

History, Geography and Environmental Studies 460

American Environmental History

Environmental history, a relatively new field, studies the changing relationship between human beings and the natural world through time. Despite being numbered at the 400-level, this course is intended as an introduction to this exciting new field of scholarship, with no prerequisites. It assumes no background in American history, geography, or environmental studies, and offers a general survey that can be valuable for students interested in any of these fields, from entry-level undergraduates through graduate students. Although the course is intended to be challenging, it is also meant to be fun: any student willing to attend lectures, do the readings, and work hard should be able to enjoy and do well in it. Our central premise throughout will be that much of the familiar terrain of American history looks very different when seen in an environmental context, and that one can learn a great deal about history, geography, and the environment by studying them together. All too often, historians study the human past without attending to nature. All too often, scientists study nature without attending to human history. We will try to discover the value of integrating these different perspectives, and argue that the humanistic perspectives of historians and geographers are absolutely crucial if one hopes to understand contemporary environmental issues.

Syllabus:

HTML (optimized for viewing on screen, with active links): [HTML ▶](#)

PDF: (optimized for printing): [PDF ▶](#)

Email Announcements Sent to Class List Server: [HTML ▶](#)

Handouts:

Please note that for all handouts listed below, the HTML version is more attractive for onscreen viewing, complete with a relevant banner illustration on top, whereas the PDF version is much more densely packed and is designed to be printable on a single sheet of paper. These handouts typically become available at least a few days before a lecture is delivered, though occasionally they may get revised very close to the time of the actual lecture. I'll try to remember to announce in class if late revisions occurred.

Handout #1: Kennecott Journey [PDF ▶](#) [HTML ▶](#)

Handout #2: World Coyote & Raven Made [PDF ▶](#) [HTML ▶](#)

Handout #3: Migration, Disease, & Death [PDF ▶](#) [HTML ▶](#)

Handout #4: Co-Invasion: Some Bigger Creatures [PDF ▶](#) [HTML ▶](#)

Handout #5: A Market in Animals [PDF ▶](#) [HTML ▶](#)

Handout #6: A World of Fields and Fences [PDF ▶](#) [HTML ▶](#)

Handout #7: The Machine in the Garden [PDF ▶](#) [HTML ▶](#)

Agricultural Time Series (old 1800-1980 B&W handout): [PDF ▶](#)

Fall 2008

History / Geography / Environmental Studies 460

AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

LECTURER: Bill Cronon, 5103 Humanities (also 443 Science Hall).

SECTION LEADERS: Bill Cronon, Ari Eisenberg, Andrew Erickson, Adam Mandelman.

Bill's Phone: 265-6023. This has an answering machine on which you can leave messages if I'm not in. No calls to my home telephone number, please. A much better way to contact me is via email at wcronon@wisc.edu, but please do this sparingly; I receive 80-100 emails per day and it's all I can do (and sometimes quite a lot more!) to keep up with them all.

Bill's Website: Bill's website is at www.williamcronon.net, and the page for this course can be found at <http://www.williamcronon.net/courses/460.htm>. Be sure to bookmark and keep track of this link, since the page has many handouts and other materials helpful for students in the course. If you happen to lose track of it, a Google search of "William Cronon 460" is likely to yield this page as the top hit.

Office Hours: 9:45-11:45am Tuesdays, 5103 Humanities, first come first served. I would prefer to see you during regular hours, but will try to meet with you at other times if necessary. Please don't just stop by my office if you need to see me at times other than my office hours, however; email me first and make an appointment. I generally meet with students for appointments in 443 Science Hall.

TA Offices: Email is the best way to get in touch with your section leader if you need to contact them. Adam's email is mandelman@wisc.edu; Andrew's is aerickson@wisc.edu; and Ari's is eisenberg2@wisc.edu. They will circulate office hours and locations at the first section meeting of the semester.

LECTURES will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 2:30pm-3:45pm, in 2650 Humanities.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental history studies the changing relationships between human beings and the natural world through time. Despite being numbered at the 400-level, this course is intended as an introduction to this exciting new field of scholarship, with no prerequisites. It assumes no background in American history, geography, or environmental studies, and offers a general survey that can be valuable for students interested in any of these fields, from entry-level undergraduates through graduate students. Although the course is intended to be challenging, it is also meant to be fun: any student willing to attend lectures, do the readings, and work hard should be able to enjoy and do well in it. Our central premise throughout will be that much of the familiar terrain of American history looks very different when seen in its environmental context, and that one can learn a great deal about history, geography, and the environment by studying them together. All too often, historians study the human past without attending to nature. All too often, scientists study nature without attending to human history. We will try to discover the value of integrating these different perspectives, and argue that the humanistic perspectives of historians and geographers are absolutely crucial if one hopes to understand contemporary environmental issues.

We will be approaching American environmental history from at least three different angles. First, we will ask how various human activities have historically depended on and interacted with the natural world: how have natural phenomena and resources shaped patterns of human life in different regions of the continent? Second, we will trace the shifting attitudes toward nature held by different Americans during various periods of their nation's history: how have the human inhabitants of this continent perceived and attached meanings to the world around them, and how have those attitudes shaped their cultural and political lives? Finally, we will ask how human attitudes and activities have worked together to reshape the American landscape: how have people altered the world around them, and what have been the consequences of those alterations for natural and human communities alike? At the same time, we will be tracing the evolution of environmental politics in the United States, so that the course is also a history of conservation and environmentalism in our nation's political life down to the present.

A NOTE ON THE READINGS

This syllabus provides a detailed outline of what we'll be covering in the course, and we strongly advise you to refer to it often as you plan your studying. Readings are extensive, but they are generally not difficult; they have been chosen as much as possible to be fun and provocative as well as informative. All required texts are available at the University Bookstore. They are as follows (call numbers are included):

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, GF 504 N45 C76 2003

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, QH81 L56 1966

David Nye, *Consuming Power: A Social History of American Energies*, HD9502 U52 N94 1998

David Stradling, *Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts*, QH76 C6545 2004

Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl*, F786 W87

I have cut the number of required textbooks quite significantly year in an effort to reduce costs for students; at the same time, the number of online readings has increased, as you'll see when you study the syllabus below. All required textbooks are available on reserve in Helen C. White library and/or at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library. You needn't purchase all of them, and you should feel free to read library copies or share books with classmates if you prefer. Other readings are available as course handouts or on electronic reserve either via your My UW page or on my personal website. *Please be sure you know how to access e-reserve readings and find my website by the end of the first week of classes.*

COURSE GRADING

The midterm exam counts for 20% of your grade, and the final for 30% of it; the paper counts for 30%; and section participation for the final 20%. Please note in particular that we take section participation very seriously in this course. Learning how to *talk* enthusiastically and intelligently about significant subjects is actually one of the most important skills you can learn in college, and this course is a great place to work on that skill. We'll be dealing with interesting readings about historical subjects that have important implications for our present and future, so it shouldn't be hard for you to come to section with questions and comments you'd like to share with other members of the group. Try to make a special effort to get to know not just your section leader, but the other students in your section. We promise this will not only make the course more enjoyable, but will add a lot to what you learn as well.

EXAMINATIONS

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final, each covering their respective halves of the course in their objective sections; the final will also require you to write comprehensive essays covering the course as a whole.

THE PLACE PAPER (5-6 pages; 6-10 pages for Honors undergrads and grad students):

This is due at the beginning of lecture on Monday, November 24, and is intended to give you an opportunity actually to *do* environmental history yourself as a way of synthesizing what you've learned from the entire course. In it, you are to choose some place--either located in Madison or somewhere you know well from your home or travels--and write a brief essay discussing your interpretation of some aspects of its environmental history, using materials we've studied in the class. Because this is a brief paper, you'll need to think carefully about what parts of your chosen place you wish to explore in your essay: it is far better to discuss a few aspects well than many aspects superficially. Write a description or tell a story that will explain to the reader how this place came to have the shape and qualities it has today. You should think of this paper as an exercise in historical, geographical, and environmental interpretation, asking you to read a small patch of landscape as a historical document of past environmental change.

Since we'd like you to be thinking about this paper from the very start of the semester, we'd like to offer you some suggestions for the how best to approach it. Remember that the most important aspect of this assignment is for you to have an experience trying to "read" an actual landscape. We fully understand that you don't know enough environmental history to construct a complete or fully accurate narrative of environmental changes that have shaped your chosen place. What we're looking for instead is that you take a long, careful look at the place and try to see it with unfamiliar eyes, taking nothing for granted but looking at everything you see there as if you'd never seen it before. Then ask how the things you see might have come to be there. (This assignment may go better and be more fun if you imagine that you're a visitor from outer space who's just landed and is trying to make sense of all the strange things you see around you: why on earth do people live this way? How did the

lives of earlier inhabitants leave traces that can still be seen?) As the first lecture of the course suggests, the trick is to ask as many questions as you can about landscapes you ordinarily take for granted. (Remember, you can go back and reread that first lecture, which is printed as an essay called "Kennecott Journey" in the book *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, edited by myself; a PDF version of it is even more conveniently available on the course page of my website.) Use materials from the readings and from the lectures to help you think about the kinds of questions you want to ask, and do the best job you can answering these questions using the evidence you can find on the ground. Unless you have a background in field ecology, you'd probably do well not to worry too much about trying to identify individual species of plants and animals, though you should at least look closely at these just to see what you can figure out about the way they're arranged on the land; more importantly, though, look at the broader patterns of boundaries, buildings, street patterns, fence lines, utility services, etc., instead.

If you're having trouble choosing a place to write about, consider these suggestions right here in Madison; most can easily be applied to other locations as well:

- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Walk along a railroad track for a mile or more (the one behind the Kohl Center that has become a bike path west of the intersection of Regent Street and Monroe Street would be a good choice) and think about its relation to the surrounding landscape. Ask how adjacent sites relate to the railroad, and how those relations may have changed with time. In what ways does the railroad divide the surrounding land, and in what ways does it connect it? How might these divisions and connections have changed with time?
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Spend an hour or two in a cemetery and see what you can learn from it as a historical document (the ones on both sides of the Speedway, just beyond Madison's West High School on Regent Street, are excellent for this exercise). What can you learn about the lives of those who are buried there: how long they lived, how they died, what their family relations were, etc.? What does the cemetery tell you about their attitudes toward life, death, and their place in the natural world? How does the physical form of the cemetery itself (as opposed to individual graves) reflect cultural attitudes toward nature?
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Drive or bike west from the UW stadium along Regent Street, Speedway, and Mineral Point Road until you're well out into the agricultural countryside (if you can, go as far as Pine Bluff, or even to the point where the road finally ends at Highway 78, which would be a round trip of 20-30 miles). As you ride, look very closely at the changing spatial arrangement of streets, buildings, and settlement patterns. How do houses change? Look at their sizes, styles, presence or absence of garages and porches, nearness to neighboring houses, sizes of front and back yards, relation of residential and non-residential buildings, etc., etc. Look at the presence or absence of green space. As you drive west, you're essentially moving through neighborhoods that were built in each succeeding decade of the twentieth century. The spatial changes you see directly reflect chronological changes in the history of Madison's built environment and its relations to the surrounding landscape.
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Try comparing two different residential neighborhoods in Madison and writing a brief paper on the key differences you notice between them. The City of Madison's Department of Planning & Development has put together a good series of walking tours you can take of historic neighborhoods in the city, easily accessed as downloadable documents from <http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/planning/walkTour.html>. You might try taking one or more of these tours, and then write about what you see along the way. Just be careful not to write a paper that only reports what you learn from the tour booklet; be sure to look at what you see and write about the landscape itself, supplementing the guide with additional library research if you can.
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Find the "Lost City" in the southeast part of the UW Arboretum and see what you can figure out about its past. This is an old failed subdivision from the early twentieth century which is now completely overgrown by the forest (it could be harder to find in deep snow!). You can find a map of where to locate it in the Arboretum visitor's center, and you could read about its past in Nancy Sachse's book, *A Thousand Ages*, QK 479 S16 1974.
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Walk to the end of Picnic Point and spend time looking at the skyline of Madison. Think about the different human elements that make up that skyline, and ask yourself how and when they might have come to be there. Then go examine those same elements close up and read what you can from their sites. You may benefit from exploring the very detailed and prize-winning website for UW-Madison's Lakeshore Nature Preserve, which includes a great deal of environmental historical information at <http://www.lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu>

Remember, the most important goal of this assignment is to look at a place, ask questions about it, and think about its past with reference to the historical and geographical phenomena you've learned about in this course. This is much harder when you're worrying about it in the abstract than when you're actually doing it. It really doesn't matter what place you pick. You could literally go to anywhere in Madison or your hometown and take a random walk through a neighborhood, thinking about everything you see along the way.

Although this is not primarily a paper based on written documents--we really do want you primarily to have the experience of trying to read an actual landscape--we also expect you to track down at least a few documents that will help you understand the changing landscape of your chosen place. For instance, looking at old photographs can be wonderfully suggestive about how your place has changed in the past. If you're writing about Madison, there are a couple excellent photographic histories of the city and the university which are on reserve at Helen C. White Library: David Mollenhoff's *Madison: The Formative*

Years, F589 M157 M64 1982; and Arthur Hove's *The University of Wisconsin: A Pictorial History*, LD 6128 H68 1991; there should be copies not just on reserve but in the non-circulating reference collection too; multiple copies of Mollenhoff's heavily illustrated book are in the Geography Library in Science Hall and the Wisconsin Historical Society Library as well. Even if you only spend half an hour looking through these, they could be extremely helpful to you, especially if you're having trouble with the assignment.

There are a number of ways you could learn more about your chosen place. The suggestions I've listed below relate mainly to Wisconsin places, but most would be equally well suited to other parts of the country as well.

- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Look at old photographs of your chosen place. The State Historical Society's Iconographic Collection (located in the Archives on the 4th floor) has a vast collection of images of places from Wisconsin and elsewhere. Nothing is better than a picture for helping you see a past place and relate it to the present.
- Look at a series of maps of your chosen place to see how it has changed over time. The Cartographic Collection of the Geography Library in Science Hall can be very helpful here. Aerial photographs might also be very suggestive if they're available.
- If you've chosen an urban place, check out the amazing collection of bird's-eye views, most published during the nineteenth century, that have been digitized on the Library of Congress's American Memory website. The URL for these is: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html>. Check under "Cities and Towns" and search for the place about which you're writing, but don't hesitate to explore other parts of the website as well. The American Memory website is an extraordinary source for digital documents: photos, maps, texts, almost anything you can think of. There's a comparable collection of Wisconsin bird's-eye views at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/feature/birdseye/>.
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> In the late 1920s or early 1930s, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources produced an extraordinary series of "Land Inventory Maps" which show the uses of land for every township in the state. These are available at the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, and can be very helpful indeed for helping you understand changing rural land use. (You can read more about this amazing cartographic resource at <http://steenbock.library.wisc.edu/general/bordner.html>, and access the actual maps at <http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/EcoNatRes/subcollections/WILandInvAbout.shtml> under "Land Economic Inventory.")
- If you want to go even further back in time, you could look at the original land survey records of the 1830s and 1840s, getting a rough sense of what the land looked like when the first American surveyors came through to impose the grid system upon it. These maps, along with the original surveyors notes, are now also available on-line, so you can peruse them for places you know at <http://libtext.library.wisc.edu/SurveyNotes/>.
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Track the changing population of the place in the manuscript census, which is available for every year between 1840 and 1930 except 1890 (for which the census records were destroyed in a fire). Microfilms of the census for every state in the country are available at the Historical Society. These will tell you who lived in a place, their family relationships, their birth places, their occupations, etc. If you're writing about a rural place in Wisconsin, you should also look at the manuscript records of the Agricultural Census, which give you a complete picture of the crops and animals raised on every farm in the state during the census years. These are in the Historical Society too, in the back left corner of the Reading Room.
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> If you're studying an urban area, look at old city directories, which often list the residents and businesses of a community not just alphabetically but according to their street address. A directory enables you almost literally to walk down the same street in the past that you've walked down in the present, seeing how the people and businesses have changed in the interval. See <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/buildings/citydir.asp> for tips.
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> Look at old county atlases or histories for your place. These were published for many counties in the Midwest primarily in the 1870s through the 1890s, so can give you lots of interesting information about your place during the nineteenth century. The Historical Society has an excellent collection.
- <!--[if !supportLists]--> And of course: *talk* with people who have lived in your place for a long time.

ADVICE ABOUT HOW TO WRITE YOUR PLACE PAPER (WITH THANKS TO ITS UNKNOWN AUTHOR)

Finally, here are some tips about how to approach the *writing* of your place paper, and also about how we'll be grading it. I've adopted these from the excellent writing standards that a colleague at the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies uses, and my colleague in turn adapted them from rubrics like this that have circulated widely on the Web. Although I'm not completely certain of the original author, two important earlier versions of the text below include Paul Halsall's "General Evaluation Rubric for College Papers" (www.fordham.edu/halsall/med/rubric.html), which was based in turn on Patrick Rael's "General Grading Rubric" (www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/). (These may have been inspired in part by rubrics used in grading AP essays.) This text has been slightly modified to fit this course, but is otherwise borrowed pretty completely from my colleague's version of the rubric.

Your goal in this Place Paper is to offer an original interpretation of your chosen landscape based on your own observations and research on the one hand, and on course readings and lectures on the other hand. We will evaluate your work using the following criteria:

STRUCTURE: Begin your paper by introducing the reader to your place, and by orienting the reader to the major questions and interpretive approaches you intend to use for understanding it. It's fine to start with an anecdote or a description of the place if you think that's the best way to proceed, but be sure to clarify early in the paper the main themes you'll be addressing. Following your introduction, build your essay as a series of well-structured paragraphs. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, and usually 3 to 5 additional sentences that clearly support that topic sentence. Each paragraph should explain one major idea, not 3 or 4. Each paragraph should have a clear connection to the next. Pay attention to transitions! End with a strong conclusion that tells readers what they've learned about your place and why they should care about the interpretation you're offering of its history.

ANALYSIS: Why should the reader believe you? What arguments for and against your thesis make sense? How can you disprove counter-arguments, or account for evidence that seems to contradict your thesis? Your analysis should offer new ways to think of the material. All ideas in the paper should flow logically. Your argument should be identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Support your thesis with arguments based on evidence from your chosen landscape and from the primary and secondary sources you've researched. All sources should be clearly and accurately identified in footnotes or endnotes using a consistent citation format from a manual such as Kate L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, itself based on the classic *Chicago Manual of Style*, which has recently been published in a new edition that pays much more attention to Internet resources and forms of citation.

STYLE: We will reward clear, active, powerful writing. PLEASE do not use the passive voice. Do not start sentences with "It is....", "There is..." or "There are...." Use active verbs. Revise your paper to remove wordiness, redundancy, passive voice, vagueness, and inactive verbs. Make sure that your grammar and spelling are correct. Careless errors, especially run-ons and comma splices, WILL lower your grade.

For example: This is an example of BAD writing: "It can be shown that farmland on the Great Plains was harmed by poor farming practices."

This is an example of BETTER writing: "Farmers on the Great Plains plowed on steep slopes, causing soil erosion."

What's the difference? In the first sentence, "It can be shown" is in the passive voice, starts with the word "It," and is wordy, redundant filler. The phrase doesn't wake up the reader, and it doesn't convey any meaning. Get rid of it.

The phrase "farmland was harmed" is an example of the passive voice. Do your absolute best to get rid of the passive voice. Your writing will be much more interesting and precise. The passive voice is usually a vague copout: you don't have to say who did what and why. Revising into active voice makes you think about who is responsible. For example, the second example tells us exactly who harmed the soil: "farmers plowed on steep slopes, causing soil erosion."

ORIGINALITY: Although you can get a good grade (a B) for presenting arguments developed in lecture and section, an A paper is one that develops original insights and arguments. We strongly encourage you to think for yourselves about the place you've chosen, giving evidence from course materials and readings, but pushing your insights based on your own observations and research.

GRADING STANDARDS FOR PAPERS:

The Superior Paper (A: 94-100) Structure: Your thesis and narrative are clear, insightful, original, sophisticated, even exciting. Your story and your arguments are well integrated with each other. All ideas in the paper flow logically; your argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. You have excellent transitions. Your paragraphs have solid topic sentences, and each sentence clearly relates to that topic sentence. Your conclusion is persuasive.

Analysis: You support every point with at least one example from your primary sources, all of which are flawlessly annotated using a standard citation format. You integrate quoted material into your sentences well. Your analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material. You anticipate and successfully defuse counter-arguments.

Style: Your sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and citations are excellent. You have NO run-on sentences or comma splices. Your writing style is lively, active, and interesting. You use active verbs, and minimize the passive voice. You are not wordy or redundant.

Originality: Your narrative and arguments show a great deal of independent insight and originality.

The Very Good Paper (AB 88-93) Structure: Your thesis and narrative are clear, insightful, and original. Your argument flows logically and is sound. You may have a few unclear transitions. You end with a strong conclusion.

Analysis: You give examples to support most points, and you integrate quotes into sentences; your notes are nearly perfect. Your analysis is clear and logical, and even makes sense. You acknowledge counter-arguments.

Style: Your sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and citations are good. You have no more than one run-on sentence or comma splice. Your writing style is solid and clear. You use active verbs, and minimize the passive voice. You are not wordy or redundant.

Originality: Your arguments show independent thought.

The Good Paper (B 82-87) Structure: Your thesis and narrative are clear, but may not be insightful, original, or easily identified. Your argument is generally clear and appropriate, although it may wander occasionally. You may have a few unclear transitions, or paragraphs without strong topic sentences. You may end without much of a conclusion.

Analysis: You give evidence to support most points, but some evidence may appear where inappropriate, and not all are accurately cited. Your argument usually flows logically and makes sense, although some gaps in logic may exist. You may fail to address counter-arguments.

Style: Your writing style is clear, but not always lively, active, or interesting. You sometimes use the passive voice. You may become wordy or redundant. Your sentence structure, grammar, and spelling are strong despite occasional lapses.

Originality: You do a solid job of synthesizing material presented in lectures and readings, but do not develop your own insights or conclusions.

The Borderline Paper (BC 77-81) Structure: Your thesis and narrative may be unclear, vague, or unoriginal, and may provide little structure for the paper. Your paper may wander, with few transitions, few topic sentences, and little logic. Your paragraphs may not be organized coherently.

Analysis: You give examples to support some but not all points. Your points often lack supporting evidence, or else you use evidence inappropriately, often because there may be no clear point. Your quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences. You may give a quote, but then fail to analyze it or show how it supports your argument. Your logic may fail, or your argument may be unclear. You may not address counter-arguments. Your end may dwindle off without a conclusion.

Style: Your writing style is not always clear, active, or interesting. You use the passive voice, or become wordy or redundant. You have repeated problems in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, citation style, or spelling. You may have several run-on sentences or comma splices.

Originality: You do a fair job synthesizing material presented in lectures and sections, but do not develop your own insights or conclusions.

The "Needs Help" Paper (C 70-76) Structure: Your thesis and narrative are difficult to identify, or may be a bland restatement of an obvious point. Your structure may be unclear, often because your thesis is weak or non-existent. Your transitions are confusing and unclear. Your paragraphs show little structure. The paper is a loose collection of statements, rather than a cohesive argument.

Analysis: Your examples are few or weak. Citations are flawed or missing altogether. You fail to support statements, and the evidence you do give is poorly analyzed or integrated into the paper. Your argument may be impossible to identify. Ideas may not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. The view of the topic may seem simplistic, with little effort to grasp possible alternative views.

Style: Your writing has problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. You have frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. You may have many run-on sentences and comma splices.

Originality: You do a confusing or poor job synthesizing material presented in lectures and sections, and do not develop your own insights or conclusions.

The Bad Paper (D or F 0-69): A bad paper shows minimal lack of effort or comprehension. The arguments are very

difficult to understand owing to major problems with mechanics, structure, and analysis. The paper has no identifiable thesis, or an incompetent thesis. It's difficult to tell that you've come to class.

In summary: we ask that you think seriously and creatively about the content of this paper, and that you write it as well as you know how. You will be evaluated for the quality and concision of your prose as well as for the breadth and depth of the thought you put into it. That said, please try to relax and have fun with the essay: it's your chance to play with the ideas in the course, and to test out different ways of looking at this complicated material. **Be forewarned that late essays will be marked down by at least one-third of a grade (and significantly more as lateness increases) unless other arrangements are made well prior to the due date.**

IMPORTANT: LAPTOP POLICY

Because the majority of lectures take place in a darkened room with PowerPoint presentations, because bright laptop screens are distracting to other students in this environment, and because the temptation to multitask has become so enormous now that wireless connections to the Internet are available in most lecture halls, the use of laptop computers or other screen-based devices is not permitted during lectures or discussion sections. If you have a medical reason for needing to use a laptop or other screen-based device that has been authorized by the McBurney Center, please let us know.

WEEKLY OUTLINE OF LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENTS

IMPORTANT: In the following outline, lecture topics are arranged into thematic "weeks" that do **NOT** correspond with ordinary calendar weeks, so don't be confused about this. For the purposes of this course, most "weeks" consist of a Wednesday lecture, the following Monday lecture, and the following section; this way, all discussion sections will be assured of having heard the same lectures and done the same readings by the time they meet. Occasionally (usually right before an exam), one of these thematic "weeks" may involve a number of lectures less than or more than two. The parenthetical number after each week's title is the approximate number of pages of reading assigned for that week.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTORY: DOING ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY (23)

3 Sept: Introduction: Conversing with the Earth

8 Sept: The World That Coyote and Raven Made

SECTION: If you'd like, you can reread Bill's opening lecture, the original version of which is a published essay: William Cronon, "Kennecott Journey: The Paths Out of Town," in William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 28-51, which is also available on Bill's website as a link under "Other Resources" on our course webpage. For maximum benefit, it's probably best to do this **after** you've heard the lecture.

PLEASE NOTE THAT DISCUSSION SECTIONS WILL MEET DURING THE FIRST AND SECOND WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER. For the second discussion section, you'll be asked to bring a "found object" to class that somehow relates to the environmental history of a place you're considering writing about for your final paper.

WEEK 2: INVASIONS (46)

10 Sept: Migration, Disease, and Death

15 Sept: Co-Invasion

SECTION: Alfred W. Crosby, "Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America," *William & Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 33:2 (April 1976), 289-99. (Online Library Reserve)

William M. Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 82:3 (1992), 369-85. (Online Library Reserve)

Charles C. Mann, "1491," *Atlantic Monthly*, 289:3 (March 2002), 41-53. (Online Library Reserve)

Thomas Vale, 1998. "The Myth of the Humanized Landscape: The Example from Yosemite National Park," *Natural Areas Journal*, 18:3 (1998), 231-236. (Online Library Reserve)

WEEK 3: REWORKING THE LAND (228)

17 Sept: Selling Animals

22 Sept: A World of Fields and Fences

SECTION: Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, xi-185 (of 20th anniversary edition, including Afterword). (If you buy a used copy of the first edition of the book, the new Afterword is available in our Online Library Reserve.)

WEEK 4: THE COUNTRY AND THE CITY (154)

24 Sept: The Machine in the Garden: Agricultural Revolutions

29 Sept: The Flow of the River: Industrial Revolutions

SECTION: Nye, *Consuming Power*, 1-154. (Available on-line through UW-Madison's .netLibrary subscription as an ebook, but that probably isn't the best way to read it.)

WEEK 5: RETHINKING NATURE (8)

1 Oct: Mountain Gloom, Mountain Glory: Sublime and Picturesque

6 Oct: Improving Nature

SECTION: Romanticism handout (Bill's Course Webpage)

Tours of Wisconsin Historical Society Collections for Final Place Paper Assignment

(gather in first-floor lobby, 816 State Street):

Tuesday, October 7, 4:30-5:30pm

Wednesday, October 8, 4:00-5:00pm (right after lecture)

Thursday, October 9, 4:30-5:30pm

WEEK 6: LANDSCAPES OF DEATH (20)

8 Oct: Hunters and Hunted

13 Oct: Even the Oceans Fail

SECTION: Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," *Journal of American*

History, 78:2 (September 1991), 465-85.

WEEK 7: MIDTERM WEEK: EXAM, AND RESEARCHING PLACE PAPERS

15 Oct: Exploring Past Landscapes: An Introduction to Researching Your Place Paper

15 Oct: EVENING REVIEW SESSION FOR MIDTERM EXAM, 6:30-8:00pm, 1100 Grainger Hall

20 Oct: MID-TERM EXAM

SECTION: Discuss topics for final place papers.

WEEK 8. CONTRADICTIONS OF PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATION (116)

22 Oct: The Conservation Vision

27 Oct: The Child in the Garden

SECTION: Stradling, Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts, vii-106.

If you're interested, explore Library of Congress's American Memory website on early history of conservation:
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html>.

WEEK 9: SEEING LIKE A STATE (168)

29 Oct: Planning Against Disaster

3 Nov: Resources for War, Hot and Cold

SECTION: Worster, Dust Bowl, 3-97, 182-254 (skim remainder if you have time).

WEEK 10: WILDERNESS AND THE LAND ETHIC (78)

5 Nov: Wilderness and Nature's Economy

10 Nov: Killing What One Loves: Paradoxes of Preservation

SECTION: Leopold, Sand County Almanac, 6-19, 127-9, 137-41, 237-95. (If you're using another edition, read the essays entitled "Good Oak," "Red Legs Kicking," "Thinking Like a Mountain," and Part IV of the Book, "The Upshot.").

WEEK 11: RACHEL CARSON AND A NEW ENVIRONMENTALISM (3)

12 Nov: The Fallout of Silent Spring

17 Nov: Silent Spring documentaries (in-class screening).

SECTION: Carson, "A Fable for Tomorrow" (Online Library Reserve)

(Discuss documentary and oral excerpt from Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* this week; reading is light so you can be researching and working on your place paper.)

WEEK 12: TOWARDS EARTH DAY

19 Nov: Environmentalism Triumphant?

24 Nov: Regulation to the Rescue

SECTION: No Sections This Week

PAPER DUE AT START OF LECTURE ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24.

WEEK 13: HIDDEN COSTS AND BACKLASH (108)

26 Nov: Toxic Torts

27 Nov: **THANKSGIVING**

1 Dec: Energy Crises

SECTION: Nye, Consuming Power, 156-264.

WEEK 14: UNCERTAIN FUTURES (online reading)

3 Dec: The Death of Environmentalism?

8 Dec: People Who Live in Glass Houses

10 Dec: That Which We Tame

SECTION: Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, "The Death of Environmentalism," along with accompanying critical comments on the Grist website: <http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2005/01/13/doe-intro/>.

Alan Weisman, "Earth Without People," *Discover* (February 6, 2005). (Online Library Reserve)

REVIEW SESSION FOR FINAL EXAM: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 7:00-8:30pm, 3650 Humanities

FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2:45p, 3650 Humanities

von Thunen's Rings Handout [PDF](#) [▶](#)

Agricultural Time Series (Black and White): [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Agricultural Time Series (Color): [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #8: The Flow of the River [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #9: Mountain Gloom, Mountain Glory [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Romanticism Readings: [PDF](#) [▶](#)

Handout #10: Improving Nature [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #11: Hunters and Hunted [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #12: Even the Oceans Fail [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #13: Wonders of Libraries, Joys of Information [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #14: The Conservation Vision [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #15: Nurturing Nature: The Child in the Garden [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #16: Planning for Disaster [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #17: Strategic Resources and the Population Bomb [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #18-19: Wilderness and the Land Ethic [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #20: The Fallout of Silent Spring [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #21: Environmentalism Triumphant? [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #22: Regulation to the Rescue [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #23: Toxic Torts [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #24: Energy Crises [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #25: Environmental Backlash [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #26: People Who Live in Glass Houses [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Handout #27: That Which We Tame [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Place Paper Assignment

Place Paper assignment described (excerpted from syllabus): [HTML](#) [▶](#)

Click [here](#) for a collection of past student papers written to fulfill the final "place paper" assignment in 460.

Kelly Roark's Tips for Successful Place Papers [PDF](#) [▶](#) [HTML](#) [▶](#)

This handout was prepared by TA Kelly Roark to help students in her discussion sections in 2005, and I've decided to make it

available again.

Other Resources:

Essay: William Cronon, "Kennebec Journey: The Paths out of Town," in William Cronon, George Miles, Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), 28-51. 

Romanticism Readings: 

Sample Midterm Exam Essay Questions, Fall 2008

Midterm Exam 

Sample Answer to Question #1 

Sample Answer to Question #2 

Sample Answer to Question #3 

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