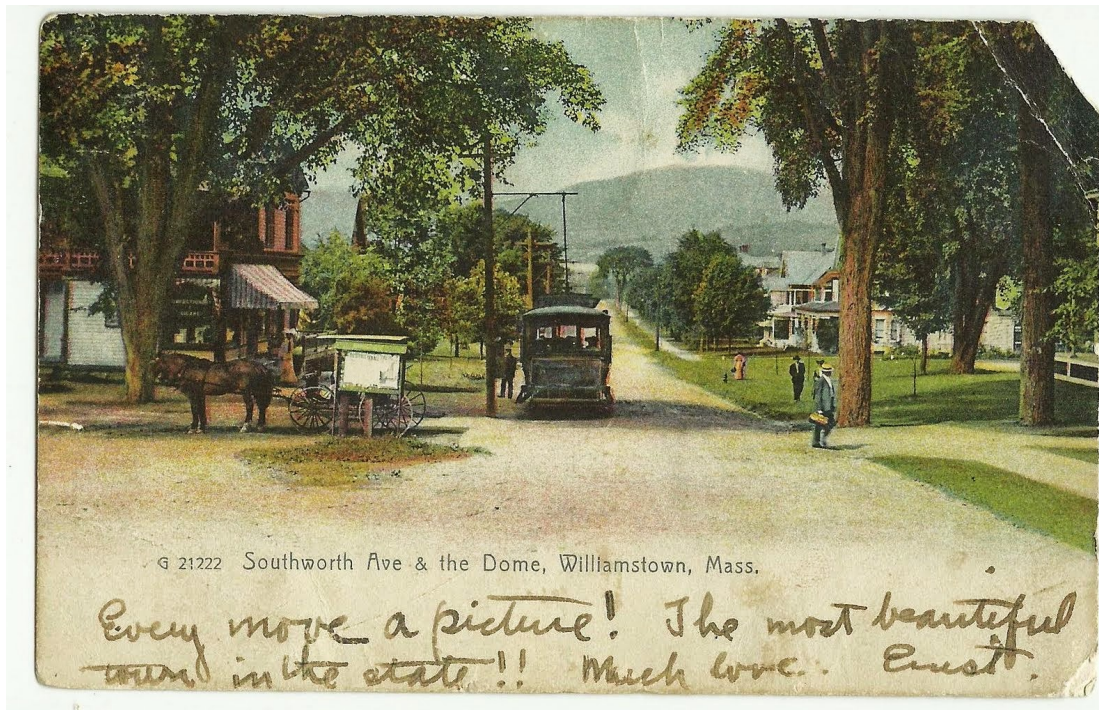


ENVI 229 | HIST 264
Fall 2023

Environmental History

Time: Tuesday / Thursday 8:30 - 9:45 am
Class Location: Schapiro Hall 241
Instructor: Professor Laura Martin
Office: Environmental Center Room 217
Email: LJM4@williams.edu



Postcard, c. 1901, Williamstown Historical Museum Digitized Collections

Course Description

This course is an introduction to Environmental History: the study of how people have shaped environments, how environments have shaped human histories, and how cultural change and material change are intertwined. As such, it challenges traditional divides between the humanities and the sciences. Taking U.S. environmental history as our focus, we will strive to understand the historical roots of contemporary environmental problems, such as species extinction, pollution, and climate change. We will take field trips to learn to read landscapes for their histories and to examine how past environments are represented in museum exhibits, digital projects, and physical landscapes. And we will develop original arguments and essays based on archival research. It is imperative that we understand this history if we are to make informed and ethical environmental decisions at the local, national, and global scale.

Course Organization

This class meets twice per week for 75 minutes. Class time will include facilitated discussions, guest speakers, in-class assignments, and field trips.

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.

Please dedicate one notebook in which to keep reading, class, and fieldtrip notes. You will be called upon to speak from these notes.

Office Hours

To sign up to visit office hours, please email me. Come to office hours with questions about readings, lectures, the environmental studies program, or just to chat.

Required Texts

The required books, listed below, are available at the Williams bookstore and online. The course packets (two volumes) are 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)
- Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008)
- Tiya Miles, *Wild Girls: How the Outdoors Shaped the Women Who Challenged a Nation* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2023)

Assignments

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	25%
Primary Source Project	25%
Annotated Bibliography	20%
Final Presentation	30%

Participation

Attendance is required. Absences or habitual lateness will decrease your final grade. You cannot pass this class if you miss more than 4 class meetings.

Participation encompasses in-class writing assignments and 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.

Final Presentation

During the semester, you will develop and execute an independent research project. Each student will work directly with primary and secondary sources. 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.

Creating a Supportive Learning Environment

Be inclusive. In this course we will discuss issues regarding personal and communal identity, including race, ethnicity, class, gender, national origin, and ability. It is essential that we all – and at all times – cultivate mutual respect. We are here to learn and grow together. If you have any concerns about classroom climate, please share them with me.

Be present. This means attending to the collective project and being aware that you are constructing the learning environment with your peers. All phones should be put away inside a bag, on silent mode, at the beginning of class and not be used or visible until class has concluded.

Challenge yourself to be the best classmate you can be. This doesn’t mean that you need to be the first to raise your hand every time, but you should try to push your comfort zone a little. If you know you tend to the quiet side in class, try to speak up more than you ordinarily would, because your thoughts are valuable and your classmates want to hear them. Alternatively, if you know you’re the kind of person who always speaks first (or loudest), then try to sit back and listen more than your instincts tell you.

Policies

Contact

I use email regularly to make announcements, clarify points from lecture, and draw your attention to events and news items. You are expected to check your email daily. Email is also the best way to get in touch with me, and I reply during normal business hours.

Lectures and discussion sections may not be recorded without my explicit permission.

Honor Code

Please re-acquaint yourself with the college Honor Code (<http://sites.williams.edu/honor-system/>). I have re-printed a useful section here:

If a student is unsure how the Honor Code applies in a particular situation, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to find out from his or her professor how the Honor Code applies in that situation. An open and highly individualized system can last only as long as both the students and the faculty work together to create a true academic community.

In all written material, including ungraded assignments and drafts, students are expected to avoid the possibility of even unintentional plagiarism by acknowledging the sources of their work. Careful observance of accepted standards of reference and attribution is required. The basic rules are summarized below. Students are further advised to consult a recognized style manual to learn how to acknowledge sources correctly.

The basic rules of attribution for all academic assignments, including homework, require that:

1. A direct quotation (whether a single word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, or series of paragraphs) must always be identified by quotation marks, by indenting and single spacing, or by reduced type size of the quoted material, and a note must be used to state the exact source.
2. A paraphrase of the work of another must be acknowledged as such by a note stating the source.
3. Indebtedness to the specific ideas of others, or the summarizing of several pages, even though expressed in different words, must be acknowledged by a note stating the source.
4. In every instance, the use of another student's laboratory reports, computer programs, or other material must be acknowledged by a note.
5. Even the use of a student's own previous or concurrent work must be acknowledged; thus, a student must obtain the prior permission of both the previous and current instructors before submitting all or part of the same paper in more than one course.

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 or disabling conditions who experience barriers in this course are encouraged to contact me to discuss options for access and full course participation. The Office of Accessible Education is also available to facilitate the removal of barriers and to ensure access and reasonable accommodations. Students with documented disabilities or disabling conditions of any kind who may need accommodations for this course or who have questions about appropriate resources are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessible Education at oaestaff@williams.edu.

As a Williams student, you can use the free tutoring services provided by the Peer Academic Support network. Step-by-step 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.

Tath Haver is the library liaison for environmental studies and is also available to provide guidance. He can be reached at th13@williams.edu.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
THURS 09/07	Introductions	
TUES 09/12	What is Environmental History?	<p><input type="checkbox"/> William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” <i>The Journal of American History</i> 78 (1992): 1347-1376.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sunil Amrith, “The Shape of Modern Asia,” in <i>Unruly Waters: How Rains, Rivers, Coasts, and Seas Have Shaped Asia’s History</i> (Basic Books, 2018), p. 1-16.</p>
THURS 09/14	Landscape as Archive	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Tom Wessels, <i>Forest Forensics: A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape</i> (Countryman Press, 2010).</p> <p>FIELD TRIP: Hopkins Forest</p>
TUES 09/19	Archival Research	<p><input type="checkbox"/> “Why Do Research?” and “Interpreting Primary Sources,” modified from Wayne Booth <i>et al.</i>, <i>The Craft of Research</i> (University of Chicago Press, 2008)</p> <p>FIELD TRIP: Meet at Williams Special Collections, Sawyer Library</p>
THURS 09/21	Primary sources	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Jerald Dosch, “On Dead Birds’ Tales: Museum Specimen Feathers as Historical Archives of Environmental Pollutants,” <i>Environmental History</i> 12 (2007): 661-665.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Nick Paumgarten, “Original Garbage-Can Art Found in Sanitation Department Archive,” <i>The New Yorker</i>, 29 May 2023</p>
TUES 09/26	Changes in the Land	<p><input type="checkbox"/> William Cronon, <i>Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England</i> (Hill and Wang, 2003 [1983]): xv-81.</p>

THURS 09/28	Native Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Lisa Brooks, “Alnôbawôgan, Wlôgan, Awikhigan: Entering Native Space,” in <i>The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast</i> (University of Minnesota Press, 2008): 1-50.
TUES 10/03	Local Environmental History	<input type="checkbox"/> Scott Frickel and James Elliott, “The Succession of Cities,” in <i>Sites Unseen: Uncovering Hidden Hazards in American Cities</i> (Russell Sage Foundation, 2018):1-14. <input type="checkbox"/> “MASS MoCA North Adams,” in <i>Massachusetts Brownfields Success Stories</i> , MassDEP, November 2006. FIELD TRIP: North Adams
THURS 10/05	Nitrogen Cycles	<input type="checkbox"/> Carly Stevens, “Nitrogen in the Environment,” <i>Science</i> 363 (2019): 578-580. <input type="checkbox"/> Edward Melillo, “The First Green Revolution: Debt Peonage and the Making of the Nitrogen Fertilizer Trade, 1840-1930,” <i>American Historical Review</i> 117 (2012): 1028-1060. DUE: Primary source project
TUES 10/10	No class	Fall Break
THURS 10/12	National Imaginaries	<input type="checkbox"/> Caterina Scaramelli, “The Wetland Is Disappearing: Conservation and Care on Turkey’s Kızılırmak Delta,” <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i> 50 (2018): 405-425. Guest Zoom speaker: Dr. Caterina Scaramelli (Boston University)
TUES 10/17	Energy Transitions	<input type="checkbox"/> Chris Jones, “A Landscape of Energy Abundance: Anthracite Coal Canals and the Roots of American Fossil Fuel Dependence, 1820-1860,” <i>Environmental History</i> 15 (2010): 449-484.

		<input type="checkbox"/> Sean Kheraj, “The Great Epizootic of 1872-73: Networks of Animal Disease in North American Urban Environments,” <i>Environmental History</i> 23 (2018): 495-521.
THURS 10/19	Age of Oil	<input type="checkbox"/> Amitav Ghosh, “Fossilized Forests,” in <i>The Nutmeg’s Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis</i> (University of Chicago Press, 2021): 99-104. <input type="checkbox"/> Brian Black, “Oil for Living: Petroleum and American Conspicuous Consumption,” <i>Journal of American History</i> 99 (2012): 40-50.
TUES 10/24	Racial Capitalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Williams and Jayson M. Porter, “Cotton, Whiteness, and Other Poisons,” <i>Environmental Humanities</i> 14 (2022): 499-521. Guest speaker: Dr. Jayson Porter, Brown University (we will meet in the classroom)
THURS 10/26	Assembling Historical Argument	<input type="checkbox"/> “Developing Research Questions” and “Identifying Secondary Sources” – 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: A Primer for Environmental Historians and Others</i> (online, 2008). <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).
TUES 10/31	Carbon Colonialism	<input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Curley, “Shape-Shifting Colonialism,” in <i>Carbon Sovereignty: Coal, Development, and Energy Transition in the Navajo Nation</i> (University of Arizona Press, 2023), 31-59. DUE: Annotated bibliography

THURS 11/02	Materialist History	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Timothy LeCain, “Fellow Travelers” and “The Copper Atom,” in <i>The Matter of History: How Things Create the Past</i> (Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1-22, 244-305.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jay Turner, “Lead Acid Batteries and a Culture of Mobility,” in <i>Charged: A History of Batteries and Lessons for a Clean Energy Future</i> (University of Washington Press, 2022): 16-56.</p>
TUES 11/07	Energy Democracy	<p>Preface, <i>Power Beyond the Grid: Rural Electricity and Community Control Since the New Deal</i> (forthcoming)</p> <p>Rhiana Gunn-Wright, “A Green New Deal for All of Us,” in <i>All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis</i> (New York: One World, 2020).</p> <p>Guest Zoom speaker: Dr. Abby Spinak, Harvard Graduate School of Design</p>
THURS 11/09	Writing Workshop	In-class writing workshop
TUES 11/14	Plastic World	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Roland Geyer <i>et al.</i>, “Production, Use, and Fate of All Plastics Ever Made,” <i>Science Advances</i> 3 (2017): e1700782.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rebecca Altman, “The Myth of Historical Bio-based Plastics,” <i>Science</i> 373 (2021): 47-49.</p> <p>DUE: Primary source project revisions</p>
THURS 11/16	Globalized Environments	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Hi’ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart, “Introduction,” in <i>Cooling the Tropics: Ice, Indigeneity, and Hawaiian Refreshment</i> (Duke University Press, 2022) 1-20.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Edward Melillo, “Making Sea Cucumbers out of Whales’ Teeth: Nantucket Castaways and Encounters of Value in Nineteenth-Century Fiji,” <i>Environmental History</i> 20 (2015): 449-474.</p>

TUES 11/21	Persistent Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> Michelle Murphy, "Alterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations," <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 32 (2017): 494-503.
THURS 11/23	No class	Thanksgiving break
TUES 11/28	Environmental isms	<input type="checkbox"/> Tiya Miles, <i>Wild Girls: How the Outdoors Shaped the Women Who Challenged a Nation</i> (W.W. Norton & Co., 2023), pages TBD
THURS 11/30	Internet and Environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Nathan Ensmenger, "The Environmental History of Computing," <i>Technology and Culture</i> 59 (2018): S7-S33. <input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Kolbert, "Why Bitcoin is Bad for the Environment," <i>The New Yorker</i> , 22 April 2021
TUES 12/05	Final Presentations	
THURS 12/07	Final Presentations	