

ENVI 259 | HIST 259
Spring 2018

New England Environmental History

Time: Tuesday / Thursday 11:20 - 12:35
Class Location: Hollander 158
Instructor: Professor Laura Martin
Office: Environmental Center Room 216
Office Hours: Thursdays 1-3pm [Signup sheets on Glow] or by appointment
Email: LJM4@williams.edu



Postcard, c. 1901, Williamstown Historical Museum Digitized Collections

Course Description

Have you ever wondered why there are few old-growth forests in New England? What Williamstown looked like before Williams was founded? How landscapes intentionally and unintentionally reflect (often fraught) histories? These are some of the questions we will explore in this course, which introduces students to the discipline of Environmental History. Environmental historians study how humans have shaped the natural world, how material environments have shaped human histories, and how cultural change and material change are intertwined. In addition to revisiting some of the touchstones of U.S. History from an environmental history perspective, we will strive to understand the historical roots of contemporary environmental problems. During the semester we will: (1) read and discuss scholarship on the environmental history of New England; (2) examine how visions of past environments are expressed in museum and digital exhibits, in other media, and in physical landscapes; and (3) conduct original archival research.

Learning Community

In this course we will discuss issues regarding personal and communal identity, including class, sex, race, gender, and religion. It is essential that we all – and at all times – cultivate mutual respect. We will listen to one another generously, which means giving others the benefit of the doubt if they stumble into language to which we object or express a view that we judge in advance as indefensible. We will also speak with total respect for our listeners. When we exchange ideas in this way, disagreement will become a welcome and valuable part of our conversations and our debates will be lively, provocative, and relevant. If at any time you feel limited in your ability to express your ideas openly, please let me know immediately.

Office Hours

To sign up to visit office hours, please use “signup sheets” on Glow. Please come with any questions about readings or discussion, or if you would like to discuss any other aspect of your studies or the field of environmental studies. Come by yourself or with a friend!

Course Structure

This class meets twice per week for 75 minutes. In-class time will include facilitated discussions, in-class assignments, and field trips. Please note that one fieldtrip falls outside of regular class time: we will drive to Mystic Seaport on the night of 4/27 and return the night of 4/28.

Required Texts

The required books, listed below, are available at the Williams bookstore and online. The course reader is available for pick-up from the Center for Environmental Studies.

- William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (Hill and Wang, 2003 [1983]).
- Tom Wessels, *Forest Forensics: A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape* (Countryman Press, 2010).
- Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (Yale University Press, 1999).
- Michael Rawson, *Eden on the Charles: The Making of Boston* (Harvard University Press, 2010).
- Theodore Steinberg, *Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (Yale University Press, 2015).
- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (the annotated edition by Jeffrey Cramer, Yale University Press, 2004 [1854]).

Assignments

Readings listed on the schedule below must be completed before each class meeting. Come prepared to talk about each reading in detail, hard copy in hand. I recommend that you dedicate one notebook in which to keep reading, class, and fieldtrip notes. You may be called upon to speak from these notes.

The relative weight of assignments is summarized below. Students must complete all course assignments in order to pass the course. Each component of your final score is briefly described in this syllabus and more detailed guidelines will be distributed in class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percent of final grade</u>
Participation	20%
Response papers	5% each (30% total)
Workshop 1	5%
Workshop 2	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Workshop 3	10%
Final Research Paper	20%
Reflection Paper	5%

Participation

Attendance is required, and missing class sessions will negatively impact your final grade.

Participation encompasses in-class writing assignments and active, regular contributions to class discussions. Class discussions are a collaborative process. Participation that falls within the “A” range shows me that you are keeping up with the work, thinking through the issues that each set of texts raises, and able to pose questions that take our conversation in new and worthwhile directions. It also shows your willingness to listen, to consider other students’ points of view, and to respond to them respectfully.

Readings listed on the schedule below must be completed before each class meeting. Come prepared to talk about each reading in detail, hard copy in hand.

I highly recommend that you dedicate one notebook in which to keep reading, class, and fieldtrip notes. You may be called upon to speak from these notes.

Response Papers

Over the semester you are required to write 6 response papers (approx. 500 words each). Response papers serve four important functions. Besides preparing you well for in-class discussion, they are an occasion to practice active reading: reading in which you ask questions as

you read and put yourself into conversation with the author. They also help me gauge how well you comprehend the material. Finally, a response paper begins to formulate the questions that a longer analytical essay might address.

These papers are due in hard copy at the end of the class period to which they refer and they will not be accepted late. Further instructions will be distributed in class.

Research Project

During the semester, you will develop and execute an independent research project on a common theme. Each student will work directly with primary and secondary sources. Three in-class workshops and an annotated bibliography accomplish preparatory work for the project. Further instructions for each step of the research process will be distributed in class.

Reflection Paper

At the end of the semester you will write a final reflection paper. It should contain a thoughtful and detailed examination of your final project and your class participation.

The letter should address the following questions:

- How did your understanding of environmental history change throughout the semester?
- What are the strengths of your final project? If you had more time to work on it, what would you improve? What questions are you left with?
- How did your final project contribute to your understanding of the course?
- How does your final project contribute to the field of environmental history?
- What topics in environmental history might you be interested in exploring in the future?
- What grade would you recommend for yourself based on your evaluation?

Your self-evaluation has two audiences. I will of course read it carefully; but you are, yourself, an important audience: This is your chance to reflect on how the texts, our discussions, and your research have affected your thinking.

Grades

The course grading system coincides with the Williams College system of grades, where A=excellent; B=good; C=fair; D=passing; and E=failing. Note that the grades I assign represent my evaluation of the work you turn in. They in no way indicate my opinion of you as a person or the views you hold and share.

Policies

Late Work

Late written assignments will receive no credit. If a medical, family, or other emergency occurs that may prevent you from completing an assignment on time, please talk with me about the circumstances as soon as you can, and we will discuss resources for helping you to complete your work on time. I will grant deadline extensions only in cases of extreme emergency, which are determined at my discretion.

Honor Code

I strongly encourage you to re-acquaint yourself with the college Honor Code (<http://sites.williams.edu/honor-system/>). Williams takes charges of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, and either can result in your dismissal. Cheating is taking advantage of the work of others. Plagiarism is representing the work of others as your own without giving appropriate credit. If you are uncertain how the Honor Code applies to your work in this course—or if you are unsure how to distinguish between legitimate collaboration with your colleagues and academic dishonesty—please ask me.

Resources

Students with disabilities of any kind who may need accommodations for this course are encouraged to contact Dr. GL Wallace (Director of Accessible Education) at 413-597-4672.

Students experiencing mental or physical health challenges that are significantly affecting their academic work or well being are encouraged to contact me and to speak with a dean. The deans can be reached at 413-597-4171.

As a Williams student, you can use the free tutoring services provided by the Peer Academic Support network. Instructions for scheduling tutoring sessions are on the Peer Tutoring Program webpage (<http://academic-resources.williams.edu/peer-tutor-program/>).

The Writing Workshop (<http://writing-programs.williams.edu/writing-workshop/>) is available to all students free of charge. Drop in sessions are located in the foyer of Stetson-Sawyer library. You can also schedule hour-long appointments through the online scheduler. The Writing Workshop also offers a Writing Partner service to support students who may need more attention and guidance than can be provided within a regular Writing Workshop session.

Christine Ménard is the library liaison for environmental studies and is also available to provide guidance. She can be reached at cmenard@williams.edu.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
WEDS 1/31	Introduction		
TUES 2/06	Imagining New England Across Time	<input type="checkbox"/> Kimberly Jarvis, “Women and the White Mountains,” in Blake Harrison and Richard Judd (eds.), <i>A Landscape History of New England</i> (MIT Press, 2011): 71-89. <input type="checkbox"/> John O’Keefe and David Foster, “An Ecological History of Massachusetts Forests,” in <i>Stepping Back to Look Forward</i> (Harvard University, 1998): 19-66.	<input type="checkbox"/> Response Paper
THURS 2/08	Exploring the Field	<input type="checkbox"/> Tom Wessels, <i>Forest Forensics: A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape</i> (Countryman Press, 2010). FIELD TRIP: Hopkins Forest	
TUES 2/13	Changes in the Land	<input type="checkbox"/> William Cronon, <i>Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England</i> (Hill and Wang, 2003 [1983]).	<input type="checkbox"/> Response Paper
THURS 2/15	Responses to Changes in the Land	<input type="checkbox"/> Daniel Vickers, “Those Dammed Shad: Would the River Fisheries of New England Have Survived in the Absence of Industrialization?” <i>William and Mary Quarterly</i> 61 (2004): 685-712.	<input type="checkbox"/> Response Paper
TUES 2/20	Thoreau and Dissent	<input type="checkbox"/> Daegan Miller, “At the Boundary with Henry David Thoreau,” from <i>This Radical Land: A Natural History of American Dissent</i> (University of Chicago, 2018): 15-46.	<input type="checkbox"/> Response Paper

		GUEST SPEAKER (Skype): Dr. Daegan Miller	
THURS 2/22	Thoreau and Dissent	□ Henry David Thoreau, “Economy” and “The Pond in Winter” in <i>Walden</i> (annotated by Jeffrey Cramer, Yale University Press, 2004 [1854]): 1-77; 273-288.	□ Response Paper
TUES 2/27	Doing Archival Research	□ “Why Do Research?” and “Interpreting Primary Sources” – excerpts from Wayne Booth <i>et al.</i> , <i>The Craft of Research</i> (University of Chicago Press, 2008) & William Cronon <i>et al.</i> , <i>Learning to Do Historical Research</i> (online, 2008). FIELD TRIP: Williams Special Collections	
THURS 3/01	What is the Discipline of Environmental History?	□ Paul Sutter, “The World With Us: The State of American Environmental History,” <i>The Journal of American History</i> 100 (2013): 94-119.	
TUES 3/06	Returning to the Field	FIELD TRIP: Mohawk Trail	
THURS 3/08	Research		Workshop 1: Primary Sources
TUES 3/13	Memoryscapes	□ Christine DeLucia, “An ‘Indian Fishing Weir’ at Musketaquid: Marking Northeastern Indigenous Homelands and Colonial Memoryscapes,” <i>Environmental History</i> 23 (2018): 184-198. GUEST: Dr. Christine DeLucia, Mount Holyoke College	□ Response Paper

THURS 3/15	NO CLASS		
TUES 3/20	NO CLASS		
THURS 3/22	NO CLASS		
TUES 3/27	NO CLASS		
THURS 3/29	NO CLASS		
TUES 4/03	Research	<p><input type="checkbox"/> “Developing Research Questions” and “Identifying Secondary Sources” – excerpts from Wayne Booth <i>et al.</i>, <i>The Craft of Research</i> (University of Chicago Press, 2008) & William Cronon <i>et al.</i>, <i>Learning to Do Historical Research</i> (online, 2008).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Philip J. Deloria, “Natural Indians and Identities of Modernity” in <i>Playing Indian</i> (Yale University Press, 1999): 95-127.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Robert Quay ’04, “Mohawks, Model Ts, and Monuments: The Formulation of an Unlikely Regional Identity in Western Massachusetts,” B.A. Thesis, Williams College, 2004: 1-6; 37-123.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spend two hours exploring the Spatial History Project at Stanford: http://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/</p>	
THURS 4/05	Recovering Native Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Lisa Brooks, “Alnôbawôgan, Wlôgan, Awikhigan: Entering Native Space,” in <i>The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Response Paper

		<i>in the Northeast</i> (University of Minnesota Press, 2008): 1-50.	
TUES 4/10	Research	<input type="checkbox"/> “Assembling an Argument” and “Constructing Historical Narrative” – excerpts from Wayne Booth <i>et al.</i> , <i>The Craft of Research: Third Edition</i> (University of Chicago Press, 2008) & William Cronon <i>et al.</i> , <i>Learning to Do Historical Research</i> (online, 2008).	Workshop 2: Critical Reading Annotated Bibliography Due
THURS 4/12	No class		
TUES 4/17	Making Cities	<input type="checkbox"/> Michael Rawson, “Constructing Water,” and “Inventing the Suburbs,” in <i>Eden on the Charles: The Making of Boston</i> (Harvard University Press, 2010): 75-128, 129-178. <input type="checkbox"/> Ingrid Burrington, “How Railroad History Shaped Internet History,” <i>The Atlantic</i> , 4 November 2015.	<input type="checkbox"/> Response Paper
THURS 4/19	Industrializing Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Theodore Steinberg, “Control of Water” and “Company Waters,” in <i>Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England</i> (Cambridge University Press, 1991 [2004]): 50-97. FIELD TRIP: North Adams	
TUES 4/24	Maritime History	<input type="checkbox"/> Nancy Shoemaker, “Whale Meat in American History,” <i>Environmental History</i> 10 (2005): 269-294.	
THURS 4/26	Maritime History	<input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Lipman, <i>The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast</i> (Yale University Press, 2015): ix-124.	<input type="checkbox"/> Response Paper

SAT 4/28		FIELD TRIP: Williams Mystic	
TUES 5/01	Legacies of Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Pillsbury, "All at Last Returns to the Sea: Land Use and Water Quality on Southern New England's Shore," in Blake Harrison and Richard Judd (eds.), <i>A Landscape History of New England</i> (MIT Press, 2011): 181-196. <input type="checkbox"/> Hugh Gorman, "Brownfields in Historical Context," <i>Environmental Practice</i> 5 (2003): 21-24.	
THURS 5/03	Future Directions	<input type="checkbox"/> Pick an article in a recent issue of <i>Environmental History</i> to summarize to the class	<input type="checkbox"/> Response Paper
TUES 5/08	Research		Workshop 3: Research Papers
THURS 5/10	Reflections		
SAT 5/12			Research Paper Due
MON 5/14			Reflection Papers Due