

HIST 4911/AMST 3680

Themes in Environmental History: Cultural Practices and the Natural World

Fall 2019, TTh, 3:30–4:45
Social Sciences Building, 3010

Dr. Albert Way
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Office Hours: TTh 11:00–2:00, and by appointment
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Course Description

In short, environmental history is the study of the interaction between humans and nonhuman nature over time. Environmental historians assume that in order to understand the past we must also understand how people have interacted with the natural world—how they have shaped the nature around them and how they have been shaped by it. We are also interested in *ideas* about nature, in how our understandings of the natural world have affected our relationships with it. Environmental history takes as a central premise that nature, too, has a history, one profoundly shaped by human beings, and that the record of the human past is incomplete without some account of the role the physical world has played in human events.

As the subtitle of the course suggests, we will take a particular interest in the idea of landscape as a hybrid of nature and culture, the place in which human beings interact with nature to shape their physical surroundings. The course is topically designed and will cover a broad spectrum of material, so if you like your history told chronologically, this course may be a little jarring. We'll be jumping around from place to place and topic to topic in an effort to cover as much as possible, and still keep some semblance of order. The course is roughly divided into five themes.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of the course are to 1) introduce you to the thriving field of environmental history, 2) develop your skills as critical readers of primary and secondary historical documents, 3) learn how to analyze historical relationships between people and their environments, and 4) improve your reading, writing, and discussion skills.

To accomplish these objectives, we will approach the subject matter in a variety of ways. The traditional stuff of a history course—reading, writing, and discussion—will be central to the student's workload. I will give mini-lectures to introduce new material and provide background, but we will spend the bulk of our class time discussing the readings. The required reading list includes a balance of good historical writing, primary documents, and memoir, all of which is essential to understanding how we, as historians, tell about the past. **This course is reading and writing intensive, so please study the course schedule and plan ahead.**

Readings

Our themes are based on three core books, and each theme unit will include several supplementary readings to provide some historical and historiographical context.

Core Books:

Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History*, 4th Edition (Oxford, 2018)

Erin Stewart Mauldin, *Unredeemed Land: An Environmental History of the Civil War and Emancipation* (Oxford, 2018)

Bartow Elmore, *Citizen Coke: The Making of Coca-Cola Capitalism* (Norton, 2016).

**PDFs or Links to supplementary articles are posted in D2L.

Course Requirements

Exams: (30%)

You will have **two exams** this semester (a midterm and a final). They will consist of identification and essay questions, which will be taken from the lectures and assigned readings. We will discuss some strategies for studying for these exams, as well as how to write an effective exam essay in class. You will need to bring a **large blue book** to class for each exam.

Synthetic Essays: (45%)

You will write **three synthetic essays** on your unit readings (choose three from the five units). These essays will focus on a particular theme or question that emerges from the readings, and ***I will expect you to use all of the readings from that unit to address your theme.*** The essay, then, is to be a *synthesis* of the readings—not a summary or regurgitation, but a synthesis that uses the reading material to advance an argument. It should be **3–5 pages**, double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12pt font (common fonts only please, i.e. Times New Roman, Arial, or Cambria). You will use the *Chicago Manual of Style*'s “Author-Date” system, found here:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. Scroll down and click the “Author-Date” tab.

I encourage you to make an appointment with the KSU Writing Center if you need further assistance on any writing project. Experienced writing assistants work with you on any aspect of your writing—topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and more. For more information or to make an appointment (appointments are strongly encouraged), visit <http://www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter/>, or stop by Room 242 in the English Building.

Quizzes: (10%)

You will have frequent in-class quizzes and writing assignments that assess your progress and your understanding of the readings.

Research Project: (15%)

TBA

Grading

Midterm Exam:	15%
Final Exam:	15%
Synthetic Essays:	45%
Quizzes:	10%
Research Project:	15%

Grading Scale

Students are evaluated on the following scale:

- A - (90–100%)
- B - (80–89%)
- C - (70–79%)
- D - (60–69%)
- F - (59% or below)

I—Indicates an incomplete grade for the course, and will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Incomplete grades are only valid after submission of the Incomplete Grade form (signed by both the instructor and student) to the Department Chair's office.

Late Work and Make-Ups

Papers will be submitted at the beginning of class on the date they are due. Late work will lose one letter grade (10 points) for each day the work is late. You will not have the opportunity to take make-up quizzes, but I will drop your lowest quiz grade. If an emergency results in a missed exam, you should contact me as soon as possible. Under ordinary circumstances, no make-ups will be permitted if you do not contact me within 24 hours.

Class Participation

In addition to the above, you are expected to fully participate in classroom discussion. You should come to class each day prepared to engage the readings with thoughtful comments and questions. Be ready to present, articulate, and defend your ideas, as well as listen to and comment on the ideas of others. The success of this class depends, in large part, on your willingness to participate in discussion.

Academic Integrity

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section 5. C of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the university's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to university materials, misrepresentation/falsification of university records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards.

Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI), which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement. See also <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct>.

Students suspected of violating the KSU statement of Academic Honesty will meet with the instructor to discuss the violation **AND** will be reported to the Department of Student Conduct according to the process outlined at the following link: <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/scai-misconduct-procedures>. For a detailed description of plagiarism and how to avoid it, see here: <http://plagiarism.org/>

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory, and I will take role every day. If you are more than fifteen minutes late for class, or if you leave early, it will count as a $\frac{1}{2}$ day. Each absence over **five** will result in **five points** subtracted from your final grade. Your physical and mental presence in the classroom is essential to your ability to do well in this course. Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a class; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal.

Contacting Me

I will hold regular office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00–2:00. If these hours do not work for you, feel free to knock on the door to see if I’m in, or we can make an appointment for a convenient time. You can also contact me via office phone or email, but keep in mind that I sometimes do not check email at night.

Electronic Communications. The University provides all KSU students with an official email account. As a result of federal laws protecting educational information and other data, **this is the sole email account you should use to communicate with your instructor or other University officials.**

ADA Compliance:

Students with qualifying disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who require “reasonable accommodation(s)” to complete the course may request those from Office of Student Disability Services. Students requiring such accommodations are required to work with the University’s Office of Student Disability Services rather than engaging in this discussion with individual faculty members or academic departments. If, after reviewing the course syllabus, a student anticipates or should have anticipated a need for accommodation, he or she must submit documentation requesting an accommodation and permitting time for a determination prior to submitting assignments or taking course quizzes or exams. Students may not request retroactive accommodation for needs that were or should have been foreseeable. Students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Student Disability Services is located in the

Carmichael Student Center in Suite 267. For more information please visit their website, sds.kennesaw.edu/sds.

Contact information is as follows:

SDS Email: sds@kennesaw.edu

Primary number for Kennesaw campus: [470-578-2666](tel:470-578-2666)

Primary number for Marietta campus: [678-915-7244](tel:678-915-7244)

Electronic Devices Policy

I aim to create a congenial classroom experience guided by the imperative of mutual respect among participants. The ring of the cell phone, the lowered head and hidden hands of the texter, and the disinterested gaze of the web surfer all amount to a breach of that respect. So turn off all of your electronic devices before entering the classroom; it's just that simple. I will allow the use of laptops to take notes, but if I see that you are using it for other means, you will not be allowed to use it for the remainder of the semester. And remove those headphones!

Course Schedule

**This schedule is a general outline for the semester. If I need to change anything, I will give you plenty of notice.*

**You should complete the readings for the day on which they are listed.*

Theme #1: What is Environmental History?

Week 1

T, 8/20: Course Introduction

Th, 8/22: What is Environmental History?

Read: *Andrew C. Isenberg, “Introduction: A New Environmental History” (**read pgs. 1–20**) (D2L)

*William Cronon, “The Uses of Environmental History” (D2L)

Week 2

T, 8/27: Doing Environmental History

Read: * Donald Worster, “Doing Environmental History” (D2L)

*William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative” (D2L)

Th, 8/29: Environmental Determinism

Read: *Jared Diamond, “Yali’s Question” (D2L)

Theme #2: Movement and Contact

Week 3

T, 9/3: “Pristine Nature” and Indigenous Peoples

Read: *Steinberg, pgs. xi–12 (Preface, Prologue, and Ch. 1)

* William Denevan, “The Pristine Myth” (D2L)

Th, 9/5: Ecological Imperialism in Global Context

Read: *Steinberg, Chapter 2

*Alfred W. Crosby, “Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon” (D2L)

***THEME #1 ESSAY DUE**

Week 4

T, 9/10: Unfettered Accumulation

Read: *Steinberg, Chapter 3

*Steven Stoll, From *Larding the Lean Earth*, pgs. 13–30 (D2L)

Th, 9/12: A World of Commodities

Read: *Steinberg, Chapter 4

*Henry David Thoreau, “Walking” (D2L)

Week 5

T, 9/17: King Climate

Read: *Steinberg, Chapter 5

Theme #3: Civil War and Reconstruction

Th, 9/19: Read: *Mauldin, Introduction

*Steinberg, Chapter 6

Week 6

T, 9/24: Read: *Mauldin, Chapter 1

***THEME #2 ESSAY DUE**

Th, 9/26: Read: *Mauldin, Chapter 2

Week 7

T, 10/1: **EXAM #1**

Th, 10/3: Read: *Mauldin, Chapter 3

Week 8

T, 10/8: Read: *Mauldin, Chapter 4

Th, 10/10: Read: *Mauldin, Chapter 5 and Conclusion

***Oct. 9 is the last day to withdraw without academic penalty**

Theme #4: The Local and the Global

Week 9

T, 10/15: Acting Locally and Globally
Read: *Elmore, pgs. 1–75
***THEME #3 ESSAY DUE**

Th, 10/17: Think Locally, Act Globally
Read: *Elmore, pgs. 76–149

Week 10

T, 10/22: Read: *Elmore, pgs. 151–192

Th, 10/24: Read: *Elmore, 193–261

Week 11

T, 10/29: Read, *Elmore, pg. 262–304

Th, 10/31: Campus Sustainability Tour?

Theme #5: The Local

Week 12

T, 11/5: TBA

Th, 11/7: **No Class—Southern Historical Association**
***THEME #4 ESSAY DUE**

Week 13

T, 11/12: TBA

Th, 11/14: TBA

Week 14

T, 11/19: TBA

Th, 11/21: TBA

Week 15

T, 11/26–Th, 11/28: **Thanksgiving Break**

Week 16

T, 12/3: No class—Work on your Research Projects

Th, 12/5: Presentations
***THEME #5 ESSAY DUE**

Week 17

T, 12/4: Presentations

Final Exam: Thursday, December 12, 3:30–5:30