

History/Environmental Studies 328

Environmental History of Europe, Fall 2015: Syllabus

Tues.-Thur., 1:00-2:15pm, Ingraham 120

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Office hours: 7131 Social Sciences, Tues.-Thur., 2:30 - 4:00pm, and by appointment

Description: This class explores a new approach to a part of the world with a very old history, but one that is now as ‘modern’ as any. The changing relations between Europeans and their environments from antiquity to the twenty-first century offer instructive comparison with American and current global environmental concerns. Approaching Western civilizations from an environmental perspective also offers fresh perspective on these enduring cultures. Questions we will consider include: how have Western ideas about nature changed over time? To what extent have Europeans degraded, or managed to live sustainably with, their environments? Did Christianity or the Church encourage domineering or negative attitudes towards (wild) nature? How did the development of capitalism, industrialization, and colonialism affect Europe’s environment? How do modern European conservationism and environmentalism compare with their American analogs?

Grades: will be calculated on the standard UW scale: A=93-100%, AB=88-92%, B=83-87%, BC=78-82%, C=70-77%, D=60-69%, F=0-59%. Grades will be determined as follows:

Attendance and participation	10%
Quizzes & Homework	10%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	30%
Final exam	30%

Attendance & Participation Assessment: Success in this class, as in most, is greatly favored by regular attendance and participation, and therefore I will keep track of them. But I do not assess attendance and participation quantitatively by assigning points. Instead, I assess these factors qualitatively and subjectively at my discretion (i.e., A-level, B-level, etc.) at the end of the semester. This is partly because I find that most students’ attendance and participation correlates rather well with their performance on written work, and therefore worrying over a precise point system is not worth it. However, I do use my qualitative assessment of attendance and participation to adjust students’ final grades in borderline cases, especially when a student contributes to class at a level above their performance on written work.

Attendance Guidelines: 1) you do not earn credit just for attending class, which is expected; 2) any more than THREE unexcused absences is excessive, because missing this much class usually leads to misunderstanding of course materials and assignments; 3) missing more than SIX classes without valid excuses may be grounds for failing the class; and 4) valid excuses are limited to university-recognized religious observances and well-documented major illnesses or emergencies in the immediate family.

Participation: You should try to speak up often, and I will also try to call on students. But quality of contribution counts more than quantity. Quality contributions reflect your familiarity with the readings and your effort to ask good critical questions about them, such as: What are the main questions the author tries to answer? What is the author’s main argument? What specific arguments, assumptions, or evidence are used in support? What is left out? Good participation also means that you listen to others and try to engage seriously but respectfully with what others say.

Reading Notes: You should always read each weekly assignment carefully, take notes, and prepare a short summary of, response to, and critical questions provoked by the readings as a basis for class discussion (1-2 pages, handwritten or typed). Normally I will not collect these, but if you are having trouble, reviewing such notes is a good place to begin a discussion with me. Such notes are also very helpful in preparing for exams and papers.

Quizzes and Homework Assignments: There will be occasional (approx. 4-5 over the semester) quizzes or short homework assignments, usually of one page or less, which will usually ask you to explain one or a few key terms or concepts in about a paragraph each.

Papers: There will be two essays that will ask you to respond critically to the assigned readings and class discussions by developing your own argument. Detailed topics and guidelines will be given later, one to two weeks before the due dates. Papers must be turned in both as paper copies in class, and as electronic copies to an anti-plagiarism website. Late papers will be heavily penalized: they will be marked down one grade per class day late. For help with papers, besides asking me and reading the guides on my website (http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~rkeyser/?page_id=80), you can get additional individual help at both the History Lab: <http://history.wisc.edu/thehistorylab.htm>; and the Writing Center: <http://writing.wisc.edu/index.html>.

Final Exam: This will be comprehensive, covering everything studied in the course, including both factual material and the broader ideas and themes of the course. The format will include some identification, short-answer essays, as well as one or two longer essays.

Academic Honesty: Your written work must reflect your own ideas, and where you draw on others' words or ideas you need to indicate this clearly with proper quotations and citations. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and all appropriate penalties, including failing the course, will be strictly enforced. As state law for the UW System states, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to "claim[ing] credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation" (https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/docs/uws_chapter_14.pdf). For plain-language guidance, see: <https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/students/>. Specifically on the proper ways to give credit to sources, consult the Writing Center (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>) and download their handout 'Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources:' http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Acknowledging_Sources.pdf.

Accommodations: If you need accommodations due to any disability, please let me know within the first two weeks of class, i.e. by Sept. 12. In order to maintain confidentiality, you may do so by coming to my office hours or by emailing me to arrange a meeting. You will need to provide documentation from the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 702 West Johnson St., Suite 2104, tel. 608-263-2741, email: mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu.

Required Books & Course Pack: You need to acquire the three required books and the Course Pack for this class, and bring them to class on the days when they are assigned. They are listed here below in the order in which they will be assigned. The books are available, among other places, the UW Bookstore: www.uwbookstore.com. The Course Pack is available from the Social Sciences Copy Center, in 6120 Social Sciences: <http://copy.ls.wisc.edu/>. Both the books and the Course Pack will also be on reserve at College Library.

Hoffmann, Richard. *An Environmental History of Medieval Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.
Keyser, Richard. *Course Pack for ES/Hist 328*. Social Science Copy Center, 2015.
Mark Cioc. *The Rhine: An Eco-Biography, 1815-2000*. University of Washington Press, 2006.
Bess, Michael. *The Light-Green Society: Ecology and Technological Modernity in France, 1960-2000*.
The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Reading Assignments: you should read each week's assignments in the order they are listed on the syllabus and finish all of them by Tuesday's class. This will enable you to make connections among the readings and to use class time to review, clarify, and ask questions about the week's material.

SCHEDULE

Week 1, Thur., Sept.3. Introduction: Nature, Culture, & Environmental History.

Hoffmann, *Environmental History*, Introduction, pp. 1-16; begin ch. 1, pp. 21-29.

Course Pack, ch. 1: Ancient Middle East.

Week 2, Sept. 8-10. Classical Mediterranean Civilizations: an Environmental Crisis?

Hoffmann, *Environmental History*, ch. 1, pp. 21-43; ch. 2, pp. 51-56.

Course Pack: Grove and Rackham, *The Nature of Mediterranean Europe*, ch. 1, pp. 8-19; and ch. 11, pp. 167-74 (Greece & Italy), 188-89 (conclusion).

Course Pack, ch. 2: Ancient Greece and Rome.

Week 3, Sept. 15-17. Fall of Rome and the Early Middle Ages.

Hoffmann, *Environmental History*, ch. 1, pp. 43-50; ch. 2, pp. 57-71, 78-84.

Begin Course Pack, ch. 3: Medieval Europe.

Week 4, Sept. 22-24. The Middle Ages: Cultural Ideas & Social Practice.

Hoffmann, *Environmental History*, ch. 3, pp. 85-112.

Course Pack, ch. 3, Medieval Europe.

Sept. 29: Essay 1 Due.

Week 5, Sept. 29 - Oct. 1. The Formation of European Landscapes: Open Fields & Woodlands.

Hoffmann, *Environmental History*, ch. 4, pp. 113-33.

Course Pack: Rackham, *History of the Countryside*, ch. 1, pp. 1-5; & ch. 5, pp. 62-68; 75-77; & 85-89.

Week 6, Oct. 6-8. Sustainability & Resource Management.

Hoffmann, *Env. History*, ch. 5, pp. 155-68; ch. 6, pp. 237-40; & ch. 7, pp. 241-78.

Course Pack, begin ch. 4: The Plague.

Week 7, Oct. 13-15. Population, Climate, & Disease in the Late Medieval Crises.

Hoffmann, *Env. History*, ch. 8, pp. 279-86, 289-98; ch. 9, pp. 318-41; ch. 10, pp. 342-51.

Course Pack, ch. 4: The Plague.

Week 8, Oct. 20-22. European Discoveries and the Columbian Exchange.

Hoffmann, *Environmental History*, ch. 10, pp. 351-70.

Course Pack, ch. 5: New World Encounters.

Week 9, Oct. 27-29. Early Modern States, Global Trade, & the Scientific Revolution.

Course Pack: Richards, John, *Unending Frontier*, intro. & ch. 1, pp. 1-24, 47-57; ch. 2, pp. 58-61, 84-85; & ch. 3, pp. 89-97, 110-111.

Course Pack: Coates, Peter, "The Advent of Modernity," in *Nature: Western Attitudes*, pp. 67-81.

Course Pack: James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, introduction & ch. 1, pp. 1-22.

Week 10, Nov. 3-5. Agrarian Intensification, Landscape Change, & British Energy Regimes.

Course Pack: Richards, *Unending Frontier*, ch. 6, pp. 193-214 (you may skim the political history on pp. 195-202), 221-41.

Course Pack: Rackham, *History of the Countryside*, ch. 5, pp. 88-97.

Course Pack: Paul Warde & Tom Williamson, "Fuel Supply and Agriculture in Post-Medieval England," *Agricultural History Review* 62: 1 (2014): 61-82.

Week 11, Nov. 10-12. The Enlightenment & New Approaches to Managing Natural Resources.

Cioc, *The Rhine*, foreword, pp. ix-xii; & ch. 1-3, pp. 3-75.

Course Pack, ch. 6: Early Modern Europe.

Nov. 17: Essay 2 Due.

Week 12, Nov. 17-19. From the Mid-19th to the Mid-20th Century: Industry & Environment.

Cioc, *The Rhine*, ch. 4-5, pp. 77-143.

Course Pack, ch. 6: Early Modern Europe.

Week 13, Tues., Nov. 24. Peak Environmental Degradation & Response.

Cioc, *The Rhine*, ch. 6-8, pp. 145-207.

Course Pack, ch. 6: Early Modern Europe.

Thanksgiving Break, Nov. 26-27.

Week 14, Dec. 1-3. The Rise of European Environmentalism (Focus: France).

Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, Intro., pp. 3-9; & ch. 1-3, pp. 11-75.

Week 15, Dec. 8-10. The Achievements of French Environmentalism: Politics & Ideas.

Bess, *Light-Green Society*, ch. 4-5, pp. 76-140.

Week 16, Tues., Dec. 15. Is "Light-Green" the Color of the Future?

Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, ch. 9-11, pp. 190-233; ch. 12, pp. 237-45; & Concl., pp. 291-95.

Final Exam: Thursday, Dec. 17, 7:45 – 9:45 am.