Course Outline

EST 361

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

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Ajith Radhakrishnan, Teaching Assistant
Chao Jiang, Teaching Assistant (Part-time)

Dept. of Environmental Studies

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Fall 2012, 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 in the United States. 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 global environmentalism. Course methods utilized include reading, writing, lectures, 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 issue, campaign, advocate or organization.

Prerequisite

Sophomore status or consent of instructor

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, 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 issue, campaign, advocate or organization.

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

Grading
Essays (3), 45%
Term paper, 40%
Attendance and participation, 15%

Communication
Office: 211-B Marshall
Hrs.: TuTh 11:00am–12:20pm
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
Syracuse University Bookstore, Schine Student Center, tel. 315.443.9900, http://bookstore.syr.edu/
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., 9/13)
"Earth Days: Seeds of a Revolution" (Thurs., 9/27 & Thurs., 10/4)
"Rachel Carson's Silent Spring" (Thurs., 10/11)
"Cesar Chavez: Pesticides Kill Farmworkers" (Tues., 10/30)
"In Our Own Back Yard: The First Love Canal" (Thurs., 11/1)
"Gus Speth at the Garrison Institute" (Tues., 11/13)

ASSIGNMENTS
Essay #1, "Early American Environmental Movements" (due Tues., 9/25)
Essay #2, "American Environmentalism: The Second Wave" (due Tues., 10/23)
Essay #3, "The Environmental Justice Movement" (due Tues., 11/13)
Term paper (see below)

TERM PAPER
Assignment. A detailed assignment will be handed out during Week 7.
Proposal (T-1). By Week 10, submit a proposal (~1 p.) describing the historical or contemporary American environmental issue, campaign, advocate or organization that you would like to examine in your term paper.
Abstract, outline and bibliography (T-2). 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.
Deadline (T-3). Due at the beginning of the regularly scheduled Final Exam period for this course.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW
(See next page)
### Schedule Overview

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**Key**

Wi = *Wilderness & the American Mind*, Nash  
FtS = *Forcing the Spring*, Gottlieb  
GU = *From the Ground Up*, Cole & Foster  
Br = *Bridge at the End of the World*, Speth
SCHEDULE DETAIL

PART I: EARLY AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

Week 1 – Introduction

Tues., 8/28: Course introduction
Why an historical perspective?
Aims of this course
Assumptions
Syllabus review
RECOMMENDED
Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch 1

Thurs., 8/30: First environmentalists
Lecture: The Wilderness Idea – Introduction
Discussion
REQUIRED:
Nash, Wilderness, prologue, ch's 1, 2
RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, Problems, ch's 2-4
ADDITIONAL:

Week 2 – The Wilderness Idea

Tues., 9/4: 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
Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch 2
ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 9/6: American preservationism**


Discussion

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

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

ADDITIONAL:

**Week 3 – Conservationism & Preservationism**

**Tues., 9/11: Utilitarianism and the multiple-use ethic**

Lecture

Discussion/ debate groups

REQUIRED:
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch 10

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 10-11
Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 3

ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 9/13: 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

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 13

ADDITIONAL:
Week 4 – The Irony of Victory

Tues., 9/18: The irony of victory
Lecture
Debate preparation

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

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 14
Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 4

ADDITIONAL:

*** Essay #1 – Early Environmental Movements (due Tues., 9/25) ***

Thurs., 9/20: International perspectives
Debate #1: "Greatest Good or 'Forever Wild'"

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

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 15

ADDITIONAL:

PART II: AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALISM: THE SECOND WAVE

Week 5 – Early Urban Reform Movements

Tues., 9/25: 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
Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 5
ADDITIONAL:

Thurs., 9/27: 1960s environmentalism
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:

Week 6 – American Environmentalism in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s
Tues., 10/2: The professionalization of environmentalism
Mainstreaming environmentalism
Discussion/ debate groups
REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, Forcing the Spring, ch 4
RECOMMENDED:
Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch 6
ADDITIONAL:

Thurs., 10/4: 1960s environmentalism (cont’d)
Film: PBS, "Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution" (2010) – Part II
Discussion
Week 7 – Grassroots Response

Tues., 10/9: Alternative environmental movements

From the grassroots
Term paper assignment
Discussion/ debate groups

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

RECOMMENDED:
Della Porta & Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 7

ADDITIONAL:

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

Thurs., 10/11: Women's role in environmental activism

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL:
Week 8 – Diversity in American Environmentalism

Tues., 10/16: 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
Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch 8
ADDITIONAL:

*** Essay #2 – American Environmentalism: The Second Wave (due Tues., 10/23) ***

Thurs., 10/18: Work, health and the environment
Debate #2: "Mainstream vs. Grassroots Environmentalism"
REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, Forcing the Spring, ch 8, conclusion, epilogue
RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, Problems, ch 12
ADDITIONAL:
PART III: HISTORY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Week 9 – Toxic Wastes and Race

Tues., 10/23: Origins of the environmental justice movement
Lecture
Discussion
REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, From the Ground Up, preface, intro, ch 1 (pp. 1-33)
RECOMMENDED:
Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch 9
ADDITIONAL:

Thurs., 10/25: Environmental racism and inequality
The political economy of environmental racism
Beyond the distributive paradigm
Term paper assignment #T-1
Discussion/ debate groups
REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, From the Ground Up, ch's 2-3
ADDITIONAL:
*** Term Paper Proposal (due Tues., 10/30) ***

Week 10 – Multiple Dimensions of the Environmental Justice Movement

Tues., 10/30: Circle of poison: from fields to plate
Video: "Cesar Chavez: Pesticides Kill Farm Workers" (1990), 11 min.
Pesticides, food safety, and farmworker health
Discussion/ debate groups
REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, From the Ground Up, ch 4
ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 11/1: 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
ADDITIONAL:

**Week 11 – Transformative Environmental Politics**

**Tues., 11/6: The Indigenous Environmental Network**
Global environmental justice
Discussion
REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, From the Ground Up, ch 6
RECOMMENDED:
Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch's 5, 7 (review)
ADDITIONAL:

*** Essay #3 – The Environmental Justice Movement (due Tues., 11/13) ***

**Thurs., 11/8: Transformative politics**
Debate #3: "Is Environmental Inequality Intentional?"  
Term paper assignment #T-2
REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, ch 7

RECOMMENDED:
Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch's 3, 4 (review)

ADDITIONAL:

*** Term Paper Abstract, Outline and Bibliography (due Thurs., 11/15) ***

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

**Week 12 – Globalization and the Environment**

**Tues., 11/13: 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., 11/15: Limits of today’s environmentalism**
Lecture
Discussion/ debate groups

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

RECOMMENDED:
Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 8 (review)

ADDITIONAL:
THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13 – The Great Transformation

Tues., 11/27: Market-based environmental transformations
  Lecture
  Discussion
  REQUIRED:
  Speth, Bridge at the End of the World, ch's 4-6
  ADDITIONAL:

Thurs., 11/29: Beyond today’s capitalism?
  Lecture
  Discussion/ debate groups
  REQUIRED:
  Speth, Bridge at the End of the World, ch's 7-9
  ADDITIONAL:

Week 14 – Seedbeds of Transformation

Tues., 12/4: New consciousness, new politics
  Lecture
  Discussion
  Debate preparation
  REQUIRED:
  Speth, Bridge at the End of the World, ch's 10, 11
  RECOMMENDED:
  Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch 9 (review)
  ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 12/6: The bridge at the end of the world**

Debate #4: "Can Today's Capitalism Be Saved?"

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

**Final Exam Week**

Term papers due