

Summer 2016

THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

AT THE CROSSROADS OF ECOLOGY AND
CULTURE

HIS 194 M | T | W | R 1:00-4:00

Instructor: Camden Burd



UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Summer Session 2016
Class Time: Monday-Thursday 1:00 PM-4:00 PM
Class Location: Hylan 206

Instructor: Camden Burd
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Office Hours: By Appointment Only

Course Description

A history of the American landscape offers insights into the actions and beliefs of its inhabitants. Through a study of the landscape, we will uncover how past residents valued some aspects of the natural environment and ignored others. This course will also examine how cultural, racial, and social biases manifest themselves onto the earth's service. In addition to a history of how men and women shaped the environment, this course explores the ways America's unique environment shaped American culture itself. Overall, the course emphasizes the influence of "place" and environment in American history. In doing so, students will leave the classroom with a new perspective to understand modern environmental, and land-use, debates.

Course Objectives

- Understanding the major themes, events, and developments in the history of the American environment.
- Development of critical thinking in both writing and class discussions.
- Understand the value of primary documents to study and understand history.
- Recognize the role of history in modern conversations regarding the environment and land-use.

Required Texts

There are no required texts to purchase for this class. All readings will be posted as PDF files on Blackboard or given as handouts.

Grading

Grades for this course will be determined using the University of Rochester's grading scale:

93-100 = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
83-86 = B	63-66 = D
80-82 = B-	60-62 = D-
77-79 = C+	0-59 = F

Attendance and Participation (20%): Students are expected to attend every class session. Due to the relatively small size of this class, it is essential that every student comes to class prepared to participate and discuss course content. Failure to attend class sessions will result in a reduction of your overall grade for the course. Because this class is a mixture of lecture, discussion, and in-class exercises, students must come ready to participate. Please come prepared to discuss assigned readings and share your insights, questions, and thoughts about

them. Keep in mind that on certain days students may be asked to bring discussion questions to class. Also, many of the class sessions will have a moment for writing to reflect on the lectures and primary source materials. These reflections are meant to be helpful aids towards preparing for the weekly exams.

Quizzes (10% each = 40%): There will be a total of four quizzes over the course of this class. These quizzes will take place at the beginning of class each Thursday and will include all material (both class discussions and readings) covered during the week. Quizzes will be kept short, consisting short answer response questions.

Film Viewings (5% each= 20%): Each Thursday, after finishing the weekly quiz, there will be a film shown related to the themes of that week's unit. While these films may be enjoyable, they are not meant for simple enjoyment. Accompanying the film will be a brief series of comprehension questions relating to the themes portrayed in each specific film. These will be turned in at the end of the viewing.

Presentation: (20%): At the end of the semester each student will be required to give an 8-10 minute presentation on the history of a place or concept related to the course. This can be a history of an environmental phenomenon, environmental issue, or history of specific land use policy. The topic will be selected by May 24 in conversation with the instructor.

Classroom Etiquette

This course is a seminar. Seminars operate best in a critical yet respectful environment. Differing opinions in classroom discussions are encouraged. If you happen to disagree with someone else's argument or opinion, please do so in a respectful and courteous manner. Persistent rude or insensitive comments will result in a deduction from your final grade for the course. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and will be reported to university officials for review and potential disciplinary action.

Technology Policy

Although some of our in-class writing assignments will be handwritten, you may bring a laptop or other portable screen to class to take notes. However, the use of cell phones and smart phones is strictly forbidden during class. If you choose to use digital technology in class, it must be for academic purposes. Occasionally, I may ask you to turn off your devices (such as during class discussion when total attention is required). If the use or misuse of technology becomes an issue during in-class discussions, workshops, and assignments (i.e., checking Facebook, watching Youtube videos, Tweeting, etc.), then I reserve the right to alter the technology policy as I see fit.

Late Work and Missed Assignments

Late work will not be accepted. No exceptions. Any extenuating circumstances should be communicated directly to the instructor as soon as possible. Exam dates and assignment deadlines are made clear at the beginning of the course which means there are few reasonable excuses for missing them.

Academic Honesty

As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities, one of which is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious

violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends. A common form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. The representation of another person's work as one's own, or the attempt "to blur the line between one's own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source." More specifically, the use of an idea, phrase, or other materials from a written or spoken source without acknowledgment in a work for which the student claims authorship. Examples include: the misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship; the improper use of course materials in a work for which the student claims authorship; the use of papers purchased online and turned in as one's own work; submission of written work such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent. A student can avoid the risk of plagiarism in written work or oral presentations by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper or presentation itself, the source of any idea or wording that he or she did not produce. Sources must be given regardless of whether the idea, phrase or other material is quoted directly, paraphrased or summarized in the student-writer's own words.

Academic Assistance

This classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. I invite you to talk with me about any concerns or situations that may affect your ability to complete your assignments successfully. If you have any issues throughout the semester I strongly encourage you to contact the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). CETL supports undergraduate students at the University of Rochester with services that promote academic success, including course-specific collaborative study groups, study skills counseling, a study skills course, and disability support.

Course Schedule (May 16- June 9)

May 16: Course Overview

Earth, Wind, Fire, and Ice

May 17: Native Americans and Land Use

Reading: Seneca Origins Story

Reading: Cherokee Origins Story

Reading: Native American Horticulture

May 18: Ecological Encounters in Colonial America

Reading: J.B. Jackson, "Westward Moving House," in *Landscape in Sight*, 82-88.

Reading: Collection of Colonial Observances

Reading: William Cronon, "A World of Fields and Fences," in *Changes in the Land*

May 19: **Quiz**

Watch and Discuss: *The New World* (2005)

May 23: Scars on the American Landscape

Reading: Thomas Jefferson and the Agrarian Ideal, 1787

Reading: Alexis de Tocqueville, "What gives Almost All Americans a Preference for Industrial Callings."

Reading: Andrew Jackson Downing, “The National Ignorance of the Agricultural Interest”

Reading: J.B. Jackson, “Westward Moving House,” in *Landscape in Sight*, 88-96.

May 24: The Southern Landscape: Slavery, Tobacco, Rice, and Cotton

Reading: Thomas Jefferson, “On the ‘Nature’ of Blacks and Worn-Out Tobacco Lands, 1787”

Reading: J.B. Jackson, “Virginia Heritage; Fencing, Farming, and Cattle Raising”

DUE: Selection of Presentation Topic

May 25: Field Trip: Mt. Hope Cemetery

Reading: Aaron Sachs, "American Arcadia: Mount Auburn Cemetery and the Nineteenth-Century Landscape Tradition," *Environmental History* 15 (April 2010), 206-35.

Reading: Henry David Thoreau, “Walking.”

May 26: **Quiz**

Watch and Discuss: *The Frontier House (2002) (2 Episodes)*

May 30: Industrial America, the Cityscape, and Tourism

Reading: Dickens, “New York,” in *American Notes*

Reading: Gregg Mitman, “Hay Fever Holiday: Health, Leisure, and Place in Gilded-Age America”

Discussion: Presentation Topics

May 31: Field Trip: Highland Park

Reading: Frederick Law Olmsted, “Psychological Effect of Park Scenery”

June 1: Conserving or Preserving the American Landscape?

Reading: Gifford Pinchot, *The Fight for Conservation*

Reading: John Muir, *Our National Parks*

June 2: **Quiz**

Watch and Discuss: *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea (2009)*

June 6: The Dust Bowl and New Deal Conservation

Reading: George Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath* (1939)

Watch: *The River* (1938)

Discussion: Presentation Topics

June 7: The City and the Suburb

Reading: Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Live of Great American Cities*

Reading: J.B. Jackson, “Westward Moving House,” in *Landscape in Sight*, 97-105.

June 8: Industrial Pollution and Modern Environmentalism

Reading: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

Reading: Roderick Frazier Nash, "Toward a Philosophy of Wilderness, in *Wilderness and the American Mind*

Presentations

June 9: **Quiz**

Watch and Discuss: *Adventures of the Wilderness Family* (1975)

Concluding Remarks