

AMH 5930-2514

American Environmental History, Fall 2022

Professor Jack E. Davis (he, him, his)

davisjac@ufl.edu 273-3398

Tuesday 11-E2 (6:15 PM - 9:10 PM)

K-F 0013

Ofc. Hrs.: T 4:15-6:15

Presented within the context of the larger and more familiar historical experience, this course is an overview of the relationship between humans and their natural physical surroundings. If we as students of history ignore that relationship and reduce nature to an inert backdrop to the drama of human actions, Ted Steinberg argues, we limit the results of our historical inquiry. Taking this point a step further, we should avoid the trap of conceptualizing environmental history as nothing more than the study of the human impact on nature or as the historical antecedents of the nation's contemporary environmental issues. We should instead begin with the premise that the natural environment was not a passive object—which humans simply contemplated, exploited, or protected; it was instead an active variable that shaped the course of American history.

Throughout human history, physical surroundings to a large extent determined the ways in which humans organized their lives. If we incorporate these ideas into our study of history, we gain greater insight into the identity, beliefs, and values of human groups and how each defined its relationship with others. As William Cronon writes in his seminal *Changes in the Land*, "the great strength of ecological analysis in writing history is its ability to uncover processes and long-term changes which might otherwise remain invisible" (vii).

This course covers the full sweep of U.S. history, from pre-Columbian cultures to the present; yet it is not intended to provide a comprehensive survey of U.S. environmental history. The course instead has been designed to introduce students to major works representing a fairly broad sampling of approaches to and topics in environmental history. As in any field within our discipline, no single mode of inquiry or interpretive category defines environmental history. Scholars with interests in social, political, intellectual, labor, gender, urban, and regional history, and history of science can all be found working in environmental history.

Course Objectives:

Regardless of their individual primary field of choice, students have the opportunity to take from this course analytic tools that can help advance their study of history, anthropology, science, political science, to mention a few disciplines. One of the course's objectives is to provide a working knowledge of the methodologies, interpretive categories, and historiography in environmental history. With this knowledge should come a new understanding of the role of environmental history, its potential impact on other fields of history, and its contributions to the

study of the past. Students should also treat the course as an opportunity to improve their skills as an academic historian--critically analyzing works of history, asking heuristic questions, researching all types of sources in any number of environments, and presenting their findings in a cogently argued and clearly written text.

Course Requirements:

- Class participation discussion leadership 20%
- Annotated bibliography contribution 10%
- Review Essays:

Chicago Manual of Style worksheet

- 3 essays x 10% = 30%
- Research Paper 40%

Including prospectus/bibliography and presentation

(Please see the last section of the syllabus for a description of these requirements.)

Course Grading Scale (see UF grading scale at end of syllabus):

A+ =97-100

A =94-96

A- =90-93

B+ =87-89

B =84-86

B- =80-83

C+ =77-79

C =74-76

C- =70-73

D =65-69

Assignments not completed earn a 0

Plagiarized assignment (see plagiarism section below) earn a 0

Assignments not turned in before or by stated due date will not be accepted. All assignments should be submitted in .doc or .docx files on canvas unless otherwise noted.

Required Texts:

Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (Touchstone, 1990) 0671695886

Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (Oxford University Press, 2006) 0195304462

Lisa Brady, *War Upon the Land military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes during the American Civil War* (University of Georgia Press, 2012) 0820342491

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (Hill & Wang, 2003). ISBN 0809016346

Jack E. Davis, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea* (Liveright Books, 2018) 1631494023: do not buy unless you can find a copy for under \$13.50, my cost new to you.

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: Fates of Human Societies* (W. W. Norton, 1999). 0393354326

Martin Doyle, *The Source: How Rivers Made America and America Remade its Rivers* (W. W. Norton 2019) 0393356612

Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock*. (Beacon Press, 2020) 0807028363

Mark D. Hersey, *My Work is That of Conservation: An Environmental Biography of George Washington Carver* (University of Georgia Press, 2011) 0820338702

Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980* (University of North Carolina Press, 1995). 0807845189

Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) 110881672X

Nancy C. Unger, *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History* (Oxford University Press, 2012) 0199735077

Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (Oxford University Press, 2008) 0199782245

(Students are required to search for and find all other assigned course readings.)

Week I (Aug 30): Introduction: The Natural Web of History; What is Nature?

Roderick F. Nash ed., *American Environmentalism: Readings in Conservation History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), 1-24.

Ted Steinberg, "Down to Earth: Nature, Agency, and Power in History," *American Historical Review* 103 (June 2002): 798-820 (read on-line responses at www.theaha.org).

Janisse Ray, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1999), 65-69.

Film: "Guns, Germs, and Steel" (episode one).

Week II (Sept 6): History and the Environmental Determinist Model

Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.

Film: "Guns, Germs, and Steel" (episode two or three).

Week III (Sept 13): Social and Environmental History

Cronon, *Changes in the Land*

(Grammar and Style Guide Due.)

Week IV (Sept 20): Animal History

Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*

Week V (Sept 27): Nature and Warfare

Brady, *War Upon the Land*

Week VI (Oct 4): Dispossession and Domination

Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*

Week VII (Oct 11): New Philosophy and Values

Worster, *A Passion for Nature*

Film: "Cadillac Desert" (episode one).

Week VIII (Oct 18): Down South; Second Nature

Hersey, *My Work is That of Conservation*

Week IX (Oct 25): Technology, the Urban Landscape, and Environmental Injustice

(Prospectus/Bibliography Due)

Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities*

Week X (Nov 1): Women and the Environment

Unger, *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers*

Week XI (Nov 8): Native Environments Redux

Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows*

Week XII (Nov 15): Way Down Upon a River

Doyle, *The Source*

Film: "Cadillac Desert" (episode two).

Week XIII (Nov 22): Wasteland Revised

Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*

Film: "Cadillac Desert" (Episode 3)

Week XIV (Nov 29): Reach

Davis, *The Gulf*

(Research Papers Due on Monday Dec 5)

XV (Dec 6): The Last Hurrah

Conclusions and Paper Presentations; Dinner at my house

Course Requirements Descriptions:

All written work for the course must be typed or computer generated and in 12-point double-spaced print. Your work must also be presented in third-person language.

Class participation has two requirements. First, students must complete the assigned readings of the week and come to class prepared to discuss the scholarly merit of the work. Second, they will be responsible for leading two class discussions. The discussion leaders should come prepared with a set of questions to direct the seminar.

Historiography contribution asks a student to assume the responsibility of making an oral presentation summarizing scholarly work on the theme of the week. The student or students should compile a written bibliography of that work and provide copies to his/her classmates.

Review essays should be approximately 750 words in length each and cover the reading for one's assigned weeks. The written reviews will be due the week after the assigned reading has been discussed in class. With book reviews from academic journals serving as a model, the essays should identify the author's central argument; evaluate the author's research, empirical analysis, and success in supporting her/his interpretation; and assess the book's organization and quality of presentation. Essay grades will in part be determined by the student's consistency in following the rules covered in the Grammar and Writing Style Guide.

Research paper grades are based on (1) turning in a prospectus/bibliography on the assigned date, (2) an in-class presentation of the research undertaken for the paper and the conclusions articulated in the paper, (3) consistency in following the rules of the *Chicago Manual of Style* worksheet, and (4) content of work completed. Part of the exercise of writing a research paper requires one to choose and conceptualize one's own topic. Students may pursue any topic that is related to the subject (and chronology) of the course, and research papers (approximately 5,000 words, separate of notes and bibliography) must represent original work. Please ensure that you read, consult, memorize, and otherwise obey the "Research Paper" handout provided on my web site.

Other Business:

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Plagiarism and Honesty Code:

Keep in mind that your written assignments must represent original work. You cannot copy the words, phrases, arguments, ideas, and conclusions of someone else or of another source (including Internet sources) without giving proper credit to the person or source by using both **quotation marks** and a **footnote**. Do not cobble together paragraphs or passages of separate texts and then try to claim that you have done original and legitimate work. You must write with your own ideas and in your own words. If you copy the words of someone else without putting those words in quotation marks, **REGARDLESS OF CITING THE SOURCE**, you are plagiarizing. Plagiarism is theft, and it is academic dishonesty. You can be reported to the Dean of Students office for plagiarism, and the incident may then become a permanent part of your academic record. Plagiarism **will** earn you a failing grade in the course, a grade that is final and that cannot be made up. If you have any questions about how you are citing or using sources, come to me for the answers.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>

Again, please consult with me if you have any questions or concerns.

In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student

Classroom Assistance:

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. Click here (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>) to get started with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Health Considerations in the Classroom

In response to COVID and perhaps monkeypox, the following practices are in place to maintain

your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

* If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: <https://coronavirus.uflhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.

* You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.

* Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.

* Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.

* If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email covid@shcc.ufl.edu <<mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu>>) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website <<https://click.info.gator360.ufl.edu/?qs=8f0d5e01a3f7385148f144e2089093522a358a8d85cb9db73c31675d3c5e5c0d27748d40c212f544822551342f1912ea5b4f2b890d5952e8>> for more information.

* Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

* If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

* Continue to regularly visit coronavirus.UFHealth.org and coronavirus.ufl.edu for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

Online Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Academic Resources Information:

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601.

Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.

General study skills and tutoring. Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138.

Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

Alpata: A Journal of History

Keep in mind that the undergraduate- and graduate-student members of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society at the University of Florida publish an academic journal each spring. In the fall, the journal editors will be sending out a call for submissions (articles and book reviews) to the journal. The journal is also looking for talented students who would like to serve on the editorial board. Please contact me if you're interested.

UF Grading Scale

Please note UF's new grading scale with the addition of minuses.

A = 4.0

A- = 3.67

B+ = 3.33

B = 3.0

B- = 2.67

C+ = 2.33

C = 2.0

C- = 1.67

D+ = 1.33

D = 1.0

D- = 0.67

E = 0.0

E1 = 0.0 Stopped attending or participating prior to end of class

I (incomplete) = 0.0

Welcome, and good luck!