History 630: Seminar in History
Fall 2016  Schedule #: 21858

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Phone: 40930  Office Hours: T 1:00-3:00; Th 12:30-1:30
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Course description:
Environmental history is a broad field that encompasses the study of law, politics and regulation; race, class and gender; popular culture; intellectual history; and various fields of economic production and their consequences, from agriculture and forestry to major industries. Important works in the field have focused on natural resources themselves, such as water, forests, or energy. Methodologically, the field relies heavily on case studies grounded in specific locations, and tries to take nature and natural processes into account as significant historical factors. The roots of environmental history in the history of federal land management, agriculture and forestry partially explains the disproportionate presence of the American west on this reading list.
The purpose of this course is to introduce some of the major intellectual questions that have driven this field, starting with a few “great books” in the field and exploring the evolving historical questions raised by those foundational works.

Learning outcomes:
This is a graduate course, and so listing learning outcomes seems a little inappropriate. My goals for this course are to introduce you to a specific historiography, and improve your skills in critiquing historical writing, and in writing. We’ll also work on discussion skills, critical (but fast) reading, and specifically on comparing works within a subfield of history. I am particularly committed to helping you draw connections amongst historical works read both for this course and other courses.

Students with disabilities:
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services.

Assignments and Grading
10%  Attendance and contribution to discussion:
You are allowed one excused absence. After that, I will lower grades in proportion to additional absences. Additional absences, for whatever reason, will not be excused. NOTE: I will grade you on how much and how well you contribute to discussion. So speak up.

30%  Weekly short papers on assigned readings.
Plan to write every week. If there is no specific assignment on the syllabus or blackboard, write a 2-3 page critical essay — a short, thoughtful essay that argues something about the week’s reading, in the context of what came before. You will be graded in part on the quality of your focus/thesis.

60%  Final essay and presentation:
This could be a historiography or a research paper on some one topic in American environmental history. If possible, write on something that is related to your thesis or exam fields. 20 pages.

Classroom and Course Policies
This is a discussion seminar. It will only work if you prepare for class by reading assignments and thinking about discussion questions. Too busy to get the reading done? Skim it, read reviews, or read part of the assignment thoroughly.

**Laptops** and other electronics: If your use of electronic gadgets may only be used in class to read documents and take notes. You may never check for or send phone, text or email messages. If your gadgets distract me or other students, you must put them away.

**Working with others**: You may edit (but not write) each other’s papers; you may study for the final exam with other students. If you collaborate with anyone on something you turn in (including worksheets), you must write the names of everyone who collaborated on the top of your paper. You may not copy wording or sentences from a collaborator on an essay, worksheet or exam.

**Changes to assignments**: *Due dates, readings and assignments may change during the semester.*

You are responsible for any and all changes announced in class, even if you are not present. If you miss class, see a colleague for notes and announcements.

**Late policy**: Weekly papers are due at the beginning of class. I will not accept any late papers. If you are going to miss class, email your paper to a colleague (not to me), and ask them to turn it in for you. You may skip 1 weekly paper without penalty. I may make exceptions for bona fide and documented emergencies. Turning in a paper by email does not count as turning it in at all.

**Missed classes/Attendance**:

You are responsible for everything that happens in class, whether you are there or not. If you miss class, you must consult with your fellow students first.

If you experience a sudden illness or personal emergency that will keep you out of school for multiple classes, contact me as soon as you can so that we can make arrangements for you to make up missed work. I will help you complete this course successfully in spite of such emergencies ONLY if you keep me informed. Student Health Services will only provide medical excuses for conditions lasting longer than 5 days; on the other hand, you can ask Student Health Services to contact me if you have an extended illness.

**Plagiarism and cheating**: Plagiarism is a serious offense, and may be punished by expulsion from SDSU, failure in this course, and/or zero credit for a specific assignment. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism, and for taking all necessary actions to avoid it. For the purposes of this class, the burden of proof is on you if I suspect that you have plagiarized or cheated in any way. I may ask you to show me notes, rough drafts, copies of your sources, or other proof that you wrote the paper you turned in.

- The most common types of plagiarism are: 1) using someone else's ideas in your writing without using footnotes or citations to show where you got these ideas from; 2) using someone else's exact words without using quotation marks and footnotes/citations; 3) turning in a paper that someone else wrote.
- If you footnote EVERY time you quote or paraphrase some one, you will not commit plagiarism. All footnotes must conform to the Turabian or Chicago Manual of Style formats.
- A bibliography at the end of your paper is a good thing, but it does not substitute for footnotes. You may not turn in a paper for this course that you or any one else has prepared for another course, publication or assignment.

### Semester schedule week by week

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
<th>Weekly Writing Questions</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings:</td>
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<td>5 9/27</td>
<td>Paul S. Sutter, <em>Driven Wild</em> (2002)</td>
<td>Using on our readings so far, explain what Sutter’s explanation of a) the developments that made Leopold, Yard, Mackaye and Marshall fear the end of wilderness, or b) the anticipated consequences of America without wilderness adds to the historiography. In other words, what is significant about Sutter’s work?</td>
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<td>6 10/4</td>
<td>Ellen Stroud, <em>Nature Next Door</em> (2013)</td>
<td>What technological, economic, social and cultural transformations permitted New England reforestation? How do our previous authors describe the impact of these same transformations?</td>
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<td>8 10/18</td>
<td>Martin V. Melosi, <em>Garbage in the Cities</em> (1981)</td>
<td>Melosi does not address the pastoral idea at all. What, according to Melosi, drives urban reform?</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11/8</td>
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<td>Orsi, <em>Hazardous Metropolis</em> (2004)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>12/6</td>
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<td>Karl Jacoby, <em>Crimes against Nature</em> (2001)</td>
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<td>12/15</td>
<td>Research Presentations</td>
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**How to read for this class:**

Always read for argument, rather than factual details. Look the author's statement of his/her goals in the introduction.

Place each reading in its historiographic and historical context. This, too, will be in the introduction - look for historiography where the author starts describing and critiquing other authors' work. Pay particular attention to authors’ statements comparing their work to their predecessors’.

**SKIM:** You know you have read enough when you really understand the author's main argument. This usually requires close reading of the introduction, and one or two chapters, plus the first and last sections of the rest of the chapters. But you may have to read more if you do not understand with the author is trying to prove, or how his/her examples support his/her argument.

**Preparing for class:**

In this class, we will focus first on the book of the week – argument, evidence, critique – and then on the place of that book in the historiography. Our initial critiques will focus on whether or not the author fulfilled his/her goals. Then we’ll move on to examining how this week’s reading revises, enlarges, challenges, addresses readings from previous weeks and classes.

You should come to class with notes on each book’s argument, and evidence. You should also note whether or not you think the author actually did what he/she set out to do. Finally, your notes should include some comparisons to books from previous weeks and from other classes. Questions about the argument or about your own reactions to the book are welcome parts of discussion, too.
Book list in alphabetical order:


