

## HIST 3540 AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Helen Rozwadowski

Teaching Assistant: Shaine Scarminach

Class hours:

Tuesdays & Thursdays

9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

At Avery Point: ACD 309

At Storrs: Rowe 320

Office hours for Prof. Roz.:

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

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

And, by appointment – please email.

Email: [helen.rozwadowski@uconn.edu](mailto:helen.rozwadowski@uconn.edu)

Office Hours for T.A.: Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Storrs, Wood Hall, Room 14B

And, by appointment – please email.

Email: [shane.scarminach@uconn.edu](mailto:shane.scarminach@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 Thursdays and at Storrs on Tuesdays, so that all students will have direct contact 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 Bookstore):

- 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, which may be an article or chapter on electronic reserve and/or from one of our course textbooks. Course reserve readings can be found on the course's HuskyCT site, under the Readings & Materials button. 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.

#### GRADING

##### **Class Participation (25% of your grade)**

Students are expected to attend class in order to participate actively 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, and being prepared for such in-class work by bringing the readings, your notes and copies of any assignments.
- Short written assignments of four types (these are listed on the syllabus and can be found via HuskyCT underneath the Assignments button). These assignments will NOT be accepted after the deadline and CANNOT be made up; however, the lowest grade of these assignments will be dropped).
  - *On-line Open Book Reading Quizzes* (“Reading Quizzes” button) – These open-book quizzes, due before class, are designed to help you read more effectively for evidence related to argument.
  - *One-page Reading Responses* -- Often you will write one-page responses to the readings. Questions/topics are available on HuskyCT (see “Reading Responses” button) and on the syllabus. These Reading Responses must be submitted via HuskyCT before class.
  - *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 the following day. Questions/topics are available on HuskyCT (“In-class Writing” button) 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. 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, topic, or issue covered in class**. See “Event Suggestions” folder in “Campus Engagement” button on HuskyCT for suggested events; 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 or 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. Due dates: the FIRST Response is due Friday, March 3rd by 5:00 p.m. The SECOND Response is due Friday, April 21st, 5:00 p.m.

### **Essays (25% of your grade)**

Three times during the term you will write a short (2-3) page essay. The 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 1st, 5 p.m.
- Friday, February 24th, 5 p.m.
- Friday, April 7th, 5 p.m.

### **Midterm Exam (25% of your grade)**

### **Final Exam (25% 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 regularly to get timely information about revisions, cancellations, etc.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As a student at the University of Connecticut, you act in accordance with the guidelines for academic integrity as described in “The Student Code.” 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 one of the tutoring or administrative staff in the Academic Center. See

<http://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/>.

## 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 & READING ASSIGNMENTS:

### WEEK 1

Tues., Jan 17 Introduction to course & course format  
 Creation Narratives  
 READING: (in-class readings provided; copies on HuskyCT, Readings & Materials button)

Thurs. Jan. 19 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 24 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 before class (on HuskyCT)
 

- Week 2 Online Reading Quiz

Thurs. Jan. 26 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 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. Jan. 31 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 1st, 5:00 p.m.**

Thurs. Feb. 2 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 in Week 3 Folder at “Readings & Materials” button)

**WEEK 4**

Tues. Feb. 7 Industrialization

READING:

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

Thurs. Feb. 9 Economy and Environment: The Ocean

READING:

- 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.
- 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 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. 14            Alternative Visions

READING:

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

Thurs. Feb. 16            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 before class (on HuskyCT)

- Week 5 Online Reading Quiz

## WEEK 6

Tues. Feb. 21            The Romanticization of the Landscape

READING:

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

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 22nd by noon, 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.

Thurs. Feb. 23            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.

**ASSIGNMENT**

**\*Essay 2 due FRIDAY, February 24th, 5:00 p.m.**

## WEEK 7

Tues. Feb. 28            **MIDTERM EXAM (Material from Weeks 1-6)**

Thurs. Mar. 2            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 3rd, 5:00 p.m.**

**WEEK 8**

Tues. Mar. 7            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 before class, posted to HuskyCT.

- One-page Reading Response.

Based on your readings of the primary sources from March 2 & 7, 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. 9            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 10th by noon, turned in via HuskyCT.

- In-Class Writing: Drawing from at least three of the readings from Stradling, 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 in-class discussion and writing.

**SPRING BREAK    MARCH 13 - 17**

**WEEK 9**

Tues. Mar. 21 Hetch-Hetchy Controversy  
View film *The Wilderness Idea* (available online through UConn Libraries)  
READING:

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

Thurs. Mar. 23 Whose Rivers?

READING:

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

ASSIGNMENT due 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. 28 Consuming Nature: Tourism

READING:

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

Thurs. Mar. 30 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* – [DVD on reserve at AP Library]

ASSIGNMENT due before class (on HuskyCT)

- Week 10 Online Reading Quiz

## WEEK 11

Tues. Apr. 4 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. 6 View in class: CBS TV Special on Carson's Silent Spring, April 1963

READING:



- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 35-58 (A Dying Planet)

### ASSIGNMENT

**\*Essay 3 due Friday, April 7th, 5:00 p.m.**

### WEEK 12

Tues. Apr. 11            The Environmental Movement

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 59-86 (Earth Year, 1<sup>st</sup> half)
- Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, ch 15, pp. 240-268.

Thurs. Apr. 13            The Environmental Movement

View the film *Soylent Green*

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 87-105 (Earth Year, 2<sup>nd</sup> half)
- Adam Rome, “The New Eco-Infrastructure,” in *The Genius of Earth Day* (Hill and Wang, 2013), pp. 209-258, with notes pp. 319-329.
- You can view/review the film *Soylent Green* on your own via <https://www.fan.tv/> for \$2.99.

### WEEK 13

Tues. Apr. 18            Environmental Movement – Discussion of all related readings & films

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 106-137 (Is Catastrophe Coming?)

ASSIGNMENT due 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. 20            (Un)natural Disasters

READING:

- Stradling, ed., *The Environmental Moment*, pp. 139-160 (Continuation)
- 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 21st, 5:00 p.m.**

## WEEK 14

Tues. Apr. 25            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 before class (on HuskyCT)

- Week 14 Online Reading Quiz

Thurs. Apr. 27            REVIEW

**FINAL EXAM, Per University Final Exam Schedule, Week of May 1-6:**

At Avery Point: Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. (tentative)

At Storrs: TBD