Course Outline

EST 361

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

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Dept. of Environmental Studies
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Fall 2015, 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 known as the American environmental movement. The course surveys the events, philosophies, and historical/cultural processes that marked and continue to drive a variety of attitudes toward nature in the United States. Course units examine conservationism and preservationism; early urban environmental reform; the 'second wave' of environmental activism in the 1960s and '70s; the environmental justice movement; and contemporary environmental movements including those that take a global perspective. Course methods include reading, writing, lectures, videos, discussion and debate. As a course project, students examine in depth an historical or contemporary American environmental issue, campaign, advocate or organization of their choosing, employing course concepts, frameworks and understandings in writing a final research paper on that topic.

Prerequisite
Sophomore status or consent of instructor

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

• Read all required texts & view all in-class films and videos
• Participate in course discussions and debates
• Write short weekly 'reading notes' (@ 1 p.) on the required readings
• Complete three formal essay assignments (@ 3-5 pp.)
• Prepare and submit a final research paper (10-12 pp.)

Grading

Essays (3), 33.3%
Research paper, 33.3%
Weekly reading notes (13) & participation, 33.3%

Communication

Office: 211-B Marshall
Hrs.: M Tu 3:30–5:20pm, & by appointment
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TEXTS

Required
Press. ISBN 978-0-300-19038-0
Gottlieb, Robert. 2005. Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental
Speth, James G. 2009. The Bridge at the End of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing

Recommended
6085-1
Merchant, Carolyn, ed. 2012. Major Problems in American Environmental History: Documents
Lester, James D., and James D. Lester, Jr. 2015. Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide,
ISBN 978-0-7456-7950-1

Bookstore

ESF Virtual Bookstore, available via myESF. For further information see: http://www.esf.edu/students/books.htm
EST361 LIBRARY GUIDE
http://libguides.esf.edu/content.php?pid=339659

FILMS AND VIDEOS
"Wild by Law: The Rise of Environmentalism and the Creation of the Wilderness Act" (Thurs., 9/17)
"Earth Days: Seeds of a Revolution" (Thurs., 10/1 & 10/8)
"Laid to Waste" (Thurs., 10/29)
"Cesar Chavez: Pesticides Kill Farmworkers" (Tues., 11/3)
"Kids at Risk" (Tues. 11/3)
"Martin Sheen" (Tues. 11/3)
"In Our Own Back Yard: The First Love Canal" (Thurs., 11/5)
"Gus Speth at the Garrison Institute" (Tues., 11/17)

ASSIGNMENTS
Weekly Reading Notes (due most Tuesdays, as noted below)
Essay #1, "Early American Environmental Movements" (due Tues., 9/29)
Essay #2, "American Environmentalism: The Second Wave" (due Thurs., 10/22)
Essay #3, "The Environmental Justice Movement" (due Tues., 11/17)
Research paper (see below)

SEMESTER-LONG RESEARCH PROJECT
Assignment. A detailed assignment will be handed out during Week 7.
Proposal (T-1). By Week 10, submit a proposal in the form of an abstract (~1 p.) describing the historical or contemporary American environmental issue, campaign, advocate or organization that you would like to examine in your research paper.
Abstract, outline and bibliography (T-2). By Week 12, submit a revised abstract, outline and preliminary bibliography for your research paper. At least 10 relevant, peer-reviewed, scholarly journal articles on your topic should be included in the bibliography, in proper reference form.
Specifications. Term papers should be ~10-12 pp. in length, double-spaced, 11 or 12 pt. Times New Roman, plus coversheet and bibliography.
Deadline (T-3). Due at the beginning of the regularly scheduled Final Exam period for this course.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW
(See next page)
**SCHEDULE DETAIL**

**PART I: EARLY AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS**

**Week 1 – Introduction**

**Tues., 9/1: Course introduction**
- What is a social movement?
- Life-cycles of social movements
- Issue-attention life cycle
- Why an historical perspective?
- Aims of this course
- Assumptions
- Syllabus review

**RECOMMENDED**
- Johnston, *What Is a Social Movement?* ch 1

**Thurs., 9/3: Before environmentalism**
- Native Americans and traditional human ecology in North America
- Settlers in the New World
- Discussion

**REQUIRED:**
- Nash, *Wilderness*, prologue, ch's 1, 2

**RECOMMENDED:**
- Merchant, *Problems*, chs 2-4
- Johnston, *What Is a Social Movement?* ch 2, "The study of social movements"

**ADDITIONAL:**

**Week 2 – The Wilderness Idea**

**Tues., 9/8: Romantic wilderness**
- Romantic wilderness
- *American* wilderness
- Henry David Thoreau
- Discussion/ debate groups (formation)
REQUIRED:
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch's 3-5

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 6
Johnston, *What Is a Social Movement?* ch 4, "What is a cultural movement?"

ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #1 due (*Wilderness*, through ch.5) ***

**Thurs., 9/10: American preservationism**


Discussion

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

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 8, 9, 11

ADDITIONAL:

**Week 3 – Conservationism & Preservationism**

**Tues., 9/15: Utilitarianism and the multiple-use ethic**

Lecture

Discussion/ debate groups

REQUIRED:
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch 10

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 10-11

ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #2 due (*Wilderness*, through ch 10) ***

**Thurs., 9/17: Toward a philosophy of wilderness**

Film: PBS, "Wild by Law: The Rise of Environmentalism and the Creation of the Wilderness Act" (2008), 58 min.

Discussion

REQUIRED:
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch's 11-13
Week 4 – The Irony of Victory

Tues., 9/22: The irony of victory
Lecture
Debate preparation

REQUIRED:
Nash, Wilderness, ch's 14-16, epilogue

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, Problems, ch 14-15
Johnston, What Is a Social Movement? ch 5, "What do social movements do?"

ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #3 due (Wilderness, through epilogue) ***
*** Essay #1 – Early Environmental Movements (due Tues., 9/29) ***

Thurs., 9/24: Debate #1
Debate #1: "For the Greatest Good?"

PART II: AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALISM: THE SECOND WAVE

Week 5 – 1960s environmentalism

Tues., 9/29: 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
ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 10/1: Earth Day**
Film: PBS, "Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution" (2010), 100 min. – Part I
Discussion
REQUIREd:
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, ch 3
RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 13-14
ADDITIONAL:
*** Weekly Reading Note #4 due (*Forcing the Spring*, through ch 3) ***

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

**Tues., 10/6: The professionalization of environmentalism**
Mainstreaming environmentalism
Discussion/ debate groups
REQUIREd:
Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, ch 4
ADDITIONAL:
*** Weekly Reading Note #5 due (*Forcing the Spring*, ch 4) ***
Thurs., 10/8: 1960s environmentalism (cont'd)
Film: PBS, "Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution" (2010) – Part II
Discussion
REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, Forcing the Spring, ch 5
ADDITIONAL:

Week 7 – Grassroots Response

Tues., 10/13: Alternative environmental movements
From the grassroots
Research paper assignment
Discussion/ debate groups
REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, Forcing the Spring, ch 6
RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, Problems, ch's 6, 7, 12, 15
Johnston, What Is a Social Movement?, ch 6, "Researching social movements”
Lester & Lester, Writing Research Papers, ch 2, "Finding a Topic"
ADDITIONAL:
*** Weekly Reading Note #6 due (Forcing the Spring, ch's 5-6) ***
Thurs., 10/15: 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:

*** Essay #2 – American Environmentalism: The Second Wave (due Thurs., 10/22) ***

Week 8 – Diversity in American Environmentalism

Tues., 10/20: Debate #2

Debate #2: "Mainstream vs. Grassroots Environmentalism"

REQUIRED:
  Gottlieb, Forcing the Spring (all)

RECOMMENDED:
  Merchant, Problems, ch 12

ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #7 due (Forcing the Spring, ch 7) ***
Thurs., 10/22: Essay #2  
Submit your essay (TBA)

PART III: HISTORY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Week 9 – Toxic Wastes and Race

Tues., 10/27: Origins of the environmental justice movement  
Lecture  
Discussion  
REQUIRED:  
Cole & Foster, From the Ground Up, preface, intro, ch 1 (pp. 1-33)  
ADDITIONAL:  
New York: United Church of Christ.  
*** Weekly Reading Note #8 due (From the Ground Up, through ch 1) ***

Thurs., 10/29: Environmental racism and inequality  
Film: Robert Bahar & George McCollough, "Laid to Waste" (1997), 52 min.  
The political economy of environmental racism  
Discussion/ debate prep  
REQUIRED:  
Cole & Foster, From the Ground Up, ch's 2-3  
ADDITIONAL:  
*** Research Paper Assignment #T-1 (due Tues., 11/3) ***

Week 10 – Diversity within the Environmental Justice Movement

Tues., 11/3: Circle of poison: from fields to plate  
Videos: "Cesar Chavez: Pesticides Kill Farm Workers" (1990), 11 min.; Earth Justice, "Kids at Risk" (2009), 4 min.; Food, Inc., "Martin Sheen Stands Up for Farm Workers" (2009), 1 min.  
Pesticides, food safety, and farmworker health  
Discussion/ debate prep
REQUIRED:
- Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, ch 4

ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #9 due (From the Ground Up, ch's 2-4) ***

**Thurs., 11/5: The structure of environmental decision making**

Film: Lynn Corcoran, "In Our Own Backyard: The First Love Canal" (1982), 59 min.

Discussion

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

RECOMMENDED:
- Lester & Lester, *Writing Research Papers*, ch's 3, 5, 8, 9, Appendix

ADDITIONAL:

**Week 11 – Global environmental justice**

**Tues., 11/10: The Indigenous Environmental Network**

Discussion

Debate prep

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

ADDITIONAL:
**Thurs., 11/12: Debate #3**

Debate #3: "Is Environmental Inequality Intentional?"

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

**ADDITIONAL:**

**PART IV: FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT**

**Week 12 – Globalization and the Environment**

**Tues., 11/17: 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., 11/19: Limits of today's environmentalism**

Lecture

Discussion/ debate groups

**REQUIRED:**
Speth, *Bridge at the End of the World*, ch 3

**ADDITIONAL:**

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13 – The Great Transformation

Tues., 12/1: Market-based environmental transformations
Lecture
Discussion
REQUIRED:
Speth, Bridge at the End of the World, ch's 4-6
RECOMMENDED:
Lester & Lester, Writing Research Papers, ch's 7, 10, 12, 13, 15
ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #12 due (Bridge, ch's 3-6) ***

Thurs., 12/3: Beyond today's capitalism?
Lecture
Discussion/ debate groups
REQUIRED:
Speth, Bridge at the End of the World, ch's 7-9
ADDITIONAL:

Week 14 – New Environmentalism?

Tues., 12/8: New consciousness, new politics
Lecture
Discussion
Debate preparation
REQUIRED:
Speth, Bridge at the End of the World (all)
RECOMMENDED:
Litfin, Ecovillages
Johnston, What Is a Social Movement?, ch 7, "Where are social movements headed?"
ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #13 due (Bridge, ch's 7-12) ***

**Thurs., 12/10: Debate #4**
Debate #4: "Can Today's Capitalism Be Saved?"

**Final Exam Week**
*** Research Paper Assignment #T-3 due ***

**NOTICES**

**Accommodations**
SUNY-ESF works closely with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at Syracuse University in assisting students with learning and physical disabilities. If you think you may need accommodations in this course related to a disability, you may contact the ESF Office of Student Affairs, 110 Bray Hall, tel. 315.470.6660, for assistance with the process. You may also contact ODS directly, Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, 315.443.4498, to schedule an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible. To learn more about ODS, visit [http://disabilityservices.syr.edu](http://disabilityservices.syr.edu).

**Academic integrity**
Plagiarism is presenting others' work as your own without properly acknowledging its source(s). Plagiarism includes verbatim and close paraphrasing of material from course texts and other published materials, cutting and pasting from electronic sources, and unattributed paraphrasing. Acts of academic dishonesty are defined in the **ESF Academic Integrity Handbook** and violate the College's **Code of Student Conduct**. Students are accountable for such acts. If you have any questions about how to properly use & cite others' original work, please consult writing reference texts, your instructor, or other campus resources.

**Personal electronics**
This course is intended as an educational experience. To ensure that the classroom learning environment is conducive for all, please follow these guidelines in use of personal electronics: **Cell phones** should be turned **off** while class is in session. (If, due to a personal emergency, you need to maintain your phone on silent mode, please notify the instructor in advance.) **Laptops, tablets, e-readers**, etc. may be used for reading, note-taking, and course-related research activities. **Text messaging, social media** viewing, updating, etc., during class is disruptive and not permitted. Use of **earphones** or **'buds'** during class is unconducive to participation and is not permitted. **Disruptive behavior**, including through inappropriate use of personal electronics in the classroom, is a violation of **ESF's Code of Student Conduct**. Students who are disruptive may be asked to leave the classroom; persistent disruptions will have additional consequences.