

History 567
Winter, 2004
Randolph Roth

American Environmental History

Office hours: TTh 11:30-1:00

165 Dulles Hall (292-6843)

Class hours: TTh 9:30-11:18 in Journalism 304

E-mail: roth.5@osu.edu

American Environmental History will focus on the history of American ecosystems from last Ice Age to the present. We will study scientific and historical debates over the causes of environmental change. We will spend some time on the history of the environmental movement and environmental philosophy, but our main purpose is to consider the historic impacts of humans and nonhumans on each other.

Required Readings: available at SBX only

William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*

Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*

Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1955-1980*

Arthur McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries, 1850-1980*

Carolyn Merchant, *Major Problems in American Environmental History*

Hal Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the United States since 1945*

Donald Worster, *The Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*

COP-EZ reader (CE): available at COP-EZ at Tuttle Garage

The syllabus provides a detailed outline of what we'll cover in the course. Please refer to it often as you plan your studying. All required texts are available at the Student Book Exchange.

We will not read all these books in their entirety and most are available through the University library system. You needn't purchase all of them, if you can't afford them. Please feel free to share books with classmates or borrow them from the State Library or the Columbus Metropolitan Library System.

Examinations

Discussion and Attendance (15% of grade): Attendance and participation in class discussions is mandatory. If your attendance is perfect and you do not participate in class discussions, you will receive a B- (82) for discussion and participation. If your attendance is poor, your grade will fall below 82; if your participation in discussions is good, your grade will rise above 82.

Quizzes (25% of grade): There will be quizzes on the readings in the course nearly every week. The quizzes will ask you to report fully and accurately on the content of readings in the course.

Midterm and Final Examinations (15% and 25% of grade): There will be a midterm examination and a final examination. The midterm will ask you to write one comprehensive one-hour essay, the final two. The exam schedule is:

Midterm: Thursday, February 5
Final: Thursday, March 18, 9:30am-11:18am

Essay (20% of grade): You will be asked to turn in an interpretive essay (no more than 5-6 pages in length), in which you reflect on a major problem in environmental history. You should devote these essays to an analysis of a particular historical and/or scientific debate. The essays should not be mere book reports, but should reflect your effort to engage, critique, and move beyond the ideas of particular authors as you strive to integrate their work into the larger framework of the course.

Please think seriously and creatively about the content of these essays, and write them as well as you know how. They will be evaluated for the quality and concision of their prose as well as for the breadth and depth of their thought. That said, try to have fun with the essays: they're your chance to play with the ideas in the course and to test out different ways of looking at this complicated material.

(If you would like to replace the essay with a short research paper, you are welcome to do so provided you make prior arrangements with me by no later than the fifth week of the quarter.)

Be forewarned that late essays will be marked down by at least one-third of a grade unless other arrangements are made well prior to the due date. No essay will be accepted after the final exam. Your grade will be determined as follows:

Discussion and attendance	15%
Quizzes	25%
Midterm	15%
Final	25%
Essay	20%

Schedule of Readings and Discussions

Week 1. Introduction; Native American Ecology (1/6 & 8)

What is environmental history?

What were the relationships between various Native American peoples and the environment?

Merchant, *Major Problems*, 1-14

William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *Journal of American History*, 78 (1992), 1347-76 (CE)

David Appell, "The New Uncertainty Principle," *Scientific American* (January 2001) 18-19 (CE)

W. Wayt Gibbs, "The Arctic Oil and Wildlife Refuge," *Scientific American* (May 2001) 62-9 (CE)

Sarah Simpson, "Debit or Credit? Whether CO₂-consuming Trees Can Offset Global Warming Is Far from Certain," *Scientific American* (February 2001) 25

Week 2. Asian and European Invasions (1/13 & 15)

Migration, disease, death, and extinction in the early Holocene and the post-Columbian period

Co-invasion of plants and animals

Selling plants and animals

Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 1-103, 132-216, 269-308

Jeffrey Sachs, et al. "The Geography of Poverty and Wealth," *Scientific American* (March 2001) 70-5 (CE)

Recommended: Crosby, 104-131, 217-268. Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*

Week 3. Asian and European Invasions; Native American Ecology (con't) (1/20 & 22)

Resource exploitation, environmental equilibrium, and environmental damage

"Mammoths of the Ice Age" (video in class)

Thompson Webb III, "Is Vegetation in Equilibrium with Climate? How to Interpret Late-Quaternary Pollen Data," *Vegatatio* 67 (1986), 75-91 (CE)

Björb Kurtén and Elaine Anderson, *Pleistocene Mammals of North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980, 235-8 (CE)

Robert S. Thompson, et al., Shasta Ground Sloth at Shelter Cave, New Mexico: Environment, Diet, and Extinction, *Quaternary Research* 14 (1980), 360-76 (CE)

Richard Stone, "The Cold Zone," *Discover* (Feb. 2000), 58-65 (CE)

"Tusk Tales," *Discover* (Jan. 1997), 22 (CE)

"Stranded on Santa Rose," *Discover* (Apr. 1995), 20 (CE)

Merchant, *Major Problems*, 32-64

Glen Martin, "Keepers of the Oaks," *Discover* (Aug. 1996), 44-50 (CE)

McEvoy, *Fisherman's Problem*, 19-40

Recommended: Merchant, *Major Problems*, 65-132

Week 4. Developing a New Nation (1/27 & 29)

Nature and civilization

Cultivation and exploitation

Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, xiii-206

Lisa J. Graumlich and Margaret B. Davis, "Holocene Variation in Spatial Scales of Vegetation Pattern in the Upper Great Lakes," *Ecology* 74 (1993), 826-39 (CE)

Recommended: Merchant, *Major Problems*, 247-85

Week 5. An Urban, Industrial Destiny (2/3 & 5)

MIDTERM EXAMINATION: Thursday (2/5), Week 5

Improving nature

Developing the Midwest and the South

Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 207-390

Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," *Journal of American History* (1991), 465-85 (CE)

Recommended: Merchant, *Major Problems*, 209-46, 286-323

Steinburg, Ted (1991) *Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 6. Environmental Disaster on the Great Plains (2/10 & 12)

Settling the Great Plains
The Dust Bowl

Worster, *Dust Bowl*

V. T. Holliday, "Middle Holocene Drought on the Southern High Plains," *Quaternary Research* (1989), 74-82 (CE)

J. E. Weaver, "Replacement of True Prairie by Mixed Prairie in Eastern Nebraska and Kansas," *Ecology* 24 (1943), 421-34 (CE)

"The Once and Future Dust Bowl," *Discover* (Apr. 1997), 16 (CE)

Carl Zimmer, "How to Make a Desert," *Discover* (Feb. 1995), 50-56 (CE)

Week 7. Ecology and Resource Management (2/17 & 19)

Managing the environment
Conserving resources

"Wild by Law: Bob Marshall, Aldo Leopold, and Howard Zahniser" (video in class)

McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem*, 65-92, 123-84, 227-57

Daniel Pauly and Reg Watson, "Counting the Last Fish," *Scientific America* (July 2003) 42-7 (CE)

Week 8. The Contradictions of Progressive Conservation (2/24 & 26)

PAPER DUE: Friday, Week 8

The Conservation Vision
Planning Against Disaster

"Rachel Carson and Silent Spring" (video in class)

Merchant, *Major Problems*, 338-413, 444-83

Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation*, 1-31

Week 9. Environmental Decades: The Perils of Success (3/2 & 4)

Urban Pollution

Redefining Risk: NEPA and the Rise of Environmental Law
Energy Crisis

Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities*

Merchant, *Major Problems*, 484-522

Jocelyn Kaiser, "Sipping from a Poisoned Chalice," *Science* (October 17 2003) 376-9 (CE)

Rebecca Renner, "Scotching Scotchguard," *Scientific American* (March 2001) 18 (CE)

Rebecca Renner, "An Environmental Solution: Ionic Liquids May Replace Hazardous Solvents," *Scientific American* (August 2001) 19 (CE)

Recommended: Merchant, *Major Problems*, 414-43

Dunlap, Thomas (1981) *Scientists, Citizens, and Public Policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Russell, Edmund (2001) *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sellers, Christopher C. (1997) *Hazards of the Job: From Industrial Disease to Environmental Health Science*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Week 10. Environmental Politics in the Reagan/Bush/Clinton/Bush Era (3/9 & 11)

Twentieth Century Environmental Problems

Backlash: Environmental Politics in the 1980's

Scale Shift: The Prospect of Global Change

Our Common Environmental Future

Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation*, 33-210

Merchant, *Major Problems*, 523-68

Recommended: Terence Kehoe, "Merchants of Pollution? The Soap and Detergent Industry and the Fight to Restore Great Lakes Water Quality, 1965-1972," *Environmental History Review* (1992).

FINAL EXAMINATION: Thursday, March 18: 9:30-11:18