

HIST 3540 AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Helen Rozwadowski

Teaching Assistant: Mr. Adam Hill

Class hours:

Tuesdays & Thursdays

12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

At Avery Point: ACD 309

At Storrs: Rowe 321

Office hours for Prof. Roz.:

At Avery Point, Room ACD 101-D: Tuesdays, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

At Storrs, Wood Hall, Room 306: Thursdays, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

And, by appointment – please email.

Office Hours for T.A. Adam Hill:

Storrs, Wood Hall, Room 208: Thursdays, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

And, by appointment – please email.

Email addresses:

helen.rozwadowski@uconn.edu

adam.hill@uconn.edu

PURPOSE: This course analyzes the transformation of the North American environment from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, paying special attention to the effects of human practices and attitudes, including different notions of nature (e.g. Native American and Euro-American, male and female); the romantic response to wilderness in an industrializing society; the rise of the conservation/preservation movements; the development of environmental science; the growth of the environmental movement; and the implications of recent environmental policy.

CLASS FORMAT: In order to serve the needs of Environmental Studies, History, and Maritime Studies majors, this class will be held simultaneously at the Avery Point and Storrs campuses. In most cases, the instructor will be at Avery Point on Tuesdays and at Storrs on Thursdays, so that all students will have direct access and the ability to meet face-to-face.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course, you will:

- Understand the importance of including the natural world in history.
- Gain an overview of North American environmental history from the time before European contact to the present.
- Learn about environmental history's development as an area of specialization in history (historiography).
- Become acquainted with the discipline of history, including its questions and methods.

- Practice analyzing primary sources.
- Improve reading, critical thinking, communication and analytical skills.

READINGS (books available at the Coop):

- William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*
- Richard White, *Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River*
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*
- David Stradling, ed., *Conservation in the Progressive Era* (University of Washington Press, 2004).
- David Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment, 1968-1972* (University of Washington Press, 2012).
- Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

Always consult the syllabus FIRST to find the reading assignment. Most readings other than the books are available on electronic reserve via the course's HuskyCT site (use the Course Reserves button). A few readings and some additional course materials are available through the Course Materials button, and a few readings are available online with the url/link provided in the syllabus.

BRING TO EVERY CLASS MEETING:

- Copy of book(s) and/or readings (or a device to access online readings) & your notes from reading them.
- Paper and pen/pencil (or device) to take notes in class.
- Syllabus (current version is always available on HuskyCT).
- Copy of any assignment due before the start of class, for your reference during class discussions.

REQUIREMENTS:

Class Participation (30% of your grade)

Students are expected to attend class unless there is a valid excuse and the instructor has been contacted ahead of time by email. Your participation grade will be based on:

- Evidence that you have done the reading carefully before class time.
- Active participation in class discussions and small group discussions.
- Short written assignments of four types (listed on the SYLLABUS; NOT accepted after the deadline; CANNOT be made up; lowest grade of these will be dropped) including:
 - *On-line Open Book Reading Quizzes*
 - *One-page Reading Responses* -- Often you will write one-page responses to the readings. Questions/topics are available on HuskyCT (use Reading Response button) and on the syllabus. These Reading Responses must be submitted via HuskyCT *before* class and will not be accepted or graded after that time.

- *In-Class Writing* -- A few times during the semester we will devote class time to informal writing, which you will revise and turn in via HuskyCT within 24 hours of class. Questions/topics are available on HuskyCT and on the syllabus.
- *Campus Engagement Responses* -- During the semester you must attend, and write a one-page response to, TWO campus (or community) events related to the environment. See Course Materials folder for suggestions. Any Avery Point/Storrs or other UConn event related to environmental themes is fine (if in doubt, ask ahead of time). You must seek approval in advance if you wish to attend off-campus/community events. The Teale Environment and Nature Lectures are especially appropriate for this class (held at Storrs and live streamed at AP), as are the AP Coastal Perspectives lectures for Avery Point students. In each of your two responses, discuss some aspect of the relevance of the event to the course, **making specific reference to a reading or readings, a theme or topic, and/or an issue covered in class.** DUE DATES: The FIRST Response is due Friday, March 6th by 5:00 p.m. The SECOND Response is due Friday, April 24th, 5:00 p.m. These responses will NOT be accepted after that time.

Essays (30% of your grade)

Three times during the term you will write a 2-3 page essay (topics are available on HuskyCT at the Essay Assignments button). These papers are based on assigned course readings and are due the day after a class meeting, so you can take advantage of class discussion. Essays must be double-spaced and must be handed in via HuskyCT.

Deadlines for these are:

- Wednesday, February 4th, 5 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 25th, 5 p.m.
- Friday, April 10th, 5 p.m.

Midterm Exam (20% of your grade)

Final Exam (20% of your grade)

SYLLABUS & COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule of readings and assignments in this syllabus is subject to change. Students must check the course HuskyCT site and their UConn email often to get timely information about revisions, cancellations, etc.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As a student at the University of Connecticut, you act in accordance with its guidelines for academic integrity, available at <http://www.ossa.uconn.edu/> under "Student Resources." Cheating, plagiarizing, or otherwise taking credit for work not your own constitutes academic misconduct, and in this class I will prosecute it with consequences that include, but are not limited to, a zero on the assignment or failure in the course. If you have any questions about whether a particular behavior constitutes cheating, please come see me or a tutor or staff member in the Academic Center (Avery Point) or Writing Center (Storrs).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact your instructor and the appropriate staff person in Student Services as soon as possible.

GRADE CONVERSIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and lower

CLASS TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

WEEK 1

Tues., Jan 20 Introduction to course and course format
Creation Narratives
READING: (in-class readings provided; copies on HuskyCT, Course Materials)

Thurs. Jan. 22 What is Environmental History?
READING:

- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, Prologue & ch 1, pp. 3-21.
- Jim O'Brien, "A Beaver's Perspective on North American History," in Carolyn Merchant, ed., *Major Problems in American Environmental History* (DC Heath and Company), pp. 78-83.

WEEK 2

Tues. Jan 27 Native American Land Use
READING:

- Charles C. Mann, "1491," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 2002): 41-53.
- Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 3-53.

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class (on HuskyCT)

- Week 2 Online Reading Quiz

Thurs. Jan. 29 European Approaches to the New World
READING:

- Alfred Crosby, "Reassessing 1492," *American Quarterly* 41 (4)(Dec. 1989): 661-669.
- Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 54-107.
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 2, pp. 22-39.

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class, posted to HuskyCT

- One-page Reading Response
Topic: Based on course readings and materials, comment on the widely-held belief that native Americans lived in harmony with nature. Use evidence from the readings & lectures in your answer.

WEEK 3

Tues. Feb. 3 Economy and Environment: Wood and Waste
READING:

- Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 108-170.
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 3, pp. 40-54.

ASSIGNMENT

***Essay 1 due Wednesday, February 4th, 5:00 p.m.**

Thurs. Feb. 5 Economy and Environment: Apples

READING:

- Pollen, “Desire: Sweetness/Plant: The Apple” (chapter 1), pp. 1-58, in *The Botany of Desire* (Random House, 2002).
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 4, pp. 57-71.
- View YouTube material on Johnny Appleseed (list of links at Course Materials button)

WEEK 4

Tues. Feb. 10 Industrialization

READING:

- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, chs 5-7. pp. 72-115.

Thurs. Feb. 12 Economy and Environment: The Ocean

READING (NOTE: everyone reads Jackson; choose one of other two):

- Richard W. Judd, “Industrializing the Margins,” chapter 4 in *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), pp. 99-121, with notes pp. 289-293.

AND

- Daniel Vickers, “Those Dammed Shad: Would the River Fisheries of New England Have Survived in the Absence of Industrialization?,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 61(4)(2004): 685-712.

OR

- Glenn M. Grasso, “What Appeared Limitless Plenty: The Rise and Fall of the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Halibut Fishery,” *Environmental History* 13(1)(2008): 66-91.

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class, posted to HuskyCT

- One-page Reading Response. Topic: Drawing from the readings for today’s class and relevant Steinberg chapters, was industrialization (the subject of last class meeting) responsible for declines in fisheries? Employ specific examples and arguments from the readings to support your answer.

WEEK 5

Tues. Feb. 17 The Romanticization of the Landscape

READING:

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*, pp. 1-71.

VIEW ONLINE BEFORE CLASS:

- “The Splendour and Misery of Urban Life,” McCord Museum of Canadian History (3 minute video)

<http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/edu/ViewLoitDa.do;jsessionid=368C6CDD9A3D8C54D8F76A530804BF72?method=preview&lang=EN&id=1453>

ASSIGNMENT due Wednesday, February 18th by 12:30 p.m., turned in via HuskyCT.

IN-CLASS WRITING: The landscape paintings of the Hudson River School of painters reveal conflicts within the emerging industrial-capitalist society of the nineteenth century. Analyze the Frederick Church painting, "Icebergs" (1861). How might the treatment of the natural environment versus the human-made objects represent romantic comments on industrialization and urbanization? Submit a typed, one-page response based on your in-class writing via HuskyCT within 24 hours of class.

Thurs. Feb. 19 City and Country: Chicago

READING:

- William Cronon, "Meat," chapter 5, pp. 207-259, in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1991).
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 12, pp. 187-202

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class (on HuskyCT)

- Week 5 Online Reading Quiz

WEEK 6

Tues. Feb. 24 Alternative Visions

READING:

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*, pp. 72-124.

ASSIGNMENT

***Essay 2 due Wednesday, February 25th, 5:00 p.m.**

Thurs. Feb. 26 Westward Expansion(ism)

READING:

- Frederick Jackson Turner, Chapter 1, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." online at: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>.
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, chs 8 & 11, pp. 116-135; 173-186.

WEEK 7

Tues. Mar. 3 **MIDTERM EXAM (Material from Weeks 1-6)**

Thurs. Mar. 5 Resource Conservation, Wilderness Preservation?

READING:

- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 9, pp. 136-154.
- Stradling, ed., *Conservation in the Progressive Era*, pp. 3-41

ASSIGNMENT

***First Campus Engagement Assignment due Friday, March 6th, 5:00 p.m.**

WEEK 8

Tues. Mar. 10 Resource Conservation, Wilderness Preservation?

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *Conservation in the Progressive Era*, pp. 43-63
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 13, pp. 203-224.

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class, posted to HuskyCT.

- One-page Reading Response.

Based on your readings of the primary sources from March 10 & 12, identify one objection that opponents of Conservation voiced to Progressive conservationist ideas, and explain how a pro-Conservationist would try to address/argue against that objection.

Thurs. Mar. 12 Urban Ecology, Human Ecology

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *Conservation in the Progressive Era*, pp. 64-83.
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 10, pp. 155-169

ASSIGNMENT due Friday, March 13th by 12:30 p.m., turned in via HuskyCT.

- **IN-CLASS DISCUSSION & WRITING EXERCISE:** Drawing from at least three of the readings from Stadling, ed., *Conservation in the Progressive Era*, Parts 3 and 4, explore similarities between concerns related to cities and people, on the one hand, and more traditional environmental concerns, on the other.
- Submit a typed, one-page response based on your in-class discussion and writing within 24 hours of class.

SPRING BREAK MARCH 16 - 20

WEEK 9

Tues. Mar. 24 Hetch-Hetchy Controversy

In class: view "The Wilderness Idea" film.

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *Conservation in the Progressive Era*, pp. 85-101
- White, *Organic Machine*, to 58.

Thurs. Mar. 26 Whose Rivers?

READING:

- White, *Organic Machine*, 59 to end.

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class, posted to HuskyCT.

- One-page Reading Response. Topic: Comparing this book to *Changes in the Land* by Cronon, identify and discuss a contribution White made to the field and/or methods of environmental history.

WEEK 10

Tues. Mar. 31 Consuming Nature: Tourism

READING:

- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 14, pp. 225-239.
- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 3-34.

Thurs. Apr. 2 Aldo Leopold and the Land Ethic

READING:

- Marybeth Lorbiecki, "Save that Game, 1915-1919," pp. 65-81 in *Aldo Leopold: A Fierce Green Fire* (Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, pp. 137-141, 237-264.
- Optional: *Green Fire* – film available on Course Reserves

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class (on HuskyCT)

- Week 10 Online Reading Quiz

WEEK 11

Tues. Mar. 7 Ecology, Environmental Science, and Rachel Carson

READING:

- Rachel Carson, "The Pattern of the Surface," pp. 31-40 in *The Sea Around Us* (New American Library, 1961).
- Linda Lear, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature*, ch18, pp. 428-456.

Thurs. Apr. 9 View in class: CBS TV Special on Carson's Silent Spring, April 1963

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 35-58

ASSIGNMENT

***Essay 3 due Friday, April 10th, 5:00 p.m.**

WEEK 12

Tues. Apr. 14 The Environmental Movement

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 59-86
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 15, pp. 240-268.

Thurs. Apr. 16 The Environmental Movement

NO CLASS; view on your own the film *Soylent Green* (available through HuskyCT Course Reserves)

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 87-105
- Adam Rome, “The New Eco-Infrastructure,” in *The Genius of Earth Day* (Hill and Wang, 2013), pp. 209-258, with notes pp. 319-329.

WEEK 13

Tues. Apr. 21 Environmental Movement – Discussion of all related readings & films

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 106-137

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class, posted to HuskyCT.

- One-page Reading Response. Topic: Using any class sources thus far, discuss evidence in *Soylent Green* that this film was produced as a reaction to the environmental movement.

Thurs. Apr. 23 (Un)natural Disasters

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 139-160
- Ted Steinberg, “Do-It-Yourself Deathscape,” chapter 3, pp. 47-75, in *Acts of God: The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in America* (Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 16, pp. 269-300.

ASSIGNMENT

***Second Campus Engagement Assignment due Friday, April 24th, 5:00 p.m.**

WEEK 14

Tues. Apr. 28 Environmental Crisis of the Oceans

READING:

- Carl Safina, “Lauching a Sea Ethic,” *Wild Earth* (Winter 2002-2003), 2-5.
- Rozwadowski, “Epilogue” to *Fathoming the Ocean*.
- Jeff Hutchings and Ransom Myers, “The Biological Collapse of Atlantic Cod off Newfoundland and Labrador,” in Ragnar Arnason, ed., *The North Atlantic Fisheries: Successes, Failures, and Challenges* (University of Prince Edward Island Press, 1995).
- Sylvia Earle, “Changing Climate, Changing Chemistry,” chapter 7 in *The World is Blue: How Our Fate and the Ocean’s Are One* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2009), pp. 151-173.

ASSIGNMENT due by 12:30 p.m. before class (on HuskyCT)

- Week 14 Online Reading Quiz

Thurs. Apr. 30 REVIEW

FINAL EXAM, Per University Final Exam Schedule, Week of May 4-9:

At Avery Point: TBD

At Storrs: TBD