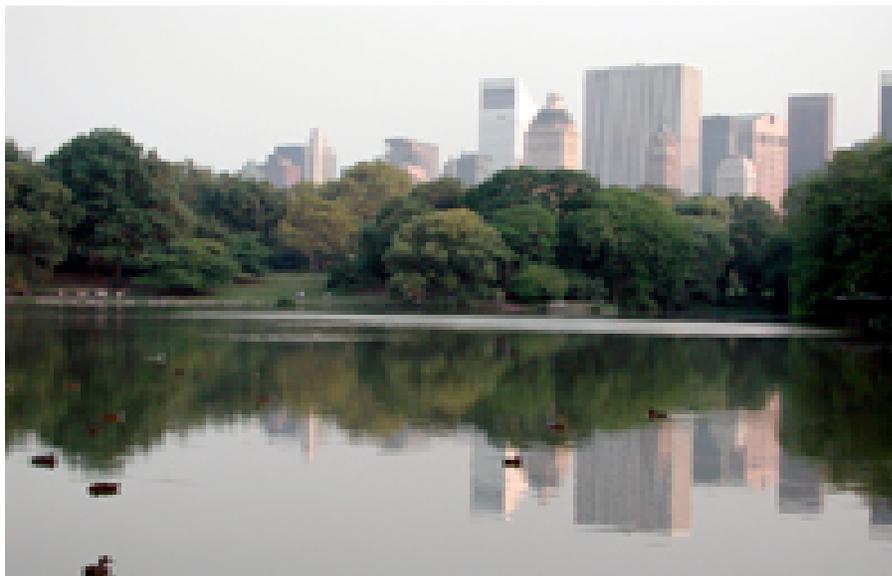


Benjamin Johnson
Global and Comparative Environmental History
Southern Methodist University
2003
Topics: World, Comparative

Global and Comparative Environmental History
HIST 6308
Spring 2004
Monday 2:00-4:50

Professor Benjamin Johnson
Dallas Hall 16
Office Hours: 10-12 M
bjohnson@mail.smu.edu



Course Description

Environmental History expands the customary framework of historical inquiry, incorporating such actors as animals, diseases, and climate alongside more familiar human institutions and creations. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to major concepts, tools, and works in the field. It takes a global and comparative approach, allowing us to consider the ways in which world environmental history might inform the study of North American History.

Required Texts

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*
William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*
Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*

William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*
James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*
Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*
Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation*
Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice: A South African History*
Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring*
Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*
J.R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-century World*
William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*
Alan Weisman, *Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World*

Other sources that may be of assistance in your assignments or pursuing your further interest in environmental topics have been placed on reserve. Carolyn Merchant's *The Columbia Guide to American Environmental History*, and the larger collection she edited with Shepard Krech III and J.R. McNeill, *Encyclopedia of World Environmental History* are good starting points for your larger papers. *American Environmental History*, an anthology edited by Louis Warren, and Ted Steinberg's *Down to Earth* are good resources for United States environmental history, particularly for thinking about how you might teach it. All of the articles and readings on the syllabus have also been placed on reserve.

Course Requirements and Notes

Seminar discussions drive this course, and even the written work is designed to make our discussions as fruitful as possible. Each week students will write brief (1-2 page) response papers, identifying the main contribution of the week's readings and evaluating it. These responses should be turned in by noon, with one copy going to your instructor and another into a folder in the department common area.

Each student will also write one longer historiographical analysis, locating the book under discussion in its scholarly context and thus evaluating in a more systematic way the work's contribution to the field. What new questions does it raise, or what new answers to old questions? How does its methodology compare to previous work? What are the major strengths or flaws of the argument? How significant is it? Is the work under consideration worthy of emulation in future scholarship, or does it take us in a misguided direction? There is no single format or formula for this paper. It should be substantial but not too long – somewhere around 10 pages. The text and bibliography should provide a road map for your fellow students should they wish to delve more deeply into the relevant literature, either for their own research or for teaching. The obvious place to begin this project is with reviews and citations of the work under consideration; you will also need to familiarize yourself with the other monographs to which it is most indebted. This assignment, like the response papers, is due by noon on the day of each of our classes. It should be read alongside the response papers before class begins.

The final assignment is a significant (15-20 page) proposal for an environmental history research project. This prospectus will identify a cohesive topic, explain its significance to environmental history as a field, and discuss the secondary and primary sources that would be used to actually conduct the research. We will meet again as a class during the finals period to discuss and evaluate one another's proposals.

Please come and visit me in my office hours, or schedule another time if they are not convenient. I am happy to meet with you to discuss the class, environmental history, or anything else.

Grading

contribution to class discussion	25%
weekly response papers	20%
historiographical essay	20%
research prospectus (due at end of term)	35%

Course Schedule

January 12	Introduction and Orientation The Evolution of the Field Richard White, "American Environmental History: The Development of a New Historical Field," <i>Pacific Historical Review</i> 54 (1985): pp 297-336 (reserve) David A. Johnson, et. al, "Forum: Environmental History, Retrospect and Prospect," <i>Pacific Historical Review</i> 70:1 (2002): pp 55-111 Hal Rothman, "A Decade in the Saddle: Confessions of a Recalcitrant Editor," <i>Environmental History</i> 7:1 (2002): pp 9-21. Guillermo Castro Herrera, "Environmental History (Made) in Latin America" (April 19, 2001): http://www.h-net.org/~environ/historiography/latinam.htm Edmund Russell, "Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field," <i>Environmental History</i> 8:2 (2003): pp 204-228 Mike Davis, "Cosmic Dancers on History's Stage?" <i>Dead Cities</i> (New Press, 2002; originally published 1996): pp 307-359.
January 19	No Class – University Holiday
January 26	The Big Picture Jared Diamon, <i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i>
February 2	Colonizing Nature William Cronon, <i>Changes in the Land</i>

or

Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside* (reserve)

- February 9 Empire and Environmental Thought
 Richard Grove, *Ecological Imperialism*
- February 16 Das Green Kapital
 William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*
- February 23 Modernism and Nature
 James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*
- March 1 The Fruits of Late Empire
 Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*
- March 8 **No Class – Spring Break**
- March 15 U.S. Conservation Reconsidered
 Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*
- March 22 Power and the Land
 Nancy Jacobs, *Environment, Power, and Injustice*
- March 29 War
 Edmund Russell, *War and Nature*
- April 5 Communist Modernity
 Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War on Nature*
- April 12 Reckoning with Industrial Civilization
 J.R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun*
- April 19 Environmental History and the Challenge of Cultural Studies
 William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground*
- April 26 Environmentalism at the Millenium
 Alan Weisman, *Gaviotas*
 Adam Rome, "'Give Earth a Chance': The Environmental
Movement and the Sixties," *Journal of American History* 90:2 (September
2003) (reserve)
 William Cronon, "The Uses of Environmental History,"
Environmental History Review 1993 17 (3): 1-22 (reserve)