

HIST 4350: American Environmental History
 The University of Texas at Tyler
 T/R: 9:30-10:50; HPR 253
 Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Matt Stith
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Office Hours: T/R, 11:00-12:30; Or by appointment.

“DOUBT IS NOT A PLEASANT CONDITION, BUT CERTAINTY IS ABSURD.” ~ VOLTAIRE

Course Description:

This course examines the relationship between people and nature in America from the pre-Columbian era to the present. It explores how the natural and built environment shaped American history with an emphasis on the relationships between environmental, social, and cultural change.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:

The natural environment is connected to every major movement, theme, and personality in American history from the beginning, long before Native-American encounters with Europeans, to the twenty-first century. Throughout this course, we will examine the role nature played in shaping human history in North America and the United States. Instead of focusing on politically charged notions of environmentalism, we will explore how the environment shaped humanity and, to an extent, how humans have shaped nature.

- Students will leave the course with a deeper appreciation for environmental history and how it shaped the course of American history.
- Students will develop a mastery of analytical thinking and communicating through intensive discussion, reading, and writing.

Important Note:

I encourage you to meet with me regularly to discuss or clarify lecture, discussion, or reading—or to talk about American history in general. My job (and satisfaction) is as much to work with students on an individual basis as it is to lecture and facilitate discussion. Please keep this in mind throughout the semester.

Required Reading:

- William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003) [20th Anniversary Edition]
- Lee Alan Dugatkin, *Mr. Jefferson and the Giant Moose* (University of Chicago Press, 2009)
- Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Book Review Essays:

A one-page, single-spaced, typed analytical review is required for the Cronon and Dugatkin books. A two-page, single-spaced review is required for the Worster book. A passing review will include: 1) the author's argument/purpose, 2) a *brief* summary of the central theme, and 3) whether or not the author succeeds in proving their argument. Each review is worth 50 points, for a total of 150 points.

Exams:

There will be two exams, including the final, worth 100 points each. We will have a brief study session during the class before each exam. The final is *not* comprehensive. The exams will consist of two essay questions worth equal amounts. Typically, one essay will cover class lecture and discussion and the other will focus almost entirely on assigned reading.

Research Paper:

Students will write an 8-10 page research paper on some aspect of American Environmental History (1492-1970s). The paper *must* be based on primary source material and be of outstanding quality. It is worth 100 points. Detailed instructions will be distributed early in the semester. The paper will count as your “Final” and is due during final's week.

Research Presentation:

Students will deliver a 10-minute presentation on their research during the last few weeks of class. It is worth 50 points.

Attendance and Participation:

This is an upper-level university course. Attendance and participation are mandatory.

Important Dates:

Thur., Sept. 22: Cronon Review Due
 Thur., Oc. 13: Dugatkin Review Due
 Thur., Oct. 20: Exam I
 Thur., Nov. 17: Worster Review Due
 Thur., Dec. 8: Exam II
 Thur., Dec. 15: Research Paper Due (Final)

Point Breakdown:

Book Reviews (50 x 3):	150 pts
Exam I:	100 pts
Exam II:	100 pts
Research Presentation:	50 pts
<u>Research Paper (Final):</u>	<u>100 pts</u>
Total:	500 pts

Classroom Conduct:

Be nice and practice decorum.

Make-up Policy:

If you miss an exam due to an **emergency**, talk with me as soon as you return to arrange a make-up. Ten percentage points per day will be deducted from any assignment turned in late.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating of any kind, including plagiarism, will result in immediate failure of the class and possibly further sanctions from the University of Texas at Tyler. Plagiarism, put simply, is using another's work as your own without proper citation or usage. This includes everything from copying and pasting from the Internet to failing to cite an idea from another source that you put in your own words. I strongly recommend reviewing the university policy for cheating and academic dishonesty at the following website: <http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/>

Lecture Schedule (Subject to Change)

NOTE: I will also distribute an outline for every major topic we cover. Our pace will be dictated by classroom discussion.

- Defining Environmental History
- A Truly New World: Pre-Columbian America and European Contact
- Reflections from a Woodlot: Environment and Colonial America
- An Environmental History of the American Revolution
- A World of Commodities: Industrialization and the Market Revolution in America
- King Climate in Dixie: Environment, Slavery, and the Foundations for Civil War
- The Great Food Fight": Nature, Agriculture, and the Civil War
- Nature, Race, and Guerrilla Warfare on the Trans-Mississippi Border
- Extracting the New South
- The Unforgiving West
- Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and the Birth of Modern Conservation
- The Dust Bowl: An Environmental History
- The Rise of Modern Environmentalism

University-Wide Syllabus Policies

The following University policies must appear on each course syllabus or be provided as an informational sheet (web-links to these policies may be used in the print or electronic syllabus)

<http://www.uttyler.edu/academicaffairs/syllabuspolicies.pdf>

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at

<http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible a disability diagnosis such as a chronic disease, learning disorder, head injury or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with an Accessibility Case Manager. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR webpage (<http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices/>) or the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to saroffice@uttyler.edu.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.