

Undergraduate Course

WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY AK1204, 7.5 CREDITS

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Course Description

The course offers a bird's eye view on global ecological changes in the last three centuries. Environmental History is the study of the ways in which society and nature interact, co-evolving through time. Since its beginning, this area of studies has aspired to contribute to the development of contemporary environmental policies, addressing topics ranging from forestry and conservation to urban pollution and waste, from epidemics to climate change, from water use to environmental justice. Environmental change is seen as the result of the interaction between historical – thus cultural, political, economic and social – and natural forces. The Environmental History approach is based on a double assumption: on one hand, humans are not the only actors in history because other forces and living organisms (other species, viruses and bacteria, minerals, gases etc.) also act as agents of change to influence human history. On the other, society and culture deeply influence the ways in which nature 'works'. World Environmental History frames the above topics within the context of global processes of material and cultural interchange.

Class format

Classes will be organized as a combination of teaching by the instructors, discussion of assigned readings, and use of audio-video resources.

All students are expected to have read the materials in advance and prepare short commentaries. We will discuss the readings at the beginning of the class.

The course will be accompanied by the screening of a selection of science-fiction movies on the topic "Fears! Facing the future". Attendance at this activity is NOT mandatory. Schedule and locations will be communicated at the beginning of the course. See the program at the end of the syllabus.

Academic Objectives

1. To acquire a basic knowledge about environmental history
2. To develop a critical ability to place contemporary environmental issues in a historical context
3. To critically read and analyze academic texts and primary sources
4. To design a research proposal connecting research questions, sources, and methodologies
5. To make a public presentation of a scientific paper

Plagiarism

As with all classes KTH policy on plagiarism applies. See <http://www.kth.se/en/student/studentliv/studentratt/fusk-och-plagiering-1.323885>.

Topics and readings

25/3 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY – SCOPE, SOURCES, METHODS

Location: V34

Instructor: Armiero

Readings:

D. Worster, “Doing Environmental History,” in *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*, ed. Worster, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988

S. Sörlin and P. Warde, “Making the Environment Historical – An Introduction”, in *Nature’s End. History and the Environment*, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009

28/3 – 10:00-12:00

Location: V12

Instructor: Kati Lindström

Topic and readings to be defined

1/04 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: ECOLOGICAL IMPERIALISM

Location: V11

Instructor: Gunnel Cederlöf

Readings (To be updated):

A. Crosby, 1-40 (Ch. 1 and 2), 217-68 (Ch. 10) on New Zealand as a case, 269-308 (Ch. 11 and 12) in *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986

J. Diamond, Preface, Prologue, Chaps. 1-6, 11-15 in *Guns, Germs, and Steel: A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13,000 Years*, London: Vintage Books, 1997

J. Diamond, “Peeling the Chinese Onion”, *Nature* 391, 433-434 (29 January 1998) (Short summary of his book)

H. Goodall, “Indigenous Peoples, Colonialism, and memories of Environmental Injustice” (73-96) in *Echoes from the Poisoned Well: Global Memories of Environmental Injustice*, eds Washington, Rosier and Goodall, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006

4/4 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: IMPERIAL SPACES, BORDERS, AND MAPS

Location: V12

Instructor: Cederlöf

Readings:

M. H. Edney, 1-118 in *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843*, New Dehli: OUP, 1999

8/04 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: THE WATERSHED OF MODERNITY

Location: V01

Instructor: Cederlöf

Readings:

R. Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, New Dehli: OUP, 1989

One of these by R. Hölzl:

“Forests in Conflict. Rural populations and the Advent of Modern Forestry in Pre-industrial Germany (1760-1860)” (198-223) in *Common Ground: Integrating the Social and Environmental in History*, eds Massard-Guilbaud and Mosley, Cambridge 2011

“Historicizing Sustainability. German scientific forestry in the 18th and 19th centuries” in *Science as Culture* 19(2010): 4, 431-460

“Contested Forests - Environmental Crimes between Science and Rural Society: Bavaria 1780-1860” (249-257) in *Elements - Continents. Approaches to Determinants of Environmental History and their Reifications*, eds Herrmann and Dahlke (Nova Acta Leopoldina 98/360), Stuttgart 2009

11/4 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: TROPICAL NATURES, THE WILD AND CONSERVATION

Location: V12

Instructor: Cederlöf

Readings:

D. Arnold, 1-146 and 225-232 in *The Tropics and the Traveling Gaze: India, Landscape, and Science 1800-1856*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005

J. Carruthers, “Conservation and Wildlife Management in South African National Parks 1930s-1960s”, *Journal of the History of Biology*, 41(2008): 2, 203-236

M. Rangarajan, “Animals with Rich Histories: The Case of the Lions of Gir Forest, Gujarat, India”, *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 52(2013), 109-127

22/04 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: URBANIZATION

Location: V22

Instructor: Armiero

Reading:

S. Mosley, Chapter 5 (Cities and the Environment) in *The Environment in World History*, Milton Park: Routledge, 2010

C. Merchant, Chapter 6 in *The Columbia guide to American Environmental History*, New York: Columbia University press, 2002

Other resources:

Lewis Mumford on cities http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5b_59mls4M

25/04 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: POLLUTION

Location: V22

Instructor: Susanna Lidström

Readings:

P. Thorsheim, chapter 1 and 2 in *Inventing Pollution. Coal, Smoke, and Culture in Britain since 1800*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006

S. Zavestoski, “The Struggle for Justice in Bhopal: A New/Old Breed of Transnational Social Movement” in *A History of Environmentalism. Local Struggles, Global Histories*, eds Armiero and Sedrez, London: Continuum Books, forthcoming

R. Carson, “Fable for Tomorrow” (chapter 1) in *Silent Spring*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962

29/04 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: TOTALITARIAN REGIMES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Location: V11

Instructor: Armiero

Readings:

M. Armiero, chapter 4 in *A Rugged Nation*, Cambridge: White Horse Press, 2011

F. Uekoetter, chapter 1 in *The Green and the Brown. A History of Conservation in Nazi Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006

W. Douglas, 149-193 in *Models of Nature Ecology, Conservation, and Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000

J. Shapiro, chapter 2 in *Mao's War Against Nature. Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001

06/05 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: WAR AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Location: V11

Instructor: Armiero

Readings:

The following chapters from *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally: Toward an Environmental History of Warfare*, eds Tucker and Russell, Oregon State University Press, 2004:

R. Tucker, "The Impact of Warfare on the Natural World: A Historical Survey"; W. M. Tsutsui, "Landscapes in the Dark Valley: Toward an Environmental History of Wartime Japan"; J. A. Bennett, "Pests and Disease in the Pacific War: Crossing the Line"

M. Armiero, chapter 3 in *A Rugged Nation*, Cambridge: White Horse Press, 2011

09/05 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: ENVIRONMENTALISM

Location: V12

Instructor: Armiero

Readings:

K. Thomas, chapter 4 in *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1983

M. Armiero and L. Sedrez, "Introduction" in *A History of Environmentalism. Local Struggles, Global Histories*, London: Continuum Books, forthcoming

13/05 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Location: V01

Instructor: Armiero

Readings:

R. Bullard, "Toxic wastes and race at twenty: why race still matters after all of these years" *Environmental Law* 38 (2008), 371-411

Jason Corburn, *Street Science. Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005), chapter 7

16/05 – 10:00-12:00

TOPIC: CONTROLLING PEOPLE THROUGH CONTROLLING NATURE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Location: V12

Instructor: Peder Roberts

Readings:

W. Beinart and L. Hughes, "Resistance to Colonial Conservation and Resource Management" (269-288) and "Reasserting Indigenous Rights and Environmental Knowledge" (329-350) in *Environment and Empire*, eds Beinart and Hughes, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007

P. Roberts, "Imperial Science in the Antarctic" (31-52) in *The European Antarctic: Science and Strategy in Scandinavia and the British Empire*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011

20/05 – 10:00-12:00

STUDENTS' PRESENTATIONS

Location: V22

27/05 – 10:00-12:00

STUDENTS' PRESENTATIONS

Location: V12

Fears! Facing the Future

1. Hybridity

Blade Runner <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0083658/>

2. Annihilation

The Day After <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0085404/>

3. Climate Change

The Day After Tomorrow <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0319262/>

4. Health

Code 6 <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0345061/>