

AMERICANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

History 226

University of Dubuque - Winter 2001

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Director: Mike Zmolek Class Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10:30 - 11:45 am
Office: 303 Van Vliet Hall Class Location: Goldthorp 206
Phone: 589-3507 Office Hours: Daily M-F 2:30 - 5:00 pm
E-mail: MZmolek@dbq.edu (or by appointment)

Introduction:

In this course we will trace the evolution of an environmental consciousness in American life. We will begin by contrasting the differing conceptions of nature held by aboriginal peoples and the early settlers. As we examine the growth of the pre-industrial American economy, we will see how the existence of vast resources, especially in the West, shaped American institutions and culture. But as industrialization took shape, economic growth also meant waste, corruption and booms and busts. By the late 19th century, a conservationist movement was beginning to take shape, and led to the creation of national parks, and laid the foundation for environmental regulation. We will trace the development of the conservationist movement and the environmental movement or movements which have arisen out of it. The latter part of the course will focus on the growing diversity within the environmental movement since the 1970s.

Format:

The course will be taught in a seminar format. You will be expected to complete the readings before class and be prepared to discuss them in class. You will be asked to summarize at least three separate chapters or essays for the class (or only one if you do a book review, see assignments page). You will also write an essay on a topic of your choice. Class discussion will be supplemented by films on relevant topics.

Evaluation:

Classroom Attendance and Participation	10%
Presentations or Book Review	20%
Quizzes	20%
Essay	25%
Final Exam	25%

Required Textbooks: Petulla, Joseph M. (1988) *Americans and the Environment*, Columbus/Toronto/London/Melbourne: Merrill Publishing Co.

Course Reader Kit to be made available in class.

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University of Dubuque - Winter 2001

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Grading Policy: Grades in this class are based upon a point system. You will be given both letter grades and point scores for each assignment. Your final grade will be derived from your performance in all the areas of the class, and based on your composite scores. The grading scale is 90-100 for an A, 80-89 for a B, 70-79 for a C, 60-69 for a D, and 59 or below for an F. Short quizzes will be given on most Thursdays. A review will be held before the final exam.

Attendance and Participation (10%) - Attendance will be taken daily, and will count towards half of your Attendance and Participation score. The other half will be a letter mark given to you based upon your performance in class. Performance means coming to class having read the assignments and being an active participant in the discussion, including asking questions.

Presentations (20%) - During the course, you will be asked to select three reading assignments which you will present on. You will read the article or chapter and prepare up to 10 minutes' worth of summary of the key points which you will present at the beginning of class. You are especially encouraged to conclude each presentation with a number of questions for discussion about the reading.

Book Report - If you prefer not to present up to 3 times, you have the option of presenting only once, and also doing a 4-5 page book report on a book that is relevant to the course. You must get my approval of the title that you choose. If you are having a hard time locating a title, please see me for suggestions. Due: February 27.

Essay - You are required to write one essay on a relevant theme involving environmentalism from the course material. The essay will detail events in a particular period of American history, and will attempt to argue the significance of the main subject or focus. An 'A' essay will be at least 10 pages in length, will cite at least three sources not included in the course materials, will be typed, double-spaced on plain white 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Times 12 point font is preferable. I strongly encourage you to discuss your chosen essay topic with me. You are required to turn in a brief outline of your proposed essay showing what you will be covering and the sources you are working with. Outline Due: March 13. Final essay Due: April 10.

NOTE: *Please be familiar with the University of Dubuque's policy on Academic Dishonesty. Read the "Values Violations" section of your Student Handbook. You are responsible for observing this policy.*

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History 226

University of Dubuque - Winter 2001

SYLLABUS & LECTURE SCHEDULE

Introduction

January 16 (Tu): Introduction to the Course

January 28 (Th): Introduction to Key Themes of themes in American Environmental History

Film: "An American Nile" [Part Three of the *Cadillac Desert* series]

Part I: Pre-Colonial and Colonial America

January 23 (Tu): Aboriginal Views of Nature and the World

Film: "The Hopi and the Fourth World"

Assignment: Kit Reading #1: "Traditional American Indian and Western European Attitudes Toward Nature: An Overview"

January 25 (Th): The Aboriginal Peoples, Columbus and the Environment

Assignment: Kit Reading #2: "Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress"

January 30 (Tu): The New Arrivals, the Land, and the "People without a History"

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 1: "The Land and its Imperial Suitors"
Petulla, Chapter 4: "Frontier Lands, Indians and Speculators"

February 1 (Th): Colonial Economy, Resources and the Road to Revolution

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 2: "Mercantilism and Colonial Resources"
Petulla, Chapter 3: "Everyday Life and Revolutionary Developments"

February 6 (Tu): The New Agrarian Nation

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 5: "Resource Enterprises"

February 8 (Th): An Expanding Nation

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 6: "Solving Problems of Capital and Transport"
Petulla, Chapter 7: "Advancing Frontiers"

AMERICANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

History 226

University of Dubuque - Winter 2001

February 13 (Tu): America's Industrial Revolution

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 8: "The Mineral Treasures of the West"
Petulla, Chapter 9: "The Rise of Resource Industrialism"

Part II: The Conservation Movement

February 15 (Th): Employments, the Land, and Problems with the Market Economy

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 10: "Farmers and Cattlemen"
Petulla, Chapter 11: "Seeds of the Conservation Movement"

February 20 (Tu): Wilderness and the Conservative & Progressive Traditions

Assignment: Kit Reading #3: "The American Wilderness in Historical Perspective"
Kit Reading #4: "Fulfilling American Democracy: the Conservation Movement"
Kit Reading #5: "The Conservation Movement and the Progressive Tradition"

February 22 (Th): Henry David Thoreau & John Muir

Assignment: Kit Reading #6: "Thoreau's Ideas"
Kit Reading #7: "John Muir's Homage to Henry David Thoreau"

February 27 (Tu): Twentieth Century Conservationists and Progressives

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 13: "Prosperity, Profits, and Progressives"
Petulla, Chapter 14: "Struggles of the Early Conservationists"

** Due: Book Reviews* (Optional, see Assignments Page)

March 1 (Th): From Boom to Bust: the Great Depression, the New Deal and Conservation

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 15: "The Beginning of the Modern Era"
Petulla, Chapter 16: "the New Deal and Conservation"

Spring Break

Part III: Cities, Water and Smog: Urban and Environmental Issues

March 13 (Tu): The Impossible City: Los Angeles

Film: "Mulholland's Dream" [Part One of Cadillac Desert]
Assignment: Kit Reading #8: "Water Pirates and the Infinite Suburb"
**Due: Essay Outlines*

AMERICANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

History 226

University of Dubuque - Winter 2001

March 15 (Th): Old and New Urban Dilemmas

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 12: "Urban Environmental Problems"

Kit Reading #9: "How Eden Lost its Garden: A Political History of the L.A. Landscape"

March 20 (Tu): The Growth of Cities and Energy Consumption

Film: TBA.

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 17: "Sources of American Abundance"

March 22 (Th): Urban Transportation and the Automobile

Assignment: Kit Reading #10: "The Commodity that is Eating the World: The Automobile, the Environment and Capitalism"

Part IV: The Problems of Pollution

March 27 (Tu): The Politics of Pollution

Assignment: Petulla, Chapter 18: "The Politics of Pollution"

Kit Reading #11: "The Profits in Pollution"

March 29 (Th): Writers Respond

Assignment: Kit Reading #12: "Silent Spring"

Kit Reading #13: "The Environmental Failure"

Part V: The Case for Environmental Racism

April 3 (Tu): Race and Environment

Assignment: Kit Reading #14: "Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement"

Kit Reading #15: "Mobilizing for Environmental and Economic Justice: the Mexican-American Environmental Justice Movement"

Kit Reading #16: "Black Ecology"

April 5 (Th): Native Peoples and Environmental Policy

Assignment: Kit Reading #17: "Cold War Impacts on Native North America: The Political Economy of Radioactive Colonization"

Part VI: The New Diversity in Environmentalism

April 10 (Tu): Post-War Environmentalism

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History 226

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Film: "Poison and the Pentagon"

***DUE: ESSAYS**

Break

April 17 (Tu): 'Conservatives' Against Conservation

Assignment: Kit Reading #18: "The Reagan Antienvironmental Revolution"

April 19 (Th): Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology

Assignment: Kit Reading #19: "Deep Ecology"

Kit Reading #20: "The Concept of Social Ecology"

April 24 (Tu): Ecofeminism

Assignment: Kit Reading #21: "Ecofeminism"

Kit Reading #22: "Women and Nature"

April 26 (Th): Workers and Environmentalists: Prospects for Labour/Green Alliances

Assignment: Kit Reading #23: "Green Work Alliances"

Part VII: Overview

May 1 (Tu): Where is the Progressive Green Movement Today?

Assignment: Kit Reading #24: "The Fourth Wave"

Evaluations

May 3 (Th): Review

May 8 (Tu): ***Final Exam*** (10:15 am, same classroom [Goldthorp 206])

Note: It would be advisable to mark presentation dates, due dates and exam dates in your personal calendar.