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 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, guest speakers, films/videos and in-class discussion. 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;
• 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

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TEXTS

Required


Recommended


Bookstore

Follett's Orange Bookstore, Marshall Square Mall, 720 University Ave., tel. 315.478.6821
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.
Deadline. Due at the beginning of the regularly scheduled Final Exam period for this course.

SCHEDULE
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
   Discussion
   REQUIRED:
      Nash, Wilderness, prologue, ch's 1, 2
   RECOMMENDED:
      Merchant, Problems, ch's 2-3
      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

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!

Wilderness Preserved

Discussion/ debate

REQUIRED:

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

RECOMMENDED:

Merchant, *Problems*, ch 10
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

John Muir: Publicizer

The Wilderness Cult
Hetch Hetchy

Discussion/ debate

REQUIRED:

Nash, *Wilderness*, ch's 8-10

RECOMMENDED:

Merchant, *Problems*, ch 11
Kline, *First Along the River*, ch 5
Guha, *Global Environmentalism*, ch 3
ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 9/15: Toward a philosophy of wilderness**
Aldo Leopold: Prophet
Decisions for Permanence
Toward a Philosophy of Wilderness
Discussion/ debate

**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**
Alaska
The Irony of Victory

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

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

**ADDITIONAL:**

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

**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
REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, Forcing the Spring, intro, ch's 1, 2 (pp. xiii-120)
RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, Problems, ch 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
The ecology of affluence
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**

Discussion/ debate

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**

Why write a research proposal?

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**

Discussion/ debate

Term paper assignment

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

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

Week 8 – Diversity in American Environmentalism

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

REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, Forcing the Spring, ch 7

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, Problems, ch 15

ADDITIONAL:

Thurs., 10/20: Work, health and the environment

Occupational health and the environment
Discussion/ debate
Essay assignment

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

RECOMMENDED:

ADDITIONAL:
PART III: HISTORY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Week 9 – Toxic Wastes and Race

Tues., 10/25: Origins of the environmental justice movement
Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement

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 proposal
Discussion/ debate

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
Pesticides, food safety, and farmworker health

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


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

Discussion

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**

Processes of struggle

REQUIRED:

Cole & Foster, From the Ground Up, ch 5

RECOMMENDED:

Guha, Global Environmentalism, ch 7

ADDITIONAL:


**Thurs., 11/10: Transformative politics**

Discussion

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

REQUIRED:
Speth, *Bridge at the End of the World*, preface, introduction, ch's 1-2

ADDITIONAL:


**Thurs., 11/17: Limits of today's environmentalism**
Discussion/ debate

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

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 15

ADDITIONAL:


**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 13 – The Great Transformation**

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

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: Advancing beyond today's capitalism
Discussion/ debate

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

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
Discussion/ debate

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

Final Exam Week
Term papers due