HST 481/581: Environmental History of the United States (4 Credits)

Prerequisite: Upper division standing (graduate standing for HST 581).
Instructor: Prof. Jacob Hamblin (jacob.hamblin@oregonstate.edu)
Hamblin office hours: Milam Hall 306C, MWF 10-11 and by appointment

TA: Tina Schweickert (schweict@onid.orst.edu) Office hours: Milam 307, W 1-150pm

Catalog description
A study of human interaction with the environment and the transformation of the landscape and ecology of North America from the Indian period to the present, with special attention to the progressive alterations induced by the modernizing world of agriculture, industry, urbanism, and their relation to the market system in the United States. (Bacc Core Course)

Learning Outcomes
Undergraduate students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
1. Evaluate the cultural and intellectual roots of environmental thought
2. Connect history to ecology and the environmental sciences
3. Discuss the relationship between political ideology and natural resource use
4. Analyze changing attitudes toward wilderness, wildlife, and biodiversity
5. Explain the historical background of contemporary environmental issues
In addition to the above, graduate students should be able to do the following:
1. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in analyzing historical texts
2. Demonstrate ability to utilize primary source materials in crafting historical and historiographic arguments
3. Articulate and evaluate standards and practices
4. Formulate understanding of an original thesis

Evaluation of Student Performance
Undergraduate students will be evaluated on the following assignments: 2 midterms (20% each; 40% total); one final exam (30%); one research paper (20%); discussion participation (10%).

Grading scale: A (94-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-89); B (84-86); B- (80-83); C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D+ (67-69); D (64-66); D- (60-63), F (0-59)

Research Paper
Please see the document “History 481 Paper Assignment” for details.

Discussion
All students are expected to participate in class discussion. At the end of the quarter, I will assign a participation grade, based on your classroom engagement.

Graduate Student Requirements (HSTS 514)
Graduate students will fulfill the same requirements as HSTS 414, with the following amendments. A) The term paper will be an essay, of approximately fifteen
double-spaced pages, assessing the central themes and points of controversy among historians on a given topic, to be chosen in discussion between the student and the instructor. Unlike the undergraduate class, please use endnotes, not parenthetical citations. B) Each week, the student will choose one of the two encouraged/optional readings, and prepare a one-page, single-spaced précis that summarizes the arguments and evidence of the author AND discusses these in the context of week’s main readings.

Graduate student grade breakdown: Midterms 10% each (20% total); Final exam 15%; Weekly précis 5% each (50% total); Paper 15%

Learning Resources


Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature’s Role in American History* 0195331826


Additional readings (available on Blackboard)

For textbook accuracy, please check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website (http://www.osubeaverstore.com/). Syllabi may not have the most up to date textbook information!

**Week One**

**Introduction to Environmental History**

An American Wilderness

**Required reading:** Nash, 23--95; Steinberg, 11--51

**Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):**


**Week Two**

**The Pastoral and the Sublime**

Preservation and Conservation

**Required reading:** Worster, 58--111; Steinberg, 138--156

**Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):**


Week Three
Environmental Determinism


**Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):**


Week Four
Midterm #1
Darwin, Marx, and Capitalism

**Required reading:** Worster, 114--187; Steinberg, 55--115; Tucker, 1--42

**Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):**


Week Five
Markets and the American Empire
Organic Cities and Ecological Catastrophes

**Required reading:** Tucker, 43--112; Steinberg, 116--137

**Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):**


Week Six
Cattle, Deforestation, and Strategic Commodities
Ecological Sciences, Eco-Consciousness

**Required reading:** Worster, 190--253; Steinberg, 157---238; Tucker, 151---222

**Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):**


Week Seven
Midterm #2
Atomic Crises
Required reading: Worster, 256---338; Nash, 182---199

Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):


Week Eight
Wilderness Protection and Silent Spring
The Environmental Movement
Required reading: Worster, 340---432;

Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):


Week Nine
Mother Nature on the Run. PAPER DUE (except grad students)
Guest Speaker: Tina Schweickert, on Oregon’s Ecological Transformation

Required reading: Nash, 200---237; Steinberg, 239---261

Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):


Week Ten
Radical Ideas, Resisting Globalization
Climate and Global Warming (GRADUATE STUDENT PAPERS DUE)

Required reading: Steinberg, 262---285; Nash, 342---378

Encouraged reading (required for graduate students):

Jacob Darwin Hamblin, “Gods and Devils in the Details: Marine Pollution,
Radioactive Waste, and an Environmental Regime circa 1972,” *Diplomatic History* 32 (2008), 539--560

**Week Eleven**

**FINAL EXAM:**

**Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities:**
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737--4098.

**Honor Code:** All students are expected to be honest and ethical in their academic work. Academic dishonesty is defined as an intentional act of deception in one of the following areas: cheating---use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids; fabrication---falsification or invention of any information; assisting---helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty; tampering---altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents; plagiarism---representing the words or ideas of another person as one’s own. See also [http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm).

**Course Evaluation**
We encourage you to engage in the course evaluation process each term – online, of course. The evaluation form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions by Ecampsus. You will login to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.

**Office hours:** All undergraduate students should plan to meet with the instructor at least once during the term to discuss the term paper topic as well as class performance.