I Course Description

Environmental history interweaves natural history with human history, and reconstructs the ecological, social, and ideological threads of past human-nature relationships. This relatively young field of history explores change and continuity-over-time in specific spaces—local, regional, hemispheric, or global—and examines the interplay of human agency and natural phenomena. Although environmental history encompasses political and social movements, it is not simply the history of modern environmentalism or conservation. Environmental history also offers students unique opportunities to explore historical questions of causation and the relative influence of human actions and broader non-human forces.

This course also blends environmental history with the history of the American West. In fact, many prominent western historians have integrated these fields in their research and scholarship, including Richard White, Donald Worster, William Cronon, Patricia Nelson Limerick, Nancy Langston, Donald Pisani, Nancy Langston. For over a century definitions of the West and assertions of western regionalism and exceptionalism have been predicated upon environmental determinist arguments, from Frederick Jackson Turner’s 1893 “Frontier Thesis,” to Walter Prescott Webb’s “Aridity Thesis,” Bernard DeVoto’s “Plundered Province Thesis” and Richard Whites “Kindergarten Thesis.” The topics of pre-contact Native American land use, federal land and water law, natural resource management, extractive industries, and the conservation, preservation, and modern environmental movements have dominated the discourse of western history.

History 399 strives to cultivate a learner-centered environment that fosters active and collaborative learning, and encourages student participation and peer interaction. Regular discussions of assigned readings combined with traditional lectures will emphasize learning through the comprehension of ideas and cause-and-effect relationships, rather than through the rote memorization of facts. The instructor will distribute “guided notes” containing specific information before each lecture to assist students with focusing on the “big-picture”—the broader contexts, themes, concepts, and trends.

The moderated discussions, response papers, field research invest students with a guided autonomy to participate in the historical process, and ultimately encourage them to “teach” the class about their particular topic or historical question. This temporary apprenticeship in the historian’s craft will offer students hands-on experience with primary source research, secondary literature analysis, critical thinking, explanatory writing, and oral communication—an invaluable skill set with inter-disciplinary and cross-occupational application.
II  Readings

Edward Abbey                Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness
                           Touchstone; 1968/Paper

Langston, Nancy              Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares:
                           The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West
                           University of Washington; 1995/Paper

Spence, David                Dispossessing the Wilderness:
                           Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks
                           Oxford; 1999/Paper

White, Richard               The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River
                           University of Washington; 1995/Paper

Worster, Donald              Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity & the Growth of the American West
                           University of Washington; 1995/Paper

III  Evaluation

1.  Response Papers (2 @ 20 points each; total of 40 possible points)

Do NOT Submit Papers via Email!

Students will prepare a response paper for two of the four assigned course readings: Abbey, Langston, Spence, White. Turn in hard copies of your papers in class or under the door of Office 340W McKenzie Hall by the due dates and times specified in the schedule below.

Response papers will be typed in **12 font, double-spaced format, and range from 500 to 750 words (2 to 3 pages)**. Response Papers should assume the form of a book review published in a scholarly journal, and therefore present a critique the authors’ theses, themes, sources, and/or methodologies. Papers will avoid a descriptive summary of the books’ content. Students may also offer some comparative analysis with other course readings. Successful sample response papers from past courses will be provided via Blackboard as a general guideline.
2. **Group Discussion Leading & Written Questions (20pts/10pts; total of 30 possible points)**

To engage students in the reading discussions, the class will be divided into seven reading groups, each comprising approximately five students depending on enrollment. Each group will be assigned a specific portion of the assigned readings (usually about 100-150 pages of material). For each scheduled discussion, the leading group for that day will deliver a ten minute introductory presentation that frames the major themes and arguments of their particular author(s). Each member of the leading group will prepare three or four historical questions, and pose at least one to the class for discussion. Leading groups are welcomed to incorporate multimedia elements such as music, video or PowerPoint slideshows into their presentations.

Discussion formats will include both full-class round table dialogues and small group conversations. Members of the moderating group will turn in their written (typed) historical questions at the end of class.

All students must complete all the reading for every discussion, however, the designated discussion leaders will be the “expert” for that day.

*Once you are assigned to groups for the “Oral Presentation” requirement of the course, inform the instructor if you foresee that you will be unable to attend class the day of your presentation. You will be reassign to another group.*

3. **Historical Inquiry Research Project (70 Points)**

Students, either working in groups or individually, will perform field research to examine a local case study of the human-nature relationship. Students will begin by asking an historical question about a specific “site” or “space” on campus or within the local community regarding change and/or continuity over time. Students will document the present condition of the “site” and perform historical research to acquire and analyze at least three primary sources to answer their historical question. Each student will complete the project by composing their own five-to-six-page, documented research paper. Please consult the Supplementary Instructions for a full description.

**Step One:** Formulate Historical Question & Identify Site (10 points)
**Step Two:** Perform Field Research (Document Current Site and Acquire Primary Sources) (10 points)
**Step Three:** Research Paper (50 points)

4. **Final Examination (total of 30 possible points)**

**Essay Section (20 possible points):**
You will write one essay, selected from a list of three questions. You must incorporate specific content drawn from the lectures, class discussion, and assigned readings into a coherent and clearly expressed essay to answer the questions successfully.
You also need to establish an accurate chronology to demonstrate your understanding of cause-and-effect relationships and the broader context. Although specific dates are not mandatory, you should clarify the sequence of historical events. The evaluation of essays is largely based on peer performance within the group dynamic of each particular course. Hence, no “absolute” or “abstract” key will be applied to the essays. Despite this approach, those essays incorporating the most specific evidence and articulating the most coherent reasoning will receive the highest marks, and those with comparatively less substance and clarity will be graded accordingly. Errors in spelling and grammar (within reason) will not undermine your performance, however, a lack of specific content and well-reasoned arguments will.

Short Answer Section (2.5 points each; 10 possible points):
You will define four terms selected from a list of eight. These definitions must include two elements: a description of specific factual information and an explanation of broader significance. The specific description should address the who, what, where, when, and why information. To ensure you have illustrated the broader significance of the term ask yourself the following questions. How does this term reflect or symbolize a larger theme, trend, or model? How is this term an important precedent or change from the past? How does this term establish a new pattern? How does this term fit into a larger cause-and-effect relationship? How is this term influential? Terms may encompass individuals, organizations, ideas, events, laws, court cases, publications, and places. Successful responses to short-answer questions typically comprise two substantive paragraphs, the first addressing the specific description and second clarifying the broader significance.

5. Class Attendance & Participation in Class Discussions (20 possible Points)
Your regular attendance, and thoughtful contributions to general and group-led class discussions are vital to your success in this class.

Total Possible Points for Entire Course = 190 points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>177 and above</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171 – 176</td>
<td>A -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165 – 170</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157 – 164</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152 – 156</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146 – 151</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139 – 145</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133 – 138</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127 – 132</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119 – 126</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114 – 118</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV Schedule and Reading Assignments

*Note: It is imperative that students complete the weekly assigned reading before our in-class discussion.

**WEEK 1**  Tue, Apr 4
Lecture: Course Introduction. Environment, Culture and the “West”: Myths, Visions & Realities.
Discussion: Introductions & Discussion Group Assignments.

**Thur, Apr 6**
Lecture: Pre-Contact Indigenous Culture & Ecology The Columbian Exchange & Disease Frontier

**WEEK 2**  Tue, Apr 11
Lecture: Jefferson’s “Yeoman Republic”, the “Fee-Simple Empire” & the Homestead Ethic in the Era of Disposal

**Thur, Apr 13**
- **Discussion A:** Langston: Foreward through “Making Sense of Strangeness: Silvics in the Blues” (vii-156)

**WEEK 3**  Tue, Apr 18
Lecture: Progressive-Era Conservationism & the “Gospel of Efficiency”

**Thur, Apr 20**
- **Discussion B:** Langston: “Liquidating the Pines” to “Conclusion: Living with Complexity” (157-306)

**DUE:** Langston Response Paper (Submit in class or by 5:00PM under Office Door, 340W McKenzie Hall)
WEEK 4 Tue, Apr 25
Lecture: The End of the West? The World’s Columbian Exposition, the Frontier Thesis, Anti-Modernism & the Post-Frontier Imagination

DUE: Historical Inquiry Project Question & Site.

Thur, Apr 27
- Discussion C: Spence, Introduction Through Chapter 5 (3-82)

WEEK 5 Tue, May 2

Thur, May 4
- Discussion D: Spence, Chapter 6 through Conclusion. (83-139)

DUE: Spence Response Paper (Submit in class or by 5:00PM under Office Door, 340W McKenzie Hall)

WEEK 6 Tue, May 9
Lecture: Rise of Ecology and the Origins of Modern Environmentalism

Thur, May 11
- Discussion E: Abbey, “Author’s Introduction” through “The Heat of Noon” (xi-136)

WEEK 7 Tue, May 16

Thur, May 18
Film: The Cadillac Desert: Water & the Transformation of Nature. Episode One: Mulholland’s Dream (90 minutes)

WEEK 8 Tue, May 23
Lecture: WWII, Cold War & the Atomic Environment

Thur, May 25
- Discussion F: Abbey, “The Moon-Eyed Horse” through “Bedrock & Paradox” (137-
DUE: Abby Response Paper (Submit in class or by 5:00PM under Office Door, 340W McKenzie Hall)

WEEK 9  Tue, May 30
Lecture: Postwar Consumer Culture, Suburbanization, & the McDonald’s Story

Thur, June 1

WEEK 10  Tue, June 6

Thur, June 8
- Discussion G: White, Introduction through Chapter 4 (ix-113).

DUE: White Response Paper (Submit in class or by 5:00PM under Office Door, 340W McKenzie Hall)

WEEK 11  Wed, June 14
◆ FINAL EXAM . 8:00AM (BRING GREEN BOOKS)

DUE: Historical Inquiry Research Project Papers

V  Blackboard

Course Materials: The instructor will post the syllabus, lecture outlines, printer-friendly PowerPoint slides shows, film synopses, exam review guides, and other class handouts on Blackboard.

Scores: Assignment scores will be posted on the Blackboard Grade Book throughout the term. You can monitor your progress and see the class average for each assignment.
VI  **University Academic Honesty Policy:**

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. You must acknowledge and document the ideas and words of others. Violations are taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records.

VII  **Policy on Missed Deadlines, Absences & Incompletes**

**Exceptional Emergency Situations:**
The following are unforeseen/incontrollable exceptional emergency situations that are acceptable excuses for missed deadlines or absences without penalty, and issuance of incomplete (I) final grades at the end of the course:

☐  **ACCEPTABLE:**

- Documented serious illness/injury;
- Documented death in the immediate family.

☒  **UNACCEPTABLE:**

**Personal Reasons:**
☒ weddings; family visits or special occasions (e.g. birthdays, anniversaries etc.);
☒ work and school conflicts; “I was unable to get off work/I have to work”;
☒ job interview; leaving early to start a job;
☒ vehicle broke down; missed the bus;
☒ regular dental/medical appointments;
☒ being generally “busy” or “I have a lot going on right now...”;
☒ “I got the due date/exam time mixed up/wrong/confused”.

**Technological Reasons:**
☒ assignment completed on computer is “missing”/was accidentally erased;
☒ inability to access saved and/or completed assignment;
☒ printer ran out of ink or paper.

To ensure equitability in the evaluation of all students, the following policies will be strictly adhered to:

1. All written assignments will be submitted, and examinations will be taken on the dates and times listed in this syllabus. Any changes in due dates and examination times can only be initiated by the instructor.

   *Early examinations will NOT be given under any circumstances;* please plan your term accordingly.

2. All assignments must be submitted in hardcopy format. They are due in class or under my office door (340W) by the deadlines as specified in “IV Schedule and Written Assignments”.

**Any assignments submitted via email will be deleted and receive a grade of 0**

3. Should a student be unable to meet a deadline for an assignment, participate in the Group-Led Oral presentation, or take an examination as scheduled due to an exceptional, unanticipated and incontrollable emergency (see above):
   
   a. contact the instructor as soon as possible,
   b. arrangements to complete and/or submit an assignment, presentation or examination in an alternative format can be permitted dependent on the situation,
   c. submit hard copy documentation of the emergency as soon as possible, or before the last day of class.

It is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with the instructor. In all other cases —unexplained/undocumented absences, missing assignments or late submissions of work—the final grade reported to the registrar will be based upon the work the student has completed by the end of the term, which may well result in a failing grade.

**Issuance of an Incomplete Grade:**
In accordance with the policy of the University of Oregon, a mark of I (incomplete) may be reported only when the quality of work is satisfactory but a minor yet essential requirement of the course has not been completed.

An “incomplete” will be granted in-lieu of letter grades only in exceptional emergency situations as stipulated above, to students who have completed at least 85% of all course requirements with a grade of C and above. Students must inform the instructor and also submit documented proof before the end of the term to obtain an incomplete for the course. The instructor will then negotiate with the student to draft a contract on the requirements and deadline for completion that will be needed to clear the incomplete grade.

**VII Policy on Accommodating Disabilities**

If you are having difficulty and are in need of academic support because of a documented disability, whether it be psychiatric, learning, physical, hard of hearing, or sensory, you may be eligible for academic accommodations through Disability Services. Contact Disability Services at 541-346-1155 or disabsrv@darkwing.uoregon.edu.

**VIII Succeeding In The Course**

At any time during the term, please consult the instructor if you have any questions or concerns about the requirements, policies or material covered in this class. Successful students have regular attendance, complete readings before attending classes, participate actively in discussions and make use of office hours. Your overall effort and any improvements demonstrated throughout the course will be considered when deciding your final course grade.

“I look forward to an engaging four weeks, and to learning about the different perspectives and ideas you have regarding the topics we will cover in this course.”

~ Kevin
History 399: American Environmental History
Historical Inquiry Research Project

The Question:
Ask a question that allows you to explore one of the course themes or topics through a locally focused, empirical case study.

1) What was the historical legacy of a particular extractive or manufacturing industry?
2) What was the historical effect of a particular government policy or regulation?
3) What were the impacts of a particular form of urban or suburban development?
4) How was a particular place originally settled and developed?
5) How have natural waterways been developed and water diverted?

The Site:
Locate a specific space on campus or in the surrounding South Willamette Valley community that illuminates your particular historical theme or question. This space should reveal the interaction between human and natural forces and provide a context for explaining “causation”—the cause-and-effect relationships that have shaped the change and/or continuity of this space over time. Students will document this space by taking digital still photographs or video (digital still and video cameras available for checkout from Media Services) and defining its natural and human geography.

The Primary Sources:
The University of Oregon Library System houses a vast array of primary sources to support your research.

1) Oral History Interviews. Check-out digital audio recorders from media services and conduct your own interview or review transcripts of existing interviews.

2) Historic Photographs. Consult the Historic and Contemporary Photographs Collections, UO Special Collections.

3) Historic Maps & Aerial Photographs. Consult the Map & Aerial Photography Collection. Resources of particular relevance include: Metsker's County Atlases, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, and Oregon Department of Transportation Historic Sets.

4) Government Documents (published & microforms). Consult the Government Documents Department of the Knight Library; the Lane County Archive and Records Center/Lane County Public Service Building, Land Management Division, Surveyor's Map Room; the National Archives & Records Administration. Resources of particular relevance housed at UO include: General Land Office Collection: Cadastral Survey Field Notes and Plats; Homestead Entry Survey; Reservations; Indian Allotment; Parks; Federal Land Surveys; Donation Land Claim Field Notes & Plats. Resources of particular relevance housed at the County Clerk's Office: County Comprehensive Plans, Federal Land Records, Land Subdivision Records, Mining Claim Records, Planning Commission Minutes, Road Maps & Survey Notes, Surveyor Field Notes and Plats, Water Rights Records.
5) Newspaper Articles. Consult the University of Oregon Newspaper Collection. The Knight Library houses Eugene-Springfield newspapers on microfilm from 1855 to present. The UO also maintains the state's most comprehensive collection of Oregon newspapers from throughout the state.

The Contacts:
1) Tom Stave, Government Documents Librarian. tstave@uoregon / 6-3060.
2) Jon Jablonski, Map/GIS Librarian. jonjab@uoregon / 6-3051
3) Colin Kelly, Map & Aerial Photo Technician. cmkelly@uoregon / 6-4565
4) Ted Smith, Documents Reference Librarian. tedsmith@uoregon / 6-1884
5) Tamara Vidos, Microforms Supervisor. tamarav@uoregon / 6-1885
6) Linda Long, Manuscripts Librarian. 6-1906.
7) Lane County Public Research Library. 682-3653

The Essay: (DUE Wednesday, June 14 by 5:00PM)
Students will compose a brief primary-source based expository essay that explains rather than describes the answer to your historical question. Papers will clarify the question and thesis in the introduction, supported by a body that analyzes and cites the supporting primary source evidence. A conclusion will reaffirm the thesis and primary points of analysis. Papers will conform to the following format:
1) Length: Five to Six Pages (1250 to 1500 words)
2) Font: 12-point Arial or Times New Roman
3) Margins: 1 inch
4) Documentation: Footnotes or Endnotes
5) Bibliography: Works-Cited List.
6) Title & Pagination Required.