**Course Outline**

**EST 361**

**HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT**

David A. Sonnenfeld, Ph.D., Instructor

TBA, Teaching Assistant

*Dept. of Environmental Studies*

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

*Fall 2013, 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. The course surveys the events, philosophies and historical/cultural processes that marked and continue to drive various competing 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 movements including those that take a more global perspective. Course methods utilized include reading, writing, lectures, videos, discussion and debate. As a semester-long research project, students examine an historical or contemporary American environmental issue, campaign, advocate or organization of their choosing, ultimately employing course concepts, frameworks and understandings in writing a research paper on that topic.

**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; and

- Successfully employ concepts from social movement theory in developing insights about the formation, development and impacts 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 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 research paper (12-15 pp.).

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

Communication
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TEXTS
Required

Recommended

Bookstore
Syracuse University Bookstore, Schine Student Center, tel. 315.443.9900, http://bookstore.syr.edu/
FILMS AND VIDEOS
"Wild by Law: The Rise of Environmentalism and the Creation of the Wilderness Act" (Tues., 9/17)
"Earth Days: Seeds of a Revolution" (Thurs., 9/26 & Thurs., 10/3)
"Rachel Carson's Silent Spring" (Thurs., 10/10)
"Laid to Waste" (Thurs., 10/24)
"Cesar Chavez: Pesticides Kill Farmworkers" (Tues., 10/29)
"In Our Own Back Yard: The First Love Canal" (Thurs., 10/31)
"Gus Speth at the Garrison Institute" (Tues., 11/12)

ASSIGNMENTS
Essay #1, "Early American Environmental Movements" (due Tues., 9/24)
Essay #2, "American Environmentalism: The Second Wave" (due Tues., 10/22)
Essay #3, "The Environmental Justice Movement" (due Tues., 11/12)
Research paper (see below)

SEMESTER-LONG RESEARCH PROJECT
Assignment. A detailed assignment will be handed out at the first class session.
Proposal (T-1). By Tues. Sept. 3, submit a preliminary research topic proposal, in the form of an abstract (1 p., double-spaced, max. 200 words). The project should focus on an historical or contemporary American environmental issue, campaign, advocate or organization.
Abstract, outline and bibliography (T-2). By Tues. Oct. 1, 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.
Deadline (T-3). Due by the beginning of the regularly scheduled Final Exam period for this course.

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., 8/27: 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
- Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch 1

*** Research Paper Proposal (#T-1) (due Tues. 10/3) ***

Thurs., 8/29: 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, ch's 2-4
- Lester & Lester, Writing Research Papers, ch 2

ADDITIONAL:

Week 2 – The Wilderness Idea

Tues., 9/3: Romantic wilderness
- Romantic wilderness
- American Wilderness
- Henry David Thoreau
Discussion/ debate groups (formation)

Research Project Assignment #T-1 due

REQUIRED:
Nash, *Wilderness*, ch's 3-5

RECOMMENDED:
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 6
Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 2

ADDITIONAL:

**Thurs., 9/5: NO CLASS**

**Week 3 – Conservationism & Preservationism**

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


Discussion

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

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

ADDITIONAL:

*** Research Paper Abstract, Outline and Bibliography (#T-2) (due Tues. 10/1) ***

**Thurs., 9/12: 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
Lester & Lester, *Writing Research Papers*, ch's 3, 5, 8, 9, Appendix B

ADDITIONAL:
Week 4 – Toward a Philosophy of Wilderness

**Tues., 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

**RECOMMENDED:**
Merchant, *Problems*, ch 13

**ADDITIONAL:**

*** Essay #1 – Early Environmental Movements (due Tues., 9/24) ***

**Thurs., 9/19: Debate #1**

Debate #1: "Greatest Good or 'Forever Wild'?"

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

**RECOMMENDED:**
Merchant, *Problems*, ch's 14-15

Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 4

**ADDITIONAL:**


PART II: AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALISM: THE SECOND WAVE

Week 5 – Early Urban Reform Movements

**Tues., 9/24: 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., 9/26: 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., 10/1: The professionalization of environmentalism**

Mainstreaming environmentalism

Discussion/ debate groups

Research Project Assignment #T-2 due

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

RECOMMENDED:
Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 6

ADDITIONAL:
Thurs., 10/3: 1960s environmentalism (cont’d)
Film: PBS, "Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution" (2010) – Part II
Discussion

Week 7 – Grassroots Response

Tues., 10/8: Alternative environmental movements
From the grassroots
Research paper assignment
Discussion/ debate groups

REQUIRED:
Gottlieb, Forcing the Spring, ch 5

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

ADDITIONAL:

Thurs., 10/10: 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., 10/15: 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
- Della Porta & Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, ch 8

ADDITIONAL:

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

**Thurs., 10/17: Debate #2**

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., 10/22: 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., 10/24: Environmental racism and inequality
Film: Robert Bahar & George McCollough, "Laid to Waste " (1997), 52 min.
The political economy of environmental racism
Beyond the distributive paradigm
Discussion/ debate groups
REQUIRED:
Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up*, ch's 2-3

ADDITIONAL:

Week 10 – Multiple Dimensions of the Environmental Justice Movement

Tues., 10/29: 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
**ADDITONAL:**


**Thurs., 10/31: 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 – Global environmental justice**

**Tues., 11/5: The Indigenous Environmental Network**

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., 11/12) ***
**Thurs., 11/7: Debate #3**

Debate #3: "Is Environmental Inequality Intentional?"

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

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

**ADDITIONAL:**

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

**Week 12 – Globalization and the Environment**

**Tues., 11/12: 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., 11/14: 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:**
Week 13 – The Great Transformation

Tues., 11/19: Market-based environmental transformations
Lecture
Discussion
REQUIRED:
Speth, Bridge at the End of the World, ch's 4-6
ADDITIONAL:

Thurs., 11/21: Beyond today’s capitalism?
Lecture
Discussion/ debate groups
REQUIRED:
Speth, Bridge at the End of the World, ch's 7-9
RECOMMENDED:
Lester & Lester, Writing Research Papers, ch's 7, 10, 12, 13, 15
ADDITIONAL:

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14 – Seedbeds of Transformation

Tues., 12/3: New consciousness, new politics
Lecture
Discussion
Debate preparation
REQUIRED:
Speth, Bridge at the End of the World (all)
RECOMMENDED:
Della Porta & Diani. Social Movements: An Introduction, ch 9 (review)
ADDITIONAL:


**Thurs., 12/5: Debate #4**

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

**REQUIRED:**

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

**Final Exam Week**

*** Research Papers due ***