

Matthew W. Klinge

Environmental Studies/History 235: Green Injustice—Environment and Equity in North American History

Bowdoin College

2003

Topics: North America, Environmental Justice

Discussion meetings and location: M, W, 11:30 a.m.-12:55 p.m., 103 Adams (ES Seminar Room)

Office hours: 110 Adams, Tuesdays, 1:30-4 p.m., and by appt.

Office telephone: 798-7141 (campus x7141)

E-mail: mklinge@bowdoin.edu

Course website: <http://academic.bowdoin.edu/courses/f03/hist235/>

Course Description

This course historicizes what seems like a relatively recent phenomenon: environmental justice. By tracing some of the various responses Americans have had toward nature from the early colonial period through the present day, we will analyze how environmental and social change have been deeply intertwined. Readings include primary historical documents, literature, and critical monographs. Many are iconic texts of American cultural or environmental history. Among the topics we will explore are the expulsion of Native Americans from public lands; agriculture and slavery; immigration, disease, and public health; the impact of invasive species upon social relations; the role of science and technology in defining environmental problems; class conflict and conservation policy; and the transnational dimensions of pollution.

We will approach this environmental history from at least three different perspectives. First, how have various human activities historically depended on and interacted with the natural world, and how have those activities been predicated upon social difference? Second, how have attitudes toward the natural world and social difference, particularly in what became the United States, changed over time, and how have those attitudes, in turn, shaped our nation's cultural, social, and political foundations? Finally, how have dynamics between nature and culture, environment and society, shaped power relations between diverse peoples and places throughout American history? Discussions and readings will add still more questions to this list.

The central purpose of this course is to improve your ability to think historically and conceptually while broadening your knowledge of North American history as viewed from an environmental angle. Historical thinking does not come naturally. It is hard, difficult work that includes learning to recognize the complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty in human affairs; developing a critical eye toward sources of information about the past (and present); and understanding that events occur sequentially and that order matters. Placing events and details in context is a key to thinking historically. Imposing order on the messy, numerous, and diverse information from the past is neither easy nor quickly learned. Thinking historically, then, requires learning details, accounting for discrepancies in sources, placing events in context and applying this knowledge to support your interpretation in a scholarly, persuasive manner.

Readings

Students should have a strong grasp of American history and/or literature, but we will begin each meeting with a brief overview of the period and themes to be addressed that day before moving onto student presentations. Interested students may want to look at Eric Foner, ed. The New American History 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), which has several interpretative essays to guide you through the historical terrain we will navigate this term, as well as Theodore Steinberg, Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Copies are on reserve at Hawthorne-Longfellow Library.

Readings are available at the Bowdoin Bookstore Textbook Annex in Moore Hall and on reserve at Hawthorne-Longfellow Library. Additional documents will be on electronic reserve and can be found through the course website or the Bowdoin College Library Gateway. There may be, from time to time, short

handouts to supplement the weekly assignments. Students are encouraged to pay attention to contemporary environmental disputes that may inform class discussions. We may also see several short films or videos this term. Dates and times will be announced in class. In accordance with copyright law, these screenings are not open to the public, so please do not publicize them outside of class.

Students should note that the reading load for this course is substantial, averaging 125-175 pages per week, but not unreasonable for an upper-division history course. I have given you page counts for each week so you can plan accordingly, and I have tried to reduce your reading after holidays and breaks as well.

William Cronon, editor, Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature (rev. ed.)

Alan Kraut, Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the “Immigrant Menace”

Andrew Hurley, Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980

Christopher Sellers, Hazards of the Job: From Industrial Disease to Environmental Health Science

Karl Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation

Richard White, The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos

Course Reader for ES 235

Course Requirements

1. Class presentation and leading discussion (20% course grade): In conjunction with a colleague, you will distribute reading questions by email before class one Monday class this term, then briefly summarize the major historical themes or events for the period under discussion when we meet in order to place our conversations in context. Presentations should last 10-15 minutes, and you are expected to help guide discussion for the remainder of the period. I strongly encourage you to use additional materials—handouts, pictures, objects, etc.—to enliven your presentations and spark debate. You may also require short writing assignments, use role-playing activities, or prepare any other activity that will help to inspire lively debate. You are encouraged to use email to promote discussion beforehand as well. I will lead the second discussion for that week, but with your help and guidance.
2. Short (4-5 pages) critical response paper (20% course grade): This paper should critically review the major secondary reading for a selected week while incorporating one or more of the recommended supplemental readings. *Students should use, at a minimum, at least one full-length monograph from the supplemental readings list.* Essays should interrogate the biases of the author, the context of their writing, and how their understandings of nature and culture relate to larger themes addressed in the course. *Students have the option of rewriting this paper once, with the average of the two counting toward your final grade.* Although you may present your paper in summary form during your class presentation, the work on your paper must be your own.
3. A medium-length research paper, 10-15 pages (30% course grade): This assignment is your opportunity to synthesize the material learned in this course through your own engagement with the assigned readings and your own research. Papers should incorporate one or more of the broader themes of the course and integrate your chosen topic with one or more of the supplemental readings. We will discuss possible topics later in the semester, and I will distribute more information about the paper then. In addition to using relevant secondary sources, students are expected to incorporate historical primary sources—diaries, newspapers, scientific reports, maps, photographs or government reports—to help advance your argument. We will discuss each rough draft in class during the last week of the term with your peers, and I will review any additional drafts you submit before the due date.
 - Topics are due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, 1 October
 - Short (1-2 pages) annotated bibliography due Monday, 27 October
 - First rough drafts are due on Wednesday, 19 November
 - Second rough drafts for peer response are due on Wednesday, 3 December
 - Final drafts are due in my office by Tuesday, 16 December by 2 p.m.

4. Participation in seminar activities and discussion (30% course grade): Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive prepared to discuss the readings for that week. Additionally, there will be several in-class writing assignments, ranging from your response to the assigned readings to personal reflections on the course material that will also count toward your participation grade. Participation, however, is more than speaking up in class. It is also coming to see me during office hours, sending emails, and generally contributing to the dynamic of the class.

Preliminary Schedule

Please keep this syllabus handy—we may make changes during the semester!

Readings followed by a bold **O** are available via JSTOR, HistoryCooperative.org, or other on-line resources courtesy of the Bowdoin College Library

Readings followed by a bold **R** are in the course reader

- Week 1: Introduction: historicizing environmental justice and inequality (79 pp.)**
Monday, 8 September
Reading:
No reading—introductions, in-class writing assignment: defining our terms
- Wednesday, 10 September
Reading:
Donald Worster, et al, “Roundtable: American Environmental History,” Journal of American History 76 (March 1990): 1087-1147. **O**
Carolyn Merchant, “Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History,” Environmental History vol. 8, no. 3 (July 2003): 380-394. **R**
- Week 2: Inventing difference: nature, race, and gender in colonial-era America (153 pp.)**
Monday, 15 September
**** Library tour and research instruction, 2nd half of class ****
Reading:
White, The Roots of Dependency, 16-146
- Wednesday, 17 September
Reading:
Joyce Chaplin, “Natural Philosophy and an Early Racial Idiom in North America: Comparing English and Indian Bodies,” William and Mary Quarterly 54 (January 1997): 229-252. **R**
Philip J. Pauly, “Fighting the Hessian Fly: American and British Responses to Insect Invasion, 1776-1789,” Environmental History vol. 7, no. 3 (July 2002): 485-507. **R**
- Week 3: Nature’s nation?: Race, climate, and environmental determinism (136 pp.)**
Monday, 22 September
Reading:
Karl Jacoby, “Slaves by Nature?: Domestic Animals and Human Slaves,” Slavery and Abolition 15 (April 1994): 89-99. **R**
Mart A. Stewart, “Rice, Water, and Power: Landscapes of Domination and Resistance in the Low Country, 1790-1880,” Environmental History Review 15 (Fall 1991): 47-64. **R**
Richard White, “Discovering Nature in North America,” Journal of American History 79:3 (December 1992): 874-891. **O**

Wednesday, 24 September

Reading:

Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia [1785] (New York: Penguin, 1999), 61-71, 77-79, 89-94, 98-113, 142-152. **R**

Solomon Northrup, Twelve Years as a Slave (New York: Dover Publications, 1853, 1970), 162-175, 208-213. **R**

Josiah C. Nott and George R. Gliddon, Indigenous Races of the Earth; or, New Chapters of Ethnological Inquiry (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1857), 353-368, 399-401, 638-650. **R**

Week 4: Manifest Destiny?: nature, culture, and the westward expansion (140 pp.)

Monday, 29 September

Reading:

Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature, 1-7, 80-146

White, The Roots of Dependency, 147-211

Wednesday, 1 October

**** Topics and draft thesis statements for final paper due at beginning of class ****

Reading:

Theodore Roosevelt, "Hunting Lore" [including "Appendix"] from The Wilderness Hunter (New York: G.P. Putnam's and Sons, 1893), 255-279. **R**

Mark Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness: Yosemite Indians and the National Parks Ideal, 1864-1930," Pacific Historical Review 61 (February 1996): 27-59. **R**

Linda Nash, "Finishing Nature: Harmonizing Bodies and Environments in Nineteenth-century California," Environmental History vol. 8, no. 1 (January 2003): 25-52. **R**

Conevery Bolton Valen_ius, "Body," from The Health of the Country: How American Settlers Understood Themselves and Their Land (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 53-84. **R**

Week 5: Abundance and scarcity: class, race, and gender in the early conservation movement (189 pp.)

Monday, 6 October

Reading:

Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature, 10-78 or 148-191; everyone 193-198

Wednesday, 8 October

Reading:

Benjamin Heber Johnson, "Conservation, Subsistence, and Class at the Birth of Superior National Forest," Environmental History vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1999): 80-99. **R**

Dianne D. Glave, "'A Garden So Brilliant with Colors, So Original in Its Design': Rural African American Women, Progressive Reform, and the Foundation of an African American Environmental Perspective," Environmental History vol. 8, no. 3 (July 2003): 395-411. **R**

William Temple Hornaday, Our Vanishing Wildlife (New York: New York Zoological Society, 1913), 51-72, 94-113. **O**

Jack London, "Yellow and White," Tales of the Fish Patrol (New York: The Regents Press, 1905), 11-38. **R**

Week 6: The "science" of race: eugenics and environmental determinism revisited (135 pp.)

Monday, 13 October

Reading:

Donna J. Haraway, "Universal Donors in a Vampire Culture: It's All in the Family: Biological Kinship Categories in the Twentieth-Century United States," in Uncommon Ground, 321-366.

Daniel J. Kevles, In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity (New York: Knopf, 1985), 57-112. **R**

Mae Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," Journal of American History 86 (June 1999): 67-92.

O

Kenneth Pomeranz, "Political Economy and Ecology on the Eve of Industrialization: Europe, China, and the Global Conjunction," American Historical Review vol. 107, no. 2 (April 2002): 425-446. **O**

Wednesday, 15 October

Reading:

Griffith Taylor, "Climatic Cycles and Evolution," The Geographical Review 8:6 (December 1919): 289-290, 298-300, map. **O**

Robert De C. Ward, "Eugenic Immigration," American Breeders Magazine 4:2 (April-June 1913): 96-102. **O**

Week 7: Wards of the state?: public lands, resource use, and Indian dependency (107 pp.)

Monday, 20 October

**** No class—Fall Vacation ****

Wednesday, 22 October

Reading:

White, The Roots of Dependency, 212-314.

Meriam Report: Institute for Government Research, The Problem of Indian Administration (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971 [1928]), 3-8. **R**

Week 8: Nature, Inc.: Corporate and state reconstructions of nature and society (165 pp.)

Monday, 27 October

Reading:

**** Annotated bibliography (1-2 pages) and thesis due at beginning of class ****

Sellers, Hazards of the Job, 1-106

Wednesday, 29 October

Reading:

Kate Brown, "Gridded Lives: Why Kazakhstan and Montana Are Nearly the Same Place," American Historical Review 106:1 (February 2001): 17-48. **O**

Susan G. Davis, "'Touch the Magic,'" in Uncommon Ground, 204-232.

Neil Maher, "A New Deal Body Politic: Landscape, Labor, and the Civilian Conservation Corps," Environmental History vol. 7, no. 3 (July 2002): 435-461. **R**

Week 9: Unwanted visitors: immigration, disease, and exotic species (176 pp.)

Monday, 3 November

Reading:

Kraut, Silent Travelers, 1-135

Wednesday, 5 November

Reading:

- Charles S. Elton, The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants (London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1958), 15-32. **R**
- Edmund P. Russell III, "Speaking of Annihilation?: Mobilizing for War Against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-1945," Journal of American History 82 (March 1996): 1505-1529. **R**
- Philip J. Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees: Conflicting Visions of American Ecological Independence," Isis vol. 87, no. 1. (March 1996): 51-73. **O**

Week 10: Manufacturing and managing risk: public health and industrial workplaces (183 pp.)

Monday, 10 November

Reading:

- Sellers, Hazards of the Job, 141-186
- Kraut, Silent Travelers, 136-165, 197-225

Wednesday, 12 November

Reading:

- Henry Ford, "The Terror of the Machine," from My Life and Work (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1922), 103-115. **R**
- Alice Hamilton, "The Prevalence of Industrial Lead Poisoning in the United States," in Lead Poisoning, ed. Joseph C. Aub, Lawrence T. Fairhall, A. S. Minot, and Paul Reznikoff (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1926), 323-340. **O**
- Douglas Sackman, "Nature's Workshop?: The Work Environment and Workers' Bodies in California's Citrus Industry, 1900-1940," Environmental History vol. 5, no. 1 (January 2000): 27-53. **R**

Week 11: Green despotism?: the critique of the "Wise Use" Movement (152 pp.)

Monday, 17 November

Reading:

- William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in Uncommon Ground, 69-90.
- Richard White, "'Are You an Environmentalist, or Do You Work for a Living?': Work and Nature," in Uncommon Ground, 171-185.
- James D. Proctor, "Whose Nature?: The Contested Moral Terrain of Ancient Forests," in Uncommon Ground, 269-297.

Wednesday, 19 November

Reading:

**** Final paper rough drafts of the due at the beginning of class ****

- Ron Arnold, Ecology Wars: Environmentalism As If People Mattered (Bellevue, Wash.: Free Enterprise Press, 1987), 9-48. **R**
- Ernest Callenbach, Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston (Bantam Books, 1975), 77-83, 91-95, 107-111. **R**
- K.A. and Jackie DuRette Soderberg, People of the Tongass: Alaska Forestry Under Attack (Bellevue, Wash.: Free Enterprise Press, 1988), 53-89. **R**

Week 12: Natural and unnatural disasters: the social ecology of catastrophe (51 pp.)
Monday, 24 November
Reading:
Mike Davis, "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn," Environmental History Review 19
(Summer 1995): 1-36. **R**
Ted Steinberg, "'Do-It-Yourself-Deathscape': The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in
South Florida," Environmental History vol. 2, no. 4 (October 1997): 414-438. **R**

Wednesday, 26 November
**** No class—Thanksgiving break ****

Week 13: Borders and boundaries: migration, globalization, and biotic exchanges (91 pp.)
Monday, 1 December
Reading:
Richard White, "The Nationalization of Nature," Journal of American History 86:3
(December 1999): 976-986. **O**
John Soluri, "People, Plants, and Pathogens: The Eco-Social Dynamics of Export Banana
Production in Honduras, 1875-1950," Hispanic American Historical Review vol. 80,
no. 3 (August 2000): 463-501. **R**
Steve Marquardt, "Green Havoc: Panama Disease, Environmental Change, and Labor
Process in the Central American Banana Industry," American Historical Review
106:1 (February 2001): 49-80. **O**

Wednesday, 3 December
Reading:
None—discussion of drafts
**** Revised rough drafts due—bring enough copies for everyone in the class ****

Week 14: Toxic politics: modern environmentalism and social justice (181 pp.)
Monday, 8 December
Reading:
Hurley, Environmental Inequalities, 15-174.
Giovanna Di Chiro, "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social
Justice," in Uncommon Ground, 298-320.
Ellen Stroud, "Troubled Waters in Ecotopia: Environmental Racism in Portland, Oregon"
Radical History 74 (Spring 1999): 65-95. **R**

Wednesday, 10 December
Reading:
None—wrap-up, discuss papers, evaluations, concluding comments

Reading period 12-15 December
Final exams 16-21 December

**** Final paper due in my office on Tuesday, 16 December by 2 p.m.! ****