linked to my website, [marshaweisiger.net/resources/html](http://marshaweisiger.net/resources/html); the bibliographies on the Forest History Society website: <http://www.foresthistory.org/Research/biblio.html>; and/or reviews in the journal *Environmental History*. For examples of critical review essays, consult *Reviews in American History*. Please consult with me via email regarding your choices. The first review is due by Week 6, and the second by the end of the course. We will schedule two group discussion meetings in weeks 6 and 10 to discuss each of these pairs.

### ***Final Exam (100 pts.)***

The final exam will have two sections: a matching-identification section and an essay section. In the matching section, you will match a name, place, or term to the best statement identifying it. In the essay section, you will write extended answers to two questions. You will have a choice of questions to answer, and you must write a coherent essay on each, drawing on the lectures and readings for the class. Each essay will be graded on the basis of the argument you make, the evidence you use to support your argument, your demonstrated understanding of the information and historical interpretations provided both in class and in the readings, and the overall coherence of the essay. We will discuss the exam format in more detail during an in-class review session. To help you focus your studying, I will give you a long list of possible questions and a list of names/places/terms from which the actual exam questions will be chosen.

### **Participation (25 pts.)**

Your participation grade will be based on attendance and participation in class, especially during the discussions of the readings each week. Note that participation means active engagement in class discussions. To record attendance, I will give quizzes, based on the assigned readings; you must bring a 3x5 index card for that purpose. After two absences, I will deduct 5 points for each absence. Exceptions will be made only in the event of a documented university-sponsored activity or a protracted illness, with a doctor's note. I do not want documentation of your absences, except in the following instances: (1) you need to submit a late assignment or take a make-up exam; (2) you participated in a university-sponsored activity; (3) you've had a prolonged absence due to a protracted illness or other calamity that you can document. Leaving early or arriving after the lecture has begun will count as an absence.

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### **Classroom Policies**

Please be sure turn off all electronic devices (including computers, except for a documented disability, with my permission) while in class. Ringing cell phones are my pet peeve; they disturb your classmates and me. Please also refrain from text messaging in class. Repeated failure to turn off your electronic devices may result in dismissal from the classroom. Please do not leave the classroom to take a phone call, unless it is an emergency. I also request that you arrive on time and stay until the end of class.

I do not accept graded course work after the class period for which the assignment is due, and a missed deadline will result in a 0 on the assignment. I do not accept emailed assignments; please plan ahead so that you successfully upload your work before class. “Make up” exams and late essays will be accepted only for a documented excused absence due to illness, a documented severe illness or death in your family, or a documented school-sponsored activity in which you are officially representing UO. No other excuses will be accepted. The one exception is the final paper, which I will accept up to the date of the final exam—with a five-point penalty for every day it is late, including weekends.

**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. Note that replacing words with synonyms, changing verb tense, stringing together phrases from a source, or other minor alterations does not qualify as paraphrasing. Even with a citation, failure to put quotation marks around direct quotations constitutes plagiarism, because it implies that the writing is your own. (By the way, submitting the same paper to more than one class for credit is also academic misconduct.) In the event of an act of plagiarism, I will impose sanctions, as provided in the Student Code of Conduct. The minimum sanction will be an F on the assignment, but plagiarism can also merit an F in the course, even for a first offense. See [http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx#Academic\\_Misconduct](http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx#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/>

**Accommodations:** If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please arrange to see me soon. Request a letter from Disability Services that verifies your disability.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS**

**Week 1: Death and Redemption**

**T** • (Oct. 1): The World We Had Lost

**R** • (Oct. 3): Saving America's Wildlife

► **Journals due on Blackboard by 10 a.m.**

*Reading Assignment (33 pp.):*

Stradling, *Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts:*

Grinnell, "American Game Protection: A Sketch," pp. 45-48

Wright, "Keep on Peddling!" pp. 49-50

Hornaday, excerpt from *Our Vanishing Wildlife*, pp. 51-52

**(Blackboard):**

"Constitution of the Boone and Crockett Club"

Roosevelt, "An Elk-Hunt at Two-Ocean Pass," from *The Wilderness Hunter* (1910)

**Week 2: Gospel of Efficiency**

**T** • (Oct. 8): Gifford Pinchot and the Professional Conservationists

► **Journals on "Kennecott Journey" are due on Blackboard by 10 a.m.**

**R** • (Oct. 10): Archival workshop (in two groups)/discussion of undergraduate term project

*Reading Assignment (37 pp.):*

Stradling, *Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts:*

Pinchot, "Principles of Conservation," pp. 19-22

Ladies' Home Journal, "What is Meant by Conservation?" pp. 32-35

George L. Knapp, "The Other Side of Conservation," pp. 35-39

**(Blackboard)**

William Cronon, "Kennecott Journey: The Paths Out of Town," from *Under an Open Sky:*

*Rethinking America's Western Past*

► **Graduate students—additional reading assignment:**

Arthur F. McEvoy, "Toward an Interactive Theory of Nature and Culture: Ecology, Production, and Cognition in the California Fishing Industry," *Environmental Review* 11 (1987): 289-305. **JStor.**

**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



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### **Week 3: Dammed**

**T** • (Oct. 15): John Muir: Radical Amateur

**R** • (Oct. 17): Reclaiming the Desert/Discussion of *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares*

► **Essay on Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares due through SafeAssign by 10 a.m.**

**F** • (Oct. 18): Field Trip to Fall Creek, Willamette National Forest (Group 1)

**S** • (Oct. 19): Field Trip to Fall Creek, Willamette National Forest (Group 2)

► **Please note that participation in the field trip is mandatory**

*Reading Assignment (366 pp.):*

Stradling, *Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts*: (by Tues.)

Smythe, "The Miracle of Irrigation," pp. 28-31

Olney, "Water Supply for the Cities about the Bay of San Francisco," pp. 87-90

Parsons, "Proposed Destruction of Hetch-Hetchy," pp. 91-94

John Muir, "Hetch Hetchy Valley," pp. 94-101

Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares* (entire) (by Thurs.)

### **Pre-Field Trip Preparation:**

#### **Blackboard**

P.L. Marks and Sana Gardescu, "Inferring Forest Stand History from Observational Evidence," in *Historical Ecology Handbook: A Restorationists' Guide to Reference Ecosystems*, ed. by Dave Egan and Evelyn A. Howell (2001)

Thomas A. Spies, "The Science of Old Growth, or a Journey into Wonderland," from *Old Growth in a New World: A Pacific Northwest Icon Reexamined*, ed. by Thomas A. Spies and Sally L. Duncan, 2009.

Richard H. Waring, "Land of the Giant Conifers"

### **Week 4: Living Dangerously**

**T** • (Oct. 22): Disaster!

**R** • (Oct. 24): Dead Horse in the Street: Urban Squalor and Reform

► **Journals due on Blackboard by 10 a.m.**

*Reading Assignment (15 pp.):*

Stradling, *Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts*

Beard, "Civic Improvement," pp. 64-66

Richards, "Conservation by Sanitation," pp. 70-72

Reed, "Address on the Smoke Problem," pp. 75-77

Kroeger, "Smoke Abatement in St. Louis," pp. 78-79

Wilson, "The Cure for the Smoke Evil," pp. 80-81

Ohle, "Smoke Abatement: Report . . . at Washington University," pp. 82-83

### **Week 5: New Deal**

**T** • (Oct. 29): A New Deal for the Environment/Discussion of Final Project

**R** • (Oct. 31): Seeking Refuge/Discussion of *Shaping the Shoreline*

Chiang, *Shaping the Shoreline*

► **Essay on Shaping the Shoreline due through SafeAssign by 10 a.m.**

*Reading Assignment (183 pp.):*

Chiang, *Shaping the Shoreline* (entire) (by Thursday)

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### **Week 6: A New Ethos**

**T** • (Nov. 5): Aldo Leopold, Wilderness, and the Land Ethic

► **Journals due on Blackboard by 10 a.m.**

**R** • (Nov. 7): A Flash in the Desert: Nuclear Wastelands and the Cold War West

*Reading Assignment (87 pp.):*

**Blackboard:**

Leopold, “Thinking Like a Mountain” and “The Land Ethic,” both from *A Sand County Almanac*

Radiation Exposure hearings

*Work Assignment:*

Work on your final project!

► **Graduate Students: discussion group meeting for first pair of books, TBA**

### **Week 7: Toxic Bodies**

**T** • (Nov. 12): Sounding the Alarm: Rachel Carson and *Silent Spring*

► **Journals due on Blackboard by 10 a.m.**

**R** • (Nov. 14): Environmental Justice

*Reading Assignment (211-350 pp., depending on how much of Carson you read):*

**Blackboard:**

Carson, *Silent Spring* (at a minimum, read Chapters 1-4, 7-9, 12, 16-17. Better yet, read the entire book—you’ll be glad you did!

### **Week 8: Earth First**

**T** • (Nov. 19): Thinking Globally: Climate Change

**R** • (Nov. 21): Protecting Wilderness/Discussion of *Natural Visions*

***Essay on Natural Visions due through SafeAssign by 10 a.m.***

*Reading assignment (214 pp.):*

Dunaway, *Natural Visions: The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform* (entire)

► **Graduate Students—additional reading assignment**

Gregg Mitman, “When Nature is the Zoo: Vision and Power in the Art and Science of Natural History,” *Osiris*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 11 (1996): 117-43. **JStor**

**Blackboard:**

William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature”

Richard White, “Are You an Environmentalist, or Do You Work for a Living?”

### **Week 9: Taking Action**

**T** • (Nov. 26): Acting Locally

**R** • (Nov. 28): THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS

*Assignment: COMPLETE YOUR FINAL PROJECT*

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**Week 10: Environmental Politics**

**T** • (Dec. 3): The Environmental Decade

**R** • (Dec. 5): Backlash/Review

**Final project due by Friday at 5 p.m. Please upload through SafeAssign.**

*Reading Assignment (20 pp.)*

**Blackboard:**

Jennifer Price, "Remaking American Environmentalism: On the Banks of the L.A. River," *Environmental History* 13 (2008): 536-55

► **Graduate Students: discussion group meeting for second set of books, TBA**

**Finals Week • Final exam: Mon. (Dec. 9) • 8 a.m. (Ugh!)**