

Latin American Environmental History

History 600 / Environmental Studies 600

Professor Elizabeth Hennesy

Fall 2014

Van Hise 144

3:30 – 5:25 Tuesdays

Office: 5110 Humanities

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and by appointment as necessary

*I am not in this office every day, so I recommend emailing me rather than leaving a voicemail message.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Latin America is home to some of the world's most famous landscapes—from Amazonian forests considered the “lungs of the earth” to soaring Andean peaks where melting glaciers have become a deadly effect of climate change. From silver ore laboriously dug from colonial-era mines to vast plantations of sugar cane and bananas, Latin American natural resources have played a central role in the development of economies and societies in the region and around the world. This course will survey changing human relationships with the natural world in the region we now call Latin America from the pre-Columbian period; through colonization and the colonial era; through the independence struggles of the nineteenth century; to contested visions of nationalism, economic development, and appropriate use of natural resources in the twentieth century; on down to the environmental questions that the region faces today. We will examine both how different peoples have understood, lived with, used, and transformed the environment as well as how the natural world has shaped human histories.

We will draw on readings from multiple disciplinary perspectives (including history, anthropology and geography) to analyze processes of imperialism, capitalist development, and the degradation of natural resources. We will ask how these processes relate to the production of scientific knowledge, global environmentalism, and issues of social justice. In the second half of the course students will develop a research paper on a case study of their choice. Previous experience in or course work about the region would be helpful, but is not required.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through this course, students will

- Become familiar with key texts and arguments in Latin American Environmental History
 - Learn to critically engage and analyze history books
 - Develop skills for conducting historical research and writing
 - Collaborate to define and address an interdisciplinary research problem
 - Analyze a research problem from diverse perspectives, integrating multiple sources and ways of thinking
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CAPSTONE REQUIREMENTS

Latin American Natural Commodity Project

This course fulfills capstone requirements for both History and Environmental Studies majors. To meet these requirements, we will undertake an original, interdisciplinary research and writing project. The project aims to help you build historiographical skills as well as skills for conducting interdisciplinary work. It is designed to teach you how to define an interdisciplinary research question or set of questions, identify appropriate methods and sources to answer the question(s), and analyze and synthesize the research results these methods uncover. This will be a collaborative process that also requires the completion of an individual research paper. Nelson Institute capstones also include a service-learning component designed to involve you in the greater Madison community. We will use this as the jumping-off point for our research project, beginning from a basic set of questions: Is there Latin American nature in Madison / south central Wisconsin? What kind? Where? How, and when, did it get here and why?

In class, we will first brainstorm answers to these questions, then choose specific Latin American natures to investigate further as a team. For this assignment, the class will either work in one or two teams to complete a commodity chain research project. This will involve selecting a commodity, collaborating on defining research questions, researching and identifying primary and secondary sources, and analyzing and integrating research results. Each student will identify an individual research question within the group's framework and will be required to submit an individual research paper on his/her topic. [More details on this to follow.]

The projects will culminate in a group research presentation [10-15 minutes total] as part of the Nelson Institute's Capstone Showcase held during our final exam time.

*Note about the dual course listing: Everyone enrolled in the course will fulfill the same course requirements and be graded on the same scale. There are not distinct requirements or rubrics for History versus Environmental Studies majors. [The exception to this rule is anyone enrolled with graduate standing; we will individually work out an appropriate research project that fits the scope of the course.] That said, we will work to play to our strengths. I understand that you will each be coming to the class with different research interests, familiarity with historical research, and knowledge of the region. This is an asset to the class and a necessity for thinking interdisciplinarily!

COURSE POLICIES

Assignments

There will be two major categories of assignments in this course: reading assignments and writing assignments.

Reading Assignments

- Five 1-page (typed, single spaced, approx. 500 words) reading responses that critically analyze (not summarize) one or more of the week's readings. You must turn in 5 during course of semester, posted to Learn@UW by 10PM on the

Monday night preceding class. Between 10PM and class time, you must read your classmates' responses for the week.

- Class discussion leaders – Teams of two students will lead class discussion once each during the semester. (If there are 12 total students, this will be a total of 6 classes.) This involves (1) meeting with me during office hours THE WEEK BEFORE YOU PRESENT to discuss readings, reading questions, and your ideas for leading discussion; (2) circulating reading questions to guide the class by the previous FRIDAY by 6PM; (3) organizing and leading in-class time to discuss the readings and their significance; (4) a short self and partner evaluation. Days on the syllabus with asterisks * are potential days to sign up to lead.

Writing Assignments

- Attend Introduction to Historical Research session @ Memorial Library
- Initial research report [due Sept 30] outlining your working research question and a one-paragraph explanation/justification of how it fits into the larger group project and listing 10 potential sources, in formal bibliographic style.
- Annotated bibliography [due Oct 14] with 10 sources and a paragraph about each explaining its relevance / key arguments.
- **Detailed** Outline [due Nov 4] should be 4-5 pages in length and include your working thesis statement, an updated justification of how your topic fits the larger project, and notes on relevant literature, your key sources, and preliminary conclusions.
- Draft paper [due Nov 25] of 20-25 pages, should include an updated bibliography [no longer needs to be annotated]
- 1-page of constructive criticism for your writing partner [approx. 500 words. Due Dec 2]
- Final paper [due at beginning of exam period, Dec 17] of 20-25 pages. Polished.
- Final presentation [exam period, Dec 17] to be organized and presented jointly to Nelson Capstone Showcase [10 minutes plus 5 for audience questions]

Grading

Participation	10%
Reading responses (5)	10%
Lead class discussion	10%
Initial research report	5%
Annotated bibliography	10%
Outline with working thesis	10%
Draft paper	15%
Constructive criticism	5%
Final paper	20%
Final presentation	5%

Rubric

A 93-100	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62
B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F <59

During the semester I will circulate a detailed holistic rubric outlining how I will grade writing. All assignments are due at the beginning of class in hard copy unless otherwise instructed. I will not accept emailed assignments. Late assignments will be marked down one percentage point per day late. (I.e., after class time on Tuesdays = 1 day late; Wednesdays = 2 days late, etc.)

Respect for Diversity

I am committed to making the classroom an open and safe space for everyone involved. Doing so will require you to respect each other's differences.

I will make every effort to accommodate any physical, learning or other disabilities. Please come see me after class or during my office hours to discuss any issues.

Technology

You are all adults and I will treat you as such and expect you to be responsible for your own conduct in class. You may use your laptops to take notes, but you may not shop, watch videos, play games, use social media, or IM during class. I will not permit you to use cell phones in class in any way. If you do, I will take your phone for the remainder of the class period.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism amounts to turning in work or participating in class activities based on work that is not your own. It is a serious offense and grounds for failing an assignment (or worse) in my classroom. You must give attribution in your written work both when you directly quote someone else's words and when you use their ideas. For more information, consult Marius and Page, pages 23-28 and the UW-Madison Writing Center:

<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>

COURSE READINGS

Required Books

Ashley Carse, *Beyond the Big Ditch*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014. [On Amazon, to be published Oct. 17]

Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Richard Marius and Melvin Page. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*. 8th ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2011.

Sidney Mintz. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985.

John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption & Environmental Change in Honduras & the United States*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.

Suggested Background Readings

If you are new to Latin American History, I recommend:

John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. New York: Norton, 2001.

Available cheaply used:

<http://www.amazon.com/Born-Blood-Fire-Concise-History/dp/0393976130>

If you are new to Environmental History, I recommend:

William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,"
Environmental History 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-28.
http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Trouble_with_Wilderness_Main.html

Supplemental Advice

Rick López, "How to Get to Know a History Book" [Learn@UW]

William Cronon, Learning to Do Historical Research <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/>
 History Department Value of the Major [Learn@UW]

COURSE PLAN

Readings and assignments listed here are subject to change. Changes will be discussed in class and updated on Learn@UW. It is your responsibility to keep up with changes and regularly consult the class web space.

September 2 – Introduction

Readings:

BEFORE CLASS:

Charles C. Mann. "1491" *The Atlantic*, March 1, 2002.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/302445/>

Assignments Due:

- Read Mann article before class
- In class, sign up for 1 day to lead class discussion (with a partner)
- Register to attend Introduction to Historical Research seminar at Memorial Library with Lisa Saywell
 - <http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/introhist>
 - All sessions are held in Memorial Library Room 231 from 6:00-7:30pm and registration is required.
 - Tues. Sept. 16th - registration link: <http://go.wisc.edu/i66t09>
 - Thur. Sept. 18th - registration link: <http://go.wisc.edu/hr2w29>
 - Wed. Sept. 24th - registration link: <http://go.wisc.edu/d5x49h>

September 9 – What is Latin American Environmental History?

Readings:

Warren Dean, "The Tasks of Latin American Environmental History." In *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today's Challenges in Central & South America*. Eds. Harold K. Steen, and Richard P. Tucker. Durham, North Carolina: Forest History Society, 1992. 5-15.

Guillermo Castro Herrera. "Environmental History (Made in) Latin America" H-Net Global Historiography Series. 2001.

<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-environment&month=0104&week=c&msg=O%2Bbr00Gm/BnllU%2B0TX/jYg&user=&pw=>

Christian Brannstrom and Stefania Gallini. "An Introduction to Latin American Environmental History," in *Territories, Commodities, and Knowledges: Latin*

American Environmental Histories in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. C. Brannstrom, ed. London: Institute for Study of the Americas, 2004. pp. 1-20.

Carlos Marichal, Steven Topik, and Zephyr Frank, "Commodity Chains in Theory and in Latin American History" in *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500-2000*. Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr Frank, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006, pp.1-24.

Assignments Due:

- Brainstorming re: What LA nature can we find in Madison? Come to class with ideas for a group capstone topic. We will choose a topic and outline each person's potential part during class.

September 16 – Conquest & The Columbian Exchange

Readings:

Doreen Massey, "Setting the Scene" in *For Space*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2005, pp. 1-4; 7
Barbara Mundy, "Indigenous Civilization" in *Mapping Latin America*, Jordana Dym and Karl Offen, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, pp. 42-45.

Alfred Crosby. *The Columbian Exchange: The Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003 [1972]. Chapters 2: Conquistador y Pestilencia and 3: Old World Plants & Animals in the New World, pp. 35-121.

Judith Carney. "'With Grains in Her Hair': Rice in Colonial Brazil," *Slavery and Abolition*. Vol. 25, No. 1, April 2004, pp.1-27.

IN CLASS: *First Contact* documentary [selection] <http://www.der.org/films/first-contact.html>

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday [Sept 15] by 10PM

September 23 – The History of a Forest

*****MEET IN MEMORIAL LIBRARY ROOM 231*****

Readings:

Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Selections: Introduction: The Forest Evolves, pp. 1-19; Chapter 5: Gold and Diamonds, Ants and Cattle, pp. 91-116; Chapter 8: Coffee Dispossess the Forest, pp. 168-190; Chapter 12: The Development Imperative, pp. 265-291; Chapter 15: The Value of Bare Ground, pp. 348-364.

IN CLASS: Library Research Session on Latin American Sources with Paloma Celis

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday [Sept 22] by 10PM
- Meet with me this week if you are leading discussion next week

***September 30 – Colonialism: Mining, Labor, Disease**

Readings:

Nicholas Robins, *Mercury, Mining and Empire: The Human and Ecological Cost of Colonial Silver Mining in the Andes*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. 195 pp.

READ THOROUGHLY: Introduction, Conclusion, Chapters 3 & 4. SKIM: Chapters 1, 2 & 5.

Marius and Page, “Identifying Key Sources,” pp. 69-84

Assignments Due:

- Initial research report. Bring hard copy to class and be prepared to discuss.
- Reading responses due Monday [Sept 29] by 10PM
- Meet with me this week if you are leading discussion next week

***October 7 – Colonialism: Sugar, Slavery, Capitalism**

Readings:

Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985. [Chapters 2 (Production), 3 (Consumption), 4 (Power).]

Marius and Page on Taking Notes, pp. 88-99

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday [Oct 6] by 10PM
- Meet with me this week if you are leading discussion next week

***October 14 – Natural History**

Readings:

Nancy Stepan, “Introduction” and “Chapter I: Going to the Tropics” in *Picturing Tropical Nature*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001, pp. 11-26; 31-56.

Mary Louise Pratt, “Introduction” and “Chapter 6: Alexander von Humboldt and the reinvention of América” in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, 2008 [1992]. pp. 1-12; 109-140.

Alexander von Humboldt. *Personal Narrative*. Selection TBD.

Karl Zimmerer, “Mapping Mountains” in *Mapping Latin America: A Cartographic Reader*. Jordana Dym and Karl Offen, eds. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011, pp. 125-130.

Assignments Due:

- Annotated bibliography due [more details to be discussed in class]
- Reading responses due Monday [Oct 13] by 10PM
- Meet with me this week if you are leading discussion next week

***October 21 – Science, Nature, Nation**

Readings:

Stuart McCook, *States of Nature: Science, Agriculture and Environment in the Spanish Caribbean, 1760-1940*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002, pp. 1-76.

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday [Oct 20] by 10PM
- Meet with me this week if you are leading discussion next week

***October 28 – The “Second Conquest”: Export Booms**

Readings:

- Gregory Cushman, “The Guano Age” in *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 19, 23-74.
- Paul Gootenberg, “Cocaine in Chains: The Rise and Demise of a Global Commodity, 1860-1950” in *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500-2000*. Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr Frank, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 321-351.
- Zephyr Frank and Aldo Musacchio, “Brazil in the International Rubber Trade, 1870-1930” in *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500-2000*. Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal, and Zephyr Frank, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 271-299.
- Marius and Page on Organizing, pp. 100-105

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday [Oct 27] by 10PM
- Meet with me this week if you are leading discussion next week

***November 4 – Going Bananas**

Readings:

- John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption & Environmental Change in Honduras & the United States*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.
[Selections TBD.]

Assignments Due:

- Detailed outline due [more details to be discussed in class]
- Reading responses due Monday [Nov 3] by 10PM
- Meet with me this week if you are leading discussion next week

***November 11 – Modernization, Global Trade, Environmentalism**

Readings:

- Ashley Carse, *Beyond the Big Ditch*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014. [Selections TBD]

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday [Nov 10] by 10PM
- Meet with me this week if you are leading discussion next week

***November 18 – Conservation Technopolitics**

Readings:

Gregory Cushman, "Conservation and the Technocratic Ideal" in *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 136-167.

Thomas Miller Klubock, "The Politics of Forests and Forestry on Chile's Southern Frontier, 1880s – 1940s" in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 2006, Vol. 86, No. 3, pp. 535-570.

Mark Carey, "The History of Ice: How Glaciers became an Endangered Species" in *Environmental History* 12, July 2007, pp. 497-527.

Marius and Page, "Writing and Revising Drafts" pp. 105-113

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday [Nov 17] by 10PM
- Write!

November 25 [Thanksgiving Week]

Readings: None.

Assignments Due:

- No class meeting! But,
- **First Draft due by end of class, 5:30PM, posted to Learn@UW**
- By next class, partners should thoroughly read each others' papers and type up one page of constructive criticism [single spaced]

December 2 – Revising

Readings: None.

Assignments Due:

- 1-page of constructive criticism reflecting on your partner's draft
- Schedule a time to see me if necessary

December 9 – Revising and Integrating

Readings: None.

Assignments Due:

- Each person will give an informal 5-minute presentation of their research and revision progress
- Come to class prepared to think holistically about how our research segments fit together to tell a broader story
- Schedule a time to see me if necessary
- Organize showcase presentation plan

EXAM: December 17, 10:05 AM – 12:05 PM

Assignments Due:

- Nelson Institute Capstone Showcase [15 minute group presentation of capstone project] EVERYONE'S ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.
- Final revised papers due to me in HARD COPY ONLY at beginning of exam period.