

## Environmental History

"Major Themes in Environmental History"  
3 ECTS

Instructor: Marco Armiero, Marie Curie Researcher ICTA  
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### About this course

Environmental History is the study of the ways in which society and nature interact, co-evolving through time. The Environmental History approach is based on a double assumption: on the one side, humans are not the only agency in history, because other forces and living organisms (other species, viruses and bacteria, minerals, gases etc.) act as agents of change, influencing human history as well. On the other side, society and culture deeply influence the ways in which nature 'works'.

This course will provide an introduction to the discipline as a contribution to overcome the divide between social and natural sciences.

### Lectures and seminars

The course will be held at the ICTA lecture room, in 6 sessions of 3 hours with a break. It combines formal lectures with seminar discussions. Every session includes selected readings and some questions for debate. Students will prepare short presentations (10 minutes) of specific articles and longer presentation (20 minutes) of their own research projects which will be followed by short questions. After the break, a general discussion will lead to a synthesis of the session.

### Other activities

The screening of movies related to the topics of the course  
Reading and discussion of a novel linked to the topics

## 1. Lesson 01/2/2012

### 15:00-18:00

Introduction: What is environmental history? Scopes, sources, methods

When was environmental history born? Which are its historiographic and cultural roots? What is its subject and methodology?

1) D. Worster, Doing environmental history, 289-307

2) James O'Connor, What is environmental history

[lesson1.ppt \(3,6 MB\)](#)

## 2. Lesson 07-2-2012

### 15:00-18:00

Economic history and the environment

S. Barca, Energy, property, and industrial revolution

Donald Worster, Dust Bowl, a selected chapter

[lesson2.ppt \(1,3 MB\)](#)

## 3. Lesson 08-02-2012

### 11:00-13:00

Political history and the environment

Empire, Warfare and Totalitarianism

Alfred Crosby, Ecological Imperialism

John R. McNeill, Mosquitoes Empire, 1-11; 193-219

All the episodes of Gun, germs and steel are at [http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=gun+germs+and+steel&aq=0](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=gun+germs+and+steel&aq=0)

[lesson3.ppt \(1,5 MB\)](#)

#### **4. Lesson 14-02-2012**

**15:00-18:00**

Social history and the environment

Social struggles and environmental conflicts

Karl Jacoby, Crimes against nature, chapter Working class environmentalism (48-76)

Andrew Hurley, Environmental inequalities, chapter Class, Race and the shaping of an urban landscape (1-14)

[lesson4.ppt \(1,5 MB\)](#)

#### **5. Lesson 16/02/2012**

**15:00-18:00**

##### **Presentations of research projects 25-11-10 ()**

15 minutes oral presentations of draft essays

General discussion:

1. How might we use environmental history in different scientific fields?
2. Can environmental history be useful in the making environmental policies and activism?

Assessment

Essay (3000 words) of 2 selected papers or one book contribute 60% to final mark.

Students' research project (1500-2000 words): each student will write a proposal for a research project, following the frame provided by the instructor. It is strongly recommended to discuss the topic with the instructor. It will contribute 30% to final mark

Active participation (questions, comments, punctuality, etc.) during the class will contribute to the remaining 10% of the final mark

Code of honor: Copy and paste from internet is totally forbidden. You always must provide full details of the web pages used, if any. You cannot use essays already written for other courses or purposes. Use footnotes.