Course Outline

EST 361

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

David A. Sonnenfeld, Ph.D., Instructor
Xiaole Ni, Teaching Assistant
Xiaoliang Yang, Teaching Assistant (Part-time)

Dept. of Environmental Studies

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Fall 2011, TuTh 2:00-3:20 pm, Baker 148

DESCRIPTION

Overview

This upper-division course examines the historical and cultural origins and evolution of the complex, multifaceted, social phenomenon called the American environmental movement, including the events, philosophies and historical/cultural processes that marked and continue to drive various competing attitudes toward nature. Course sessions examine conservationism, preservationism, early urban environmental reform, the 'second wave' of environmental activism in the 1960s and '70s, the environmental justice movement, and contemporary movements including transnational environmental advocacy. Course methods utilized include reading, writing, lectures, films/videos, discussion and debate. As a final project, students employ course concepts, frameworks and understandings in researching and writing a term paper on an historical or contemporary American environmental advocate, organization, campaign, or issue.

Objectives

By the completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with key moments in the history of the American environmental movement, including conservationism, preservationism, early urban reform movements, the 'second wave' of environmental concern, the environmental justice movement, and contemporary movements including transnational environmental advocacy;

- Relate contextual environmental, social, political, economic, and cultural factors with the rise, fall, rebirth, diversification, development, successes and limitations of the American environmental movement;

- Successfully employ concepts from social movement theory in developing insights about the formation, development and impacts of the American environmental movement; and

- Demonstrate proficiency in applying basic course concepts and analytical frameworks in the analysis of a particular historical or contemporary American environmental advocate, organization, campaign or issue.
Requirements

- Read all required texts and view all in-class films and videos;
- Participate in course discussions and debates;
- Complete three, take-home short (3-5 pp.) essay assignments; and
- Prepare and submit a medium-length (10-12 pp.) term paper.

Grading

Essays (3), 50%
Term paper, 35%
Attendance and participation, 15%

Communication

Office: 211B Marshall
Hrs.: TuTh 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, & by appointment
Tel. 315.470.4931/ 6636, fax 315.470.6915
E-mail: <dsonn@esf.edu>, and <DASonnenfeld@gmail.com>
URL: http://www.esf.edu/es/sonnenfeld

TEXTS

Required


Recommended


Bookstore

Follett's Orange Bookstore, Marshall Square Mall, 720 University Ave., tel. 315.478.6821
ESF LIBRARY GUIDE
http://researchguides.library.syr.edu/content.php?pid=222788

FILMS AND VIDEOS
"Aldo Leopold: A Sand County Almanac" (Thurs., 9/15)
"Earth Days: Seeds of a Revolution" (Tues., 10/4)
"Rachel Carson's Silent Spring" (Thurs., 10/13)
"Cesar Chavez: Pesticides Kill Farmworkers" (Tues., 11/1)
"In Our Own Back Yard: The First Love Canal" (Tues., 11/8)
"Dr. Gus Speth at the Garrison Institute" (Tues., 11/15)

ASSIGNMENTS
Essay #1, "Early American Environmental Movements" (due Tues., 9/27)
Essay #3, "The Environmental Justice Movement" (due Tues., 11/15)
Term paper (see below)

TERM PAPER
Assignment. A detailed assignment will be handed out during Week 7.
Proposal. By Week 10, submit a short, 1 p., proposal describing the historical or contemporary American environmental advocate, organization, campaign, or issue that you would like to examine in your term paper.
Abstract, outline and bibliography. By Week 12, submit a working abstract, outline and bibliography for your term paper.
Specifications. Term papers should be ~10-12 pp. in length, double-spaced, 11 or 12 pt. Times New Roman, plus coversheet and bibliography.
Extra credit. Students may receive extra credit on this assignment for thoughtfully and appropriately incorporating material from their term paper in an already-existing or new Wikipedia entry on that topic. All Wikipedia conventions including user registration, documentation of sources, neutral point of view, etc., must be observed.
Deadline. Due at the beginning of the regularly scheduled Final Exam period for this course.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW
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|    | *** THANKSGIVING BREAK ***
| 13 | Tu 11/29 | Br, 4-6         |         |            |            |              |        |            |
|    | Th 12/1  | Br, 7-9          |         |            |            |              | X      |            |
| 14 | Tu 12/6  | Br, 10-11       |         |            |            |              |        |            |
|    | Th 12/8  | Br, 12          |         |            |            |              |        |            |
|    | F        | TBD              |         |            |            |              |        |            |

**Key**
- WI = *Wilderness Idea*, Nash
- FtS = *Forcing the Spring*, Gottlieb
- GU = *From the Ground Up*, Cole & Foster
- Br = *Bridge at the End of the World*, Speth

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8/23/2011
SCHEDULE DETAIL

PART I: EARLY AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

Week 1 – Introduction

Tues., 8/30: Course introduction
  Why an historical perspective?
  Aims of this course
  Assumptions
  Syllabus review

Thurs., 9/1: First environmentalists
  Lecture: The Wilderness Idea - Introduction
  Discussion
  REQUIRED:
    Nash, Wilderness, prologue, ch's 1, 2
  RECOMMENDED:
    Merchant, Problems, ch's 2-4
    Kline, First Along the River, ch's 1-2
    Guha, Global Environmentalism, ch 1
  ADDITIONAL:

Week 2 – The Wilderness Idea

Tues., 9/6: Romantic wilderness
  Romantic wilderness
  American Wilderness
  Henry David Thoreau
  Discussion
  REQUIRED:
    Nash, Wilderness, ch's 3-5
  RECOMMENDED:
    Merchant, Problems, ch 6
    Kline, First Along the River, ch 3
    Guha, Global Environmentalism, ch 2
  ADDITIONAL:
**Thurs., 9/8: American preservationism**

"Preserve the Wilderness!"

Small groups

REQUIRED:
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch's 6, 7

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 8, 9, 11
Kline, *First Along the River*, ch 4
Guha, *Global Environmentalism*, ch 4

ADDITIONAL:

**Week 3 – Conservationism & Preservationism**

**Tues., 9/13: Utilitarianism and the multiple-use ethic**


Discussion

REQUIRED:
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch 10

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 10-11
Kline, *First Along the River*, ch 5
Guha, *Global Environmentalism*, ch 3

ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 9/15: Toward a philosophy of wilderness**

Lecture


Small groups

REQUIRED:
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch's 11-13

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 13
Guha, *Global Environmentalism*, ch 4

ADDITIONAL:
Week 4 – The Irony of Victory

**Tues., 9/20: The irony of victory**

Lecture
Debate preparation

**REQUIRED:**
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch's 14, 15

**RECOMMENDED:**
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 14

**ADDITIONAL:**


**Thurs., 9/22: International perspectives**

Debate: "Greatest Good or 'Forever Wild'?"

**REQUIRED:**
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch 16, epilogue

**RECOMMENDED:**
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 15
Kline, *First Along the River*, ch's 8, 10, 11

**ADDITIONAL:**


*** Essay #1 – Early Environmental Movements (due Tues., 9/27) ***

PART II: AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALISM: THE SECOND WAVE

Week 5 – Early Urban Reform Movements

**Tues., 9/27: Urbanization, health and the environment**

Urban and industrial roots of American environmentalism

Discussion

**REQUIRED:**
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, intro, ch's 1, 2 (pp. xiii-120)

**RECOMMENDED:**
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 5, 12
Kline, *First Along the River*, ch 4
ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 9/29: NO CLASS**

**Week 6 – American Environmentalism in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s**

**Tues., 10/4: 1960s environmentalism**

REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, ch 3

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 13-14
Kline, *First Along the River*, ch 6
Guha, *Global Environmentalism*, prologue (Part II), ch 5

ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 10/6: The professionalization of environmentalism**
Mainstreaming environmentalism
Small groups

REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, ch 4

RECOMMENDED:
Kline, *First Along the River*, ch's 7-10

ADDITIONAL:
Week 7 – Grassroots Response

**Tues., 10/11: Alternative environmental movements**

From the grassroots
Small groups

**REQUIRED:**
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, ch 5

**RECOMMENDED:**
Kline, *First Along the River*, ch 7

**ADDITIONAL:**


**Thurs., 10/13: Women's role in environmental activism**

Film: PBS, "Rachel Carson's Silent Spring" (2007), 55 min.

**Discussion**

**Term paper assignment**

**REQUIRED:**
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, ch 6

**RECOMMENDED:**
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 6, 7, 12, 15

**ADDITIONAL:**


*** Term Paper (due at beginning of Final Exam period) ***

Week 8 – Diversity in American Environmentalism

**Tues., 10/18: Race, ethnicity and environmental issues**

Lecture
Discussion
Debate preparation
REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, ch 7

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 4, 6, 7, 15

ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 10/20: Work, health and the environment**
Debate: "Mainstream vs. Grassroots Environmentalism"

REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, ch 8, conclusion, epilogue

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 12

ADDITIONAL:

*** Essay #2 – American Environmentalism: The Second Wave (due Tues., 10/25) ***

**PART III: HISTORY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT**

**Week 9 – Toxic Wastes and Race**

**Tues., 10/25: Origins of the environmental justice movement**
Lecture
Discussion

REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, preface, intro, ch 1 (pp. 1-33)

ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 10/27: Environmental racism and inequality**

The political economy of environmental racism
Beyond the distributive paradigm
Term paper assignment #T-1
Small groups

**REQUIRED:**
Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, ch's 2-3

**ADDITIONAL:**

*** Term Paper Proposal (due Tues., 11/1) ***

**Week 10 – Broadening the Environmental Justice Movement**

**Tues., 11/1: Circle of poison: from fields to plate**

Video: "Cesar Chavez: Pesticides Kill Farmworkers" (1990), 11 min.
Pesticides, food safety, and farmworker health
Discussion

**REQUIRED:**
Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, ch 4

**ADDITIONAL:**

**Thurs., 11/3: The Indigenous Environmental Network**

Global environmental justice
Discussion
Term paper assignment #T-2

**REQUIRED:**
Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, ch 6

**RECOMMENDED:**
Guha, *Global Environmentalism*, ch's 6-8
ADDITIONAL:


*** Term Paper Abstract, Outline and Bibliography (due Tues., 11/8) ***

Week 11 – Transformative Environmental Politics

*Tues., 11/8: The structure of environmental decision making*
Film: Lynn Corcoran, "In Our Own Backyard: The First Love Canal" (1982), 59 min.
Discussion
Debate preparation

REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, ch 5

RECOMMENDED:
Guha, *Global Environmentalism*, ch 7

ADDITIONAL:

*Thurs., 11/10: Transformative politics*
Debate: "Is Environmental Inequality Intentional?"

REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, ch 7

ADDITIONAL:


*** Essay #3 – The Environmental Justice Movement (due Tues., 11/15) ***

PART IV: FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Week 12 – Globalization and the Environment

*Tues., 11/15: System failure?*
Modern capitalism: out of control?
Video: "Dr. Gus Speth at the Garrison Institute" (2010), 27 min.
Discussion

REQUIRED:
Speth, _Bridge at the End of the World_, preface, introduction, ch's 1-2

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, _Problems_, ch 15

ADDITIONAL:


**Thurs., 11/17: Limits of today’s environmentalism**

Lecture
Small groups

REQUIRED:
Speth, _Bridge at the End of the World_, ch 3

ADDITIONAL:


**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 13 – The Great Transformation**

**Tues., 11/29: Market-based environmental transformations**

Lecture
Discussion

REQUIRED:
Speth, _Bridge at the End of the World_, ch's 4-6

RECOMMENDED:
Kline, _First Along the River_, ch 11

ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 12/1: Beyond today's capitalism?**

Lecture  
Small groups  

REQUIRED:  
Speth, *Bridge at the End of the World*, ch's 7-9  

ADDITIONAL:  

**Week 14 – Seedbeds of Transformation**

**Tues., 12/6: New consciousness, new politics**

Lecture  
Discussion  
Debate preparation  

REQUIRED:  
Speth, *Bridge at the End of the World*, ch's 10, 11  

ADDITIONAL:  

**Thurs., 12/8: The bridge at the end of the world**

Debate: "Can Today's Capitalism Be Saved?"

REQUIRED:  
Speth, *Bridge at the End of the World*, ch 12

**Final Exam Week**

Term papers due (also, any extra credit projects)