



Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

Département d'histoire | Department of History

Faculté des arts / Faculty of Arts

HIS2300 – GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY WINTER 2021 ONLINE COURSE

Professor: Dr. Daniel Rück (alternative spelling: Rueck)

Office Hours: After the synchronous class on Wednesdays or by appointment

Class time: Wednesday 14h30-17h20 EST

- 14h30 start time: We will meet synchronously most weeks for about an hour to discuss the lecture and readings. Please keep the entire three hour slot open on your schedule in case we need to go longer occasionally.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course sketches the history of human interactions with environments and non-human species over the last 10,000 years. Topics include the rise and expansion of agricultural societies, introduced species and extinctions, wilderness and conservation, climate change, the Industrial Revolution, and resource extraction. The course places environmental history in the context of settler colonialism, environmental racism, patriarchy, and the global history of capitalism. It gives students access to key readings, themes, and approaches to environmental history, and draws on work by scholars across disciplines. Students will strengthen intellectual and practical skills that can help all of us to live our lives in good relationship with each other and other creatures.

OBJECTIVES

The course objectives are:

- to develop a strong basic knowledge of global environmental history
- to reflect deeply on our own place in global environmental history
- to work with other students to conduct original environmental history research
- to strengthen intellectual and practical skills that can help us to live in good relationship with the earth and other creatures

EVALUATION

30% Participation and Reading Responses (details below)

30% Group Research Presentations (details below)

40% Take-home exam: You have about a week to write essay answers to questions that cover the readings, discussions, and lectures we went over in this course.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Generally speaking, an assignment will be considered late if it is submitted after class has begun, or after the specified due date. I don't usually grant extensions in advance, but instead deduct a penalty of 2% per late working day. This penalty may be waived in the event of unforeseen emergencies such as illness (please note that a heavy work load for other classes or paid employment does not qualify as an unforeseen emergency). If your assignment is late and you believe you should not be penalized, please attach a note of explanation along with any supporting documentation you think appropriate. The late penalty will be waived, in part or in whole, as seems justified.

DISPUTED GRADES

If you believe your grade for a particular assignment is incorrect you may resubmit the graded copy along with a written explanation for why you believe you should receive a different grade. The newly-assessed grade will replace the original. The new grade may be higher, lower, or unchanged.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is considered academic fraud, and will be sanctioned in accordance with related University of Ottawa regulations: <http://www.uottawa.ca/academic-regulations/academic-fraud.html>. In order to avoid academic fraud, please read the Student Guide on academic integrity: <http://web5.uottawa.ca/mcs-smc/academicintegrity/documents/2011/academic-integrity-students-guide.pdf>

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Mentoring Centre - <http://www.arts.uottawa.ca/eng/mentoring/>

The goal of the Mentoring Centre is to help students with their academic and social well-being. Regardless of where a student stands academically, or how far along they are in completing their degree, the mentoring centre is there to help students continue on their path to success.

Academic Writing Help Centre - <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/writing/>

The AWHC is committed to helping students develop writing strategies and skills that will enable them to identify and correct their mistakes and help them to become better writers. It offers individual writing appointments, in-class presentations and workshops, and online writing resources.

Counselling Service- <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/personal/>

The Counselling Service offers personal counselling, career counselling and study skills counselling.

Access Service - <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/acces/>

The Access Service contributes to the creation of an inclusive environment by developing strategies and implementing measures that aim to reduce the barriers to learning for students who have learning disabilities, health, psychiatric or physical conditions.

RESOURCES FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Mashkawazìwogamig - Indigenous Resource Centre (IRC)

<https://www.uottawa.ca/indigenous/about-us>

The IRC provides support and tools to meet the personal, professional, and academic needs of all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

READINGS

There is no textbook for this course. You are required to read a number of articles, book chapters and other documents, all of which are will be made available online.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION AND VIRTUAL CAMPUS (BRIGHTSPACE)

It is very important that you regularly check your university email account for course-related announcements. Unless you do not wish others to see your questions, please post any questions on the Brightspace discussion board. You may also email me with simple questions that you wish to discuss privately, but for anything requiring more than a one-sentence response, please ask me during office hours. Please check the syllabus to see if it contains answers before emailing me. I try to answer emails within 24 hours but do not usually respond on weekends.

RECORDING AND POSTING SYNCHRONOUS CLASS VIDEOS

- I will record synchronous classes and post recordings on Brightspace.
- Please do not take recordings outside of the classroom unless you have everyone's consent.
- I strongly encourage you to have your camera on, but of course you may turn your camera off if you need privacy for a short while. If your camera is off for a long time I may specifically ask you a question.
- I encourage you to speak up and ask questions or share responses using the voice or the chat function. You may also send me private messages during class if you are uncomfortable sharing with everyone.

Most weeks I will post my lecture on Monday. Students should post their reading responses on Tuesday before 5pm. Brightspace will not accept responses uploaded after that time.

PRIVACY, RESPECT, AND ONLINE ETIQUETTE

This course sometimes deals with sensitive topics, and this means that we need to take into consideration, and respect, the experiences and feelings of others. One important aspect of respectful interaction is to ask questions with an open mind and to keep your curiosity about the experience of others. I encourage you to communicate with me any concerns you may have about the course content or how we discuss it. I want to ensure that our learning environment is as safe and welcoming as possible to everyone.

In an online environment, especially on a discussion board or zoom meeting, when we are not sharing physical space with our peers, it is especially important to be mindful of the

importance of mutual respect, listening, and care. We are here to learn together. We all come from different backgrounds, and we each bring our own interesting and unique experiences to this class.

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 13	<p>Introduction</p>	
Jan 20	<p>150,000 Years and What is Environmental History? <i>Listen</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture: 150,000 Years and What is Environmental History? <p><i>Read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MacEachern, Alan. "An Introduction, In Theory and Practice." In <i>Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History</i>, edited by Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel, ix-xv. Toronto: Nelson Education, 2009. Kimmerer, Robin Wall. "Greed Does Not Have to Define Our Relationship to Land: On Choosing to Belong to a Place" https://lithub.com/robin-wall-kimmerer-greed-does-not-have-to-define-our-relationship-to-land/ <p><i>Synchronous Class</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of lecture and readings. What is Environmental History? 	<p>Due Jan 19, 5pm: Reading Responses 1 (one response for each reading)</p>
Jan 27	<p>The Ancient World and the Idea of Wilderness <i>Listen</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture: The Ancient World and the Idea of Wilderness <p><i>Read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cronon, William. "The Trouble With Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." In <i>Uncommon Ground: Toward reinventing nature</i>, edited by William Cronon, 69-90. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995. Pilon, Jean-Luc, and Randy Boswell. "Below the Falls; An Ancient Cultural Landscape in the Centre of (Canada's National Capital Region) Gatineau." <i>Canadian Journal of Archaeology/Journal Canadien d'Archéology</i> 39, no. 2 (2015): 257-293. <p><i>Synchronous Class</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of lecture and readings 	<p>Due Jan 26, 5pm: Reading Responses 2 (one response for each reading) Due Today: Everyone chooses research topic</p>
Feb 3	<p>Library Research Presentation and Discussion of Research Methods <i>Listen</i></p>	<p>Due Feb 2, 5pm: Reading Responses 3 (one response</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Lecture: Jennifer Dekker - Library Research in Environmental History <p><i>Read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rackham, Oliver. "The Medieval Countryside of England: Botany and Archaeology." In <i>Inventing Medieval Landscapes: Sense of place in Western Europe</i>, edited by John Howe and Michael Wolfe, 13-32. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002. • Leopold, Aldo. "February." In <i>A Sand County Almanac</i>, 6-18, 1949. <p><i>Synchronous Class</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of Research Assignment, Methods, and Topics 	for each reading)
Feb 10	<p>The Medieval World and Early Settler Colonialism</p> <p><i>Listen</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: Environmental History of the Medieval World <p><i>Read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martínez, Ignacio. "Settler Colonialism in New Spain and the Early Mexican Republic." In <i>The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism</i>, edited by Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini. London: Routledge, 2016. • Anderson, Virginia DeJohn. "King Philip's Herds: Indians, colonists, and the problem of livestock in early New England." <i>The William and Mary Quarterly</i> 51, no. 4 (1994): 601-624. <p><i>Synchronous Class</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of readings and lecture 	Due Feb 9, 5pm: Reading Responses #4 (one response for each reading)
Feb 15-21	Reading Week	
Feb 24	Group Research Presentations	Due Feb 23, 5pm: All documents/files for presentations
Mar 3	<p>Agriculture</p> <p><i>Listen</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Lecture: Dr. Sarah Rotz <p><i>Read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friedmann, Harriet, and Philip McMichael. "Agriculture and the State System: The rise and decline of national agricultures, 1870 to the present." <i>Sociologia Ruralis</i> 29, no. 2 (1989): 93-117. 	Due Mar 2, 5pm: Reading Responses #5 (one response for each reading/podcast)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Wild Rice Wars” Red Man Laughing Podcast https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-wild-rice-wars/id581403701?i=1000385222582 <p><i>Synchronous Class</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: History of food and agriculture 	
Mar 10	<p>“Natural Disasters” and Environmental Racism</p> <p><i>Listen</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Lecture: Dr. Alexandra Giancarlo "Environmental Injustice and Hurricane Katrina" <p><i>Read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giancarlo, Alexandra. "'I am coming home!': Lieux de mémoire and Social Memory in the Post-Katrina Ninth Ward." <i>Material Culture</i> 52, no. 2 (2020): 60-79. <p><i>Synchronous Class</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Disasters and Race 	Due Mar 9, 5pm: Reading Responses #6 (one response for the reading)
Mar 17	<p>The Modern World</p> <p><i>Listen</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: Environmental History of the Modern World <p><i>Read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loo, Tina, and Meg Stanley. "An Environmental History of Progress: Damming the Peace and Columbia Rivers." <i>Canadian Historical Review</i> 92, no. 3 (2011): 399-427. • “Gone: The Sea that Disappeared” Audio documentary (26 min) https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p02k871g <p><i>Synchronous Class</i> Discussion of readings and lecture</p>	Due Mar 16, 5pm: Reading Responses #7 (one response for each reading/podcast)
Mar 24	<p>Guest Lecture (to be confirmed)</p>	Due Mar 23, 5pm: Reading Responses #8
Mar 31	<p>The Columbian Exchange and Invasive Species</p> <p><i>Listen</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Lecture: The Columbian Exchange and Invasive Species <p><i>Read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parsons, Christopher. "The Natural History of Colonial Science: Joseph-François Lafitau's Discovery of Ginseng and Its Afterlives." <i>The William and Mary Quarterly</i> 73, no. 1 (2016): 37-72. • Richards, John F. "The Columbian Exchange: The West Indies." In <i>The Unending Frontier: An environmental history of the early modern world</i>, 	Due Mar 30, 5pm: Reading Responses #9 (one response for each reading)

	<p>309-333. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.</p> <p><i>Synchronous Class</i></p> <p>Discussion of short lecture and readings</p>	
Apr 7	Conclusions and Review	Students Receive Take-Home Exam
Apr 16	Take-Home Exam due 5pm	Take-Home Exam Due 5pm

PARTICIPATION AND READING RESPONSES

Participating means regularly attending class and arriving on time. On days when it is required, you should have carefully read the assigned texts, be prepared to discuss them, and engage with your classmates and professor during class. Attempting to participate in the discussion without having done the readings will not result in elevated participation grades and may have the opposite effect. If you are anxious about speaking up or if you have another reason for not engaging, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can find solutions. Those students who are comfortable speaking and debating also have a responsibility to allow space for less assertive students to be heard.

*If there are special circumstances in your life that I should be aware of when evaluating your participation, please alert me to these as soon as possible.

An important criteria for determining your participation grade is **Reading Responses**.

READING RESPONSE ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to read all assigned texts (or listen, watch, as the case may be). Exam questions will ask you to draw from any of these. Taking effective notes while you read/listen/watch will allow you to study for exams without having to re-visit everything.

I have identified nine classes this semester for which you can submit reading responses, and you are required to **submit reading responses for five of those nine classes**. The classes in question are marked on the right-hand column of the course outline, and instructions are given there. In most cases you are required to submit two reading responses at a time.

Reading responses must be uploaded to Brightspace by 5pm on the day before class. This allows me to read at least some of them before we meet the following day. I will not accept late submissions or submissions far in advance of the class in question.

Reading Responses should be structured like the following example:



Li Gaulu – Student Number 99999999
September 21, 1953
Reading Response Assignment #9

Cronon

Argument: A summary of author's argument (or main points) in your own words (50-100 words)

Academic Response: What do you think of this piece? Did you find it well-argued? compelling? convincing? If so, why? If not, why not? Your response should show that you have read and

thought carefully about the piece. You might want to draw connections to readings from previous weeks if appropriate. Please avoid quoting the authors directly unless absolutely necessary. (200-300 words)

CBC Ideas Podcast – Leanne Simpson

Argument: A summary of author's argument (or main points) in your own words (50-100 words)

Academic Response: What do you think of this piece? Did you find it well-argued? compelling? convincing? If so, why? If not, why not? Your response should show that you have read and thought carefully about the piece. You might want to draw connections to readings from previous weeks if appropriate. Please avoid quoting the authors direction unless absolutely necessary. (200-300 words)



Each entry should be written in full sentences, single spaced, and should include clear headings according the above specifications. Please ensure that everything you submit includes your name and the date submitted. No late reading responses will be accepted.

Grades for reading responses will be assigned as follows:

- *Complete* (5) understood the text and engaged with the material
- *Somewhat complete* (2.5) appears to have read or skimmed the text but engagement with text is limited, or have engaged with only one reading
- *Incomplete* (0) response not submitted or does not engage with the readings

GROUP RESEARCH PRESENTATION

For this assignment you will form groups of four or five, and together you will research and present on the environmental history of a plant, animal, or micro-organism. This assignment has similar expectations to a research paper but the final product is your presentation, along with an annotated bibliography and a description of each person's work.

Students will be grouped together with others who signed up for the same topic and will prepare a 10 minute presentation for the class which includes a single Powerpoint presentation. All students will be involved in the original research, but they may choose to divide certain tasks in ways that seem appropriate. Having done significant research on your own, each of you enters the group discussions well-informed and possibly with differing opinions. If students have divergent points of view on the research, these should be reflected in the presentation. The goal here is not necessarily to agree on a single perspective, but to present the class with your findings in a coherent way. After the presentation, each group will field questions from class.

Groups will be graded on quality of research and sources, clarity of the presented material, quality of the visuals, and ability to field questions from the class. Powerpoints will be posted on Brightspace and material presented by students may be included on the final exam.

- *Presentation Length:* Each presentation will be about 10 minutes in length, followed by a short period of question and answer.
- *Presentation Topics:* I will provide a list of possible species on which you may present and will allow you to sign up for them. You should have several top choices in mind, in case you don't get the one you had hoped for. I may also ask students to change topics if there is not enough interest in the one they initially choose.
- *Presentation Structure:* Although you can decide the focus of your research (you will want to limit it chronologically, topically, and/or geographically), your overall goal is to explore the historical relationship between the species and human beings. Your presentation should include a short summary of the organism's life-cycle, ecology, and/or behaviour, all of which will help to explain this species' role as a historical actor, but this should be a small part of your presentation. You should have a strong argument, and the entire body of your presentation should provide supporting evidence for this argument. Like any good research paper, your presentation should have an introduction that clearly states your argument, and explains what the presentation will do. It should finish with a strong conclusion.
- *Presentation Visuals:* The presentation should include a power point presentation with images and a basic outline of your presentation.
- *Annotated Bibliography:* Your group will submit an annotated bibliography of the sources used for your presentation (in Chicago Style). There should be reference to at least two in-class texts as well as at least twelve other high-quality sources. Most sources should be scholarly, peer-reviewed sources, but you may also include two or three high-quality non-scholarly sources. Wikipedia and other less-reliable sources are useful for beginning your research but should not be included in your bibliography. Each entry

should include an annotation of about two or three sentences describing the source, what it does for your argument, and how you have used it.

- *Description of each person's role and work:* Your group will submit a document that summarizes everyone's role and work in completing the project. Every member of the group needs to sign off of this document—please let me know if you are experiencing irreconcilable differences.
- *Submission:* Someone in each group should upload all documents/files (annotated bibliography, description of each person's work, and powerpoint) by 5pm the day before the presentations. There will be a penalty of 2% for every hour it is late.

The following are a list of questions you might find useful as you plan your research. Please do not answer all of these questions in your presentation, but use them to spur your research.

1. What is the appropriate temporal scale for this history? What are the key events and moments? Differentiate between long-term and short-term processes at play.
2. What is the appropriate geographical scale for this history? How do we spatially frame our research? Where are the geographical boundaries for our narrative?
3. Who are the people involved in this history? What kinds of human histories are intertwined with the history of this species?
4. What primary sources can I use for my research and also for my visual presentation? Are there maps, photos, paintings, texts?
5. Are there conservation issues involved in the narrative of this species? Are there controversies related to these?
6. Who has so far written the histories of this organism? Are there historical questions that are of interest to biologists, ecologists, and environmentalists?
7. Are there popular narratives about the history of this species? If so, are we telling the same story? Does our narrative confirm, complicate, or contradict popular narratives?
8. Are there broader ecological consequences to this history? What roles does the creature play in its ecosystems?