Course Title: American Environmental History

Catalog Description: Analysis of America’s environmental history from the colonial period to the present. This course traces the connections between human society and its surroundings in the various bioregions of North America. In particular, it focuses upon how ideas, attitudes, institutions, and technologies impacted the American experience with nature. Significant attention will be given to indigenous ecology, agricultural extension, resource conservation, and green politics. Cross-listed as ENVS 352. Prerequisite: Junior standing or instructor's permission. Offered even Spring.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Junior standing or instructor's permission.

Text(s): The required text must be assigned and supplemented with a minimum of two recommended texts. Additional primary and secondary sources may be assigned as well.

Most current editions of the following:

Required:


Recommended:


Donald Worster. *Nature’s Economy: A History of Ecological*
Course Objectives:

- To recognize the main currents of U.S. history in regard to environmental issues.
- To explore the interrelationships between the ecological imagination and natural resources in the U.S.
- To compare and contrast various historiographical perspectives on the American environment.

Measurable Learning Outcomes

- Describe the significant people, places, and events of American environmental history.
- Analyze definitive factors that shaped American Indian concepts of nature and its value.
- Explain the Columbia exchange between the Americas and Europe and its ecological legacies.
- Differentiate the major crops, techniques, and impacts of antebellum agriculture in the North and the South.
- Describe the transformation of the environment after the Industrial Revolution in the U.S.
- Study the works of art, literature, and philosophy indicative of environmental ethics during the nineteenth century.
- Analyze the factors contributing to progressive policies of conservation, preservation, and land management.
- Describe the influence of green political movements on environmental regulation and justice in modern times.
- Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and trends in the historiography of American environmentalism.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

Because the course represents an upper level history elective, it bears a distinctive responsibility for teaching advanced knowledge within the discipline. It must be distinguished as an advanced course by three structural components: extensive reading, intensive writing, and historiographical thinking. It must require advanced students to complete both in class and out of class projects (i.e., midterms, finals, team reports, quizzes, research papers). It must demand a minimum of 1000 pages of required text reading, 1000 words of type-written work, and a consideration of the range and variance of historical scholarship. Finally, it must develop student skills and abilities for researching diverse sources of knowledge and organizing findings through synthesis.

- The Ecological Imagination
- Native Environmentalism
• Proliferation of Fur Trading
• New England Fields and Forests
• The Tobacco South
• King Cotton and Soil Exhaustion
• Energizing the Industrial Revolution
• Transcendentalism and the Romantic Landscape
• Conquering the Prairies and Grasslands
• Extermination of Wildlife
• Preservation and Conservation
• The National Parks
• A Hydraulic Civilization
• Metropolitan Waste and Sprawl
• The Greening of America
• Environmental Protection

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 35

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by: Brad Lookingbill

Name ________________________________ Signature ________________________________

Date: May 10, 2005 ________________________________

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.