

HIST 311 – Environmental History



Course Description: HIST 311 Environmental History. (3 credits) Interdisciplinary investigations into environmental themes and topics in historical perspective. Case studies explore the environmental dimensions of social, cultural, economic, military, epidemiological, and ecological practices and policies and how they impact class, gender, identity, prosperity, security, warfare, health, nature, and sustainability. May be repeated under different themes or topics no more than two times. F, S, Su

Desired Student Learning Outcomes: Students:

- √ gain knowledge of issues and concepts that define environmental history;
- √ apply this knowledge to specific environmental issues in historical context;
- √ understand the conditions under which people preserve or destroy their environment;
- √ investigate how the concerns of environment and social justice intersect;
- √ use environmental data as historical evidence;
- √ adopt strategies for critical reading, writing and thinking;
- √ query how environmental convictions influence scholarship; and
- √ explore how ideas of natural landscape influence human interactions with the environment.

Learning Outcomes Measured 3 Ways: **1) daily 1-page summary reading response essays** that measure the student's ability to identify, understand, and evaluate the elements and vectors of global environmental history in weekly readings (worth **50%** of the final grade). **2) Daily Class Participation:** You will need to amass a set number of points to receive full credit (worth **25%** of the final grade) for discussion during the term. [I use the following grading rubric for discussions: -1 = took up class time with unproductive comments and/or evinced a failure to have read the assignment; 0 = was not present; 1 = present but added nothing constructive; 2 = contributed comments to the discussion that reveal a partial or working knowledge of the material being discussed; 3 = offered comments that were directly related to the readings, and on multiple occasions; 4 = offered multiple, well-considered comments that were readings-related, and showed careful thought, even to the point of redirecting the course of conversation—virtually leading the discussion at times]. Counting all schedule discussions of the assigned readings, and you will need to amass 100 points to receive the full 25% toward the course grade. **3) Final: 8- to-10-page research essay** that identifies, traces, and evaluates specific links between human geography, environmental change, and political economy in modern world environmental history (for **25%** of your final grade).

Grading: A= 90-100; B+= 86-89; B= 80-85; C+= 76-79; C= 70-75; D+= 66-69; D= 60- 65; F= 0-59; FX= failure as a result of academic dishonesty. The FX grade is treated as an F in the grade point average computation. With regard to Repetition of Course Work, courses that receive an FX grade are not eligible to be repeated under the university's "Repeat Forgiveness" option, and instead may only be repeated via the "Standard Repeat" option. When assigned, the FX grade will become a part of the student's internal academic record and will appear on unofficial transcripts and within the student information system. The FX grade will not appear on the student's official transcript. Also see "Essay Grading" below.

Strategies for Success:

- 1) Make success in school a priority;
- 2) Study approximately 10 hours per week outside of class;
- 3) Read approximately 70-90 pages per week outside of class;
- 4) Attend class regularly and bring reading materials;
- 5) Turn in all assigned work on time;
- 6) Be prepared to write about 35 typed pages for this course.

Attendance and class participation are necessary for you to learn. Each student should arrive at class on time and remain for the entire class period. Polite and constructive participation is expected. I adhere to the University Policy outlined in the current University catalog. It indicates that if you miss 25% of your classes unexcused you may receive an 'F'.



Student Consultations: You are welcome to call (at x2350), skype (during office hours), or stop by my office at any time. The best time to catch me is after class and during my scheduled office hours. If these times are inconvenient, I would be happy to meet with you at a more agreeable time.

Required Readings:

Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (Verso)
Christian Parenti, *Tropic of Chaos* (Nation)
Jared Diamond, *Collapse* (Random House)
The Climate Report 2019 (Melville)
* **Additional readings available vis Moodle**

Suggested Background Readings:

J. Donald Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World*
Clive Ponting, *A New Green History of the World*
Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History*
Frank Uekoetter, *The Turning Points in Environmental History*

Weekly Topics and Readings

Week 1: Introduction: Environmental History

Read: Ratzel, “Nature, Rise, and Spread of Civilization” and “2015 National Security Implications of Climate-Related Risks and a Changing Climate.”

Week 2: Comparative Perspectives

Read: Diamond “A Tale of Two Farms” and Acemoglu and Robinson, “So Close and Yet so Different.”

Week 3: Colonial Landscapes (New England and Canary Islands)

Read: Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (selections) and Crosby, “The Fortunate Isles.”

Week 4: Settlement and Biological Expansion (New Zealand and the Americas)

Read: Crosby, “New Zealand” and “The Biological Metamorphosis of the Americas.”

Week 5: 19th-Century Climate Change (China, India, and Brazil)

Read: Mike Davis, *Mid-Victorian Holocausts*, chs. 1-2.

Week 6: Modernization, Development, and Sustainability (Japan and Haiti)

Read: Diamond, *Collapse*, “Prologue” and chs. 9 and 11.

Week 7: Vulnerability, Risk, and Control (Rhodesia and Chernobyl)

Read: Colson, “Rain-Shrines of the Plateau of Tonga in Northern Rhodesia” and TBA (Chernobyl). **Film Clip:** Risk Analysis in Tim Burton’s “Mars Attacks” (1996).

Week 8: Dustbowl Anthropologies (American Midwest and Contemporary Syria)

Read: Ken Burns, *The Dust Bowl* (selections), Steinbeck, “Harvest Gypsies,” and TBA.

Week 9: Modernization and Sustainability (China, Australia, and Rwanda)

Read: Diamond, *Collapse*, chs. 10, 12, and 13.

Week 10: Geographies of Poverty and Enmiseration

Read: Davis, *Planet of Slums*, chs. 1-4; Richard Nixon’s *State of the Union* address, January 20, 1970, and Janise Ray, *The Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* (selections). Consider, “Poverty in South Carolina” @ <http://wn.com/poverty_in_south_carolina>.

Week 11: Slum Ecology and Global Health

Read: Davis, *Planet of Slums*, chs. 5-7 and Berji Kristin, *Tales from the Garbage Hills* (selections). Consider, “Scavenging for Food” @ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzU9ixn66AU&feature=player_embedded#!>.

In-class: “Cholera in Haiti” @

<[HTTP://VIDEO.NYTIMES.COM/VIDEO/2012/03/31/WORLD/AMERICAS/100000001463594/CHOLERA-GRIPS-HAITI.HTML?NL=TODAYSHEADLINES&EMC=EDIT_TH_20120401](http://video.nytimes.com/video/2012/03/31/world/americas/100000001463594/cholera-grips-haiti.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120401)>.

Week 12: Natural or Social Disasters? (New Orleans and Bangladesh)

Read: Nancy Scheper-Hughes, “Katrina: The Disaster and its Doubles,” “NOLA Flood Protection Final Report Summary: Executive Summary,” Neufeld, “Thursday, Sept. 1, 2005,” and Shaw, “Floods and Gender in Bangladesh.”

Week 13: Ecological Degradation in the Tropics (South and Central America)

Read: Tucker, “The Tropical Costs of the Automobile Age” and Tucker, “Crop on Hooves.”

Week 14: Desertification, Poverty, and Militarization (East Africa)

Read: Parenti, *Tropic of Chaos* (Selections) and “How Economic Inequality Harms Societies” @ <http://www.truthdig.com/avbooth/item/how_economic_inequality_harms_societies_20111030/>

Week 15: Doing Environmental History

Read: Weiner, “A Death-Defying Attempt to Articulate a Coherent Definition of Environmental History,” *Environmental History* 10 (July 2005): 404-420, Donald Worster, “Appendix: Doing Environmental History,” in *The Ends of the Earth* (Cambridge University Press, 1988): 289-307.

Final Exam Essay as Scheduled

Make-ups: students must take all exams and hand in all assignments at the specified times and places. If this is impossible due to *extraordinary* circumstances, inform me before class and alternative arrangements may be possible (extraordinary circumstances include documented illness, death in the family, or institutional activities as approved by the academic deans).

Internet Resources:

Citation Guide

<<http://libguides.coastal.edu/content.php?hs=a&pid=48406>>

Contemporary World Maps

<www.nationalgeographic.com/maps/index.html>

Environmental History: Explore the Field

<<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/departments/espm/env-hist/>>

Environmental History

<<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/hstm/data/529.htm>>

Environment and History

< <http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EH.html>>



Academic Integrity: I expect each student to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. **Plagiarism** is the use of another's work and the presentation of it as one's own. Plagiarism is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship and undermines the credibility of academic inquiry. Plagiarism takes many forms. The clearest abuse is the use of another's language or written work without quotation marks and citation (even if it is in one's own words). Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: any limited borrowing, without attribution, of another person's research findings, hypotheses, data, theories, rhetorical strategies, interpretations; the submission of laboratory reports, research papers, computer programs, etc., not authored by the student; and the submission of material copied from any published source without attribution (including the Internet). More subtle abuses include the appropriation of concepts, data, or notes all disguised in newly crafted sentences, or reference to a borrowed work in an early note and then extensive further use without attribution. Note that the resubmission of a student's previously submitted laboratory reports, research papers, computer programs, etc., without the instructor's approval constitutes cheating.

Essay Format: essays are to be typewritten and be formatted accordingly: 1-inch margins all around; 1 1/2 spaced, provide footnotes, and use Palatino 11; Courier 10; Verdana 11, or New Times 12. Writing: you are responsible for the mechanical and organizational aspects of your essays. Assistance in all aspects of written assignments is available at the Writing Center in 208 Prince Building. Call (843) 349-2937 to set up an appointment. Late Essays- will lose one letter grade per class. This will also apply to papers returned for not properly following the formatting instructions. Also, remember to put your name, course number, and section number on your work.

Essay Grading:

A=This paper is *insightful*. It addresses the assignment in a way that indicates your comprehension of and control over the assignment itself as well as an understanding of the underlying issues. The thesis goes beyond what was said in class and the message is communicated *clearly, concisely, and directly*. There is confidence in this writing; your voice is lively and intelligent.

B=This paper meets and, at times, exceeds the basic requirements of the assignment. It indicates that you are *beginning*, at times, to think through the major ideas in the assignment. The message is communicated with generally effective clarity, directness, and conciseness. Some *unevenness* in writing may be apparent. While a degree of thought has gone into the paper, it is solid but not striking. Ideas may be original but remain poorly connected one to another.

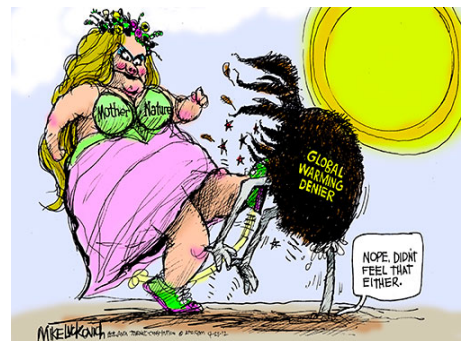
C=While the paper offers *little insight* into the greater issues of the assignment, it meets the basic requirements. The paper's central argument (thesis) remains weak, fuzzy, unsound, or illogical. While the message is, for the most part, reasonably clear, concise, and direct, there may be *unevenness* in the writing. Portions of the work reveal minor but numerous mechanical, grammatical, and stylistic errors. Examples provided might prove familiarity with the materials

but do not support an argument and/or reveal a certain amount of confusion concerning what the texts actually say. The text reads like a high school book report.

D= The basic requirements of the assignment are *partially met*; however, additional revision is necessary if you are to communicate the message clearly. There is considerable *unevenness* in the writing. The paper reveals *major flaws* such as mechanical errors; poor organization; serious misreading(s) of the text; long stretches of plot summary; a missing or weak thesis. The paper may be shorter than the assigned length.

F=The assignment's *basic requirements* are met only marginally or not at all. The writing is not clear, concise, or direct. The paper may be partially or wholly *plagiarized*.

Moodle: Announcements, assignments, grades, and resources will be posted to Moodle. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with Moodle and for acquiring the technology necessary to run Moodle. You are responsible for ensuring that all of the course's Moodle features will function smoothly on your computer-of-choice. The University recommends using the browsers Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome, and using a hard-wired internet connection (not wi-fi). The "Moodle Student Info Sheet" is the best place to begin:



<https://www.coastal.edu/intranet/scs/docs/moodle/MoodleStudentInfo.pdf>. For additional help, see Student Computing Service's "Moodle Access Information" at <http://www.coastal.edu/scs/index.html?type=moodinfo>. You can also contact Student Computing Services directly at 843-349-2220 or via an email or help request form found here <http://www.coastal.edu/scs/index.html?type=contact>.

Student Consultations: You are welcome to call me or stop by my office during posted office-hours, as I will be in. If these times are inconvenient, I will try to arrange to meet at another time. You may contact me by phone, by email, or by leaving a note for me in my faculty mailbox. Direct correspondence, concerns and/or questions should be sent to pwhalen@coastal.edu. When you write, please include your class and section information (number or meeting time), and I will try to answer within 24 hours.

Course Communication: All changes, announcements and communication will be done via the course's Moodle website. The default email account for this system is your student email. Please check the website frequently! Anyone not using their student email will need to make the proper arrangements to have their mail forwarded to the proper account.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarized assignments will receive a "0" grade and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Subsequent infractions will likely lead to withdrawal from the course. The FX grade is treated as an F in the grade point average computation. With regard to Repetition

of Course Work, courses that receive an FX grade are not eligible to be repeated under the university's "Repeat Forgiveness" option, and instead may only be repeated via the "Standard Repeat" option. When assigned, the FX grade will become a part of the student's internal academic record and will appear on unofficial transcripts and within the student information system. The FX grade will not appear on the student's official transcript.

Disruptive Behavior: Such as sleeping, chit-chatting, tardiness, attending to cell phones or email, studying for other classes, being disrespectful, wasting class time with unrelated issues or counterproductive contributions, exhibiting a "checked out" or uninterested attitude, and/or engaging in distracting or disruptive behavior during class time that distracts Prof. Whalen and thereby disrupts teaching and learning will, in the first instance, receive an informal oral in-class warning, in the second instance, a written (email) warning, and, in the third instance, be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. For a complete copy of the Coastal Carolina University Code of Student Conduct see:

<http://www.coastal.edu/media/studentaffairs/deanofstudents/pdf/CCU%20Code%20of%20Student%20Conduct%20WEB%20Aug14%20PRINT.pdf>

Reasonable Accommodation Policy: Coastal Carolina University is committed to equitable access and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Accordingly, any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally so that we might discuss accommodations and resources necessary to insure your full participation and facilitate your educational experience. Individuals seeking reasonable accommodations, disability testing, or other arrangements should contact Accessibility & Disability Services (843-349-2503 or <https://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices/>).

Inclement Weather Notice: Closing of the University for Inclement Weather

In the event of hazardous weather, faculty, staff, and students are requested to listen to local radio and television stations or visit the Coastal Carolina University website for official University closing announcements. Announcements about hazardous weather are also posted on the University's homepage. Review the [Hazardous Weather and Emergency Conditions Leave Policy](#) (FAST-HREO-220). Instructors may refer to the [Contingency Instruction website](#) or Section VIII N. Contingency Instruction for information about what to do if class has been cancelled.

Internet Resources:

Environmental History

<<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/hstm/data/529.htm>>

Environment and History

< <http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EH.html>>

Guide to History of Science Journals

<<http://nervm.nerdc.ufl.edu/~msslwww/hsjrl.html>>

“World Bank 2013 Climate Change Report” @

<<http://climatechange.worldbank.org/content/climate-change-report-warns-dramatically-warmer-world-century>>

Environmental History Discussion Lists

<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/hstm/hstm_ema.htm>

Environmental History Discussion List

<<http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~aseh/archives/threads/>>

Natural History Resources

<<http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/subway/nathistres.html>>

Environmental Organization Web Directory

<<http://www.webdirectory.com/>>

American Nature Study Society

<<http://hometown.aol.com/anssonline/index.htm>>

History of Environmental Justice

<<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jrajzer/nre/history.html>>

Web Sites Devoted to Environmental Philosophy

<<http://hnet2.msu.edu/~aseh/syllabi/isenberg.html>>

Directory to Bibliography in Environmental Ethics

<<http://ecoethics.net/bib/>>

Human Development Report <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/>>



Alternative Modules:

Environment, Disaster, and Resilience. Read: Gilbert, “Studying Disaster,” Kreps, “Disaster as Systemic Event and Social Catalyst,” and Hewitt, “Social Construction of Disaster.”

Edenic Ecologies (Pre-Gold Rush California and Columbian Amazonia) Read: Anderson, “A World of Balance and Plenty” and Sweet, “A Rich realm Disturbed.”

Fishing, Sustainability and the Oceans. Read: W. J. Bolster, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail*, chs. 4-5.

Engineering Safety for the Urban Environment. Read: Jeffrey Jackson, *Paris Under Water...1910*, chs. 1-3. Consider, “The Great Flood of Paris” @ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00s0g1w>

The Phylloxera Epidemic: Scientists and the Land. Read: Christy Campbell, *The Botanist and the Vintner*, part 1.

Sheppard, “Climate Change Takes a Village” @

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/14/shishmaref-alaska-climate-change-relocation_n_6296516.html?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000592

Recycling and Corporatizing Waste Heather Rogers, *Gone Tomorrow* (selections) and Pomeranz, “Calamities without Collapse.” Consider: *The National [US] Environmental Policy Act of 1969* @ <http://www.nepa.gov/nepa/regs/nepa/nepaeqia.htm>

US Military: Report on Effects of a Changing Climate to the Department of Defense
https://partner-mco-archive.s3.amazonaws.com/client_files/1547826612.pdf