

History 332: Environmental History Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Keith Pluymers

MW 12:35-1:50PM, SCH 244

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Office: Schroeder 318 (All office hours will be done via Zoom)

Office Hours: MW 8:45-9:30 AM and 11:45AM-12:30 PM. Also, by appointment.

Course Description: HIS 332 will explore the methods and questions involved in doing environmental history—the study of the interactions between people, non-human animals, and the material world in historical context. In this class, we will be doing a series of topical case studies from multiple places and time periods. Students will complete two short essays and presentations on a primary and secondary source related to one of these case studies. Students will also write a longer paper on an environmental history topic of their choosing. Topics will include conservation and sustainability, animal studies, environmental movements, climate change, histories of environmental science, and many more.

Course Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify key themes in environmental history and analyze them through case studies from different places/times.
- Students will be able to compare how different societies understood and addressed environmental issues.
- Students will be able to analyze primary and secondary sources.
- Students will be able to explain how other-than-human forces have shaped human history and how human beings have altered the other-than-human world.
- Students will be able to identify and compare different historical interpretations and to evaluate them against primary and secondary sources.

Required Texts:

PDFs via ReggieNet

Requirements:

Short Reflection (15% of total grade): Students will complete one 500 – 750 word (2-3 page) reflection based on the activities in Unit 1 (Weeks 1-7). This will be due by Week 8 of the semester but students are *strongly urged* to complete the assignment within 1 week of completing the activity.

Primary/Secondary Source Analysis (15 % of total grade): Students will select 1 primary or secondary source relevant to any week's discussion topic or their project. They will be responsible for presenting the source to the class via a short Flipgrid video (3-5 minutes) or in-class presentation and writing a 500 – 750 word analysis of their secondary source. What does it say? Why is it significant? How can it help us to understand or build on a topic we're covering

in the course? Students are responsible for choosing their own sources but should clear source selections with me.

One of the following three major assignments (60% of grade):

Traditional Research Paper

1. Prospectus (10% of assignment grade)
2. Annotated bibliography or outline (10% of assignment grade)
3. Rough draft (20% of assignment grade)
4. Final draft (40% of assignment grade)
5. Reflection/Self-Assessment (20% of assignment grade)

Unit Plan

1. Prospectus (10% of assignment grade)
2. Annotated bibliography or outline (10% of assignment grade)
3. Rough draft (20% of assignment grade)
4. Final draft (40% of assignment grade)
5. Reflection/Self-Assessment (20% of assignment grade)

Online Exhibition

1. Prospectus (10% of assignment grade)
2. Annotated bibliography or outline (10% of assignment grade)
3. Rough draft (20% of assignment grade)
4. Final draft (40% of assignment grade)
5. Reflection/Self-Assessment (20% of assignment grade)

Course Policies:

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

As stated in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#), you are responsible for attending class and completing all academic work. If a situation arises that leaves you unable to attend class or complete an assignment on-time **contact me in advance** of due dates. I am happy to work with you, but only if we discuss **prior to the deadline**. Serious circumstances such as [extended illness](#) (3 or more consecutive class days) or a [bereavement](#) are exceptions to the prior-notice rule. In these cases, the [Dean of Students Office](#) can help. It's located in Room 387, Student Services Building. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed or are struggling with personal issues, do not hesitate to call or visit [Student Counseling Services](#) (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential. SCS is located at 320 Student Services Building, 309-438-3655.

Participation in class discussions is essential to creating collaborative learning, a goal for this course. ISU remains committed to creating and maintaining a working, learning and living environment that is welcoming, supportive, respectful, inclusive, diverse and free from discrimination and harassment. Upholding that commitment is essential to collaboration. In this

course, students are expected to engage respectfully with each other, to practice active listening, and to consider how their words might affect their classmates before speaking. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Illinois State University's [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Writing is a key component of this course and proper citation is essential to academic writing. Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#). All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment without the possibility of a make-up. In certain circumstances, I may be required to refer violations to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#).

Technology:

Students must obtain written permission from the instructor if they wish either to photograph classroom lectures or discussions or to record them using audio or video devices. This restriction includes visual materials that accompany the lecture/discussion, such as lecture slides, whiteboard notes/equations, etc. Such recordings are to be used solely for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the class. They may not be reproduced, shared in any way (including electronically or posting in any web environment) with those not in the class. Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact Student Access and Accommodation Services to register, request and be approved for an accommodation. Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University's Code of Student Conduct.

Use of devices (laptops, tablets, and yes, even cell phones) is permitted to consult course materials, take written or typed notes, and complete course assignments. Students are expected to use these devices in a manner that respects me and their classmates and does not cause distractions. Devices should be silenced at all times unless a course activity explicitly requires the use of sound. Failure to respectfully use technology may result in revocation of use permission.

Covid-19 Information and Modifications:

Students are expected to follow all university guidelines and directives for classroom conduct, including but not limited to [wearing face coverings](#) and social distancing. Information and current guidelines can be found at <https://coronavirus.illinoisstate.edu>.

Students should not attend class or come to campus if they are experiencing **any** symptoms associated with Covid-19 or if they are deemed a close contact of someone who has tested positive. Students must follow university protocols for testing, quarantine, and isolation if they experience any symptoms. For more on these protocols, see communications from President Dietz and other official ISU sources at <https://coronavirus.illinoisstate.edu>.

I understand that this absence policy has the potential to be significantly disruptive, so, in turn, I commit to provide students with the following to ensure that complying with these rules is as easy as possible:

- As stated above, deadlines on all assignments can be made flexible without penalty if you speak to me **in advance**. In addition, any student who misses a deadline as a result of following university guidelines regarding Covid-19 will be able to make up missed work **without penalty**, even if they were unable to contact me in advance.
- There will be **no penalties** for absences from class due to physical or mental health concerns and students are **not required** to provide documentation for single absences.
- I will work with students and be flexible should they need to take extended leave from the course.

Schedule:

Unit 1: Grounding History in Place

Week 1: Paths around town

17 August: Introduction, syllabus, setting policies for the semester

19 August:

- William Cronon, “Kennebec Journey: The Paths Out of Town” (PDF via ReggieNet)
- Meet at Uptown Circle for a brief walk on Constitution Trail. *Please bring appropriate supplies to walk outside—Masks, Hat, Sunscreen, Umbrella/Raincoat, Comfortable Shoes*

Week 2: Walking as historical practice

24 August & 26 August:

- Read Rebecca Solnit, “Aerobic Sisyphus and the Suburbanized Psyche,” in *Wanderlust* (PDF via ReggieNet)
- Design and execute a walk somewhere in Bloomington-Normal.

Week 3: Recreating Lost Landscapes

31 August & 2 September:

- Read Robert Michael Morrissey, “Climate, Ecology and History in North America’s Tallgrass Prairie Borderlands*,” *Past & Present* 245, no. 1 (November 1, 2019): 39–77 and Eric Higgs et al., “The Changing Role of History in Restoration Ecology,” *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 12, no. 9 (November 2014): 499–506.
- Meet at the ISU Horticultural Center to tour ISU’s restored prairie garden

Prospectus due 9 September.

Week 4: Water History

7 September: **Labor Day Holiday—No Class**

9 September:

- Digital Research

- Listen to this interview with historian Sharon Block:
<https://doinghistorypodcast.com/how-to-research-history-online/>

Week 5: Sounds of History

14 September & 16 September:

- Read Peter Coates, “The Strange Stillness of the Past: Toward an Environmental History of Sound and Noise,” *Environmental History* 10 (October 2005).
- Select a location and record 15 minutes of sound using your phone.

30 September: Annotated Bibliography/Outline Due

Week 6: Visualizing Environmental History

21 September & 23 September:

- Read Finis Dunaway, “Finis Dunaway on the Subtle Spectacle of Fallen Leaves,” *Environmental History* 9, no. 4 (October 2004) and Jennifer Tucker, “Dangerous Exposures: Visualizing Work and Waste in the Victorian Chemical Trades,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 95 (2019): 130–65.
- Select a location or locations on/around campus and take at least 5 photographs that tell us something about the local environment.

Week 7: Eating Environmental History

28 September & 30 September

- Read Nicolaas Mink, “It Begins in the Belly,” *Environmental History* 14, no. 2 (2009): 312–22 and Robert N. Chester, “Sensory Deprivation: Taste as a Useful Category of Analysis in Environmental History,” *Environmental History* 14, no. 2 (2009): 323–30.
- Document one meal that you have consumed this week

Unit 2: Case Studies and Conversations

Week 8: Indigenous and Colonial Landscapes

5 October & 7 October

- Read: Christine DeLucia, “Terrapoltics in the Dawnland: Relationality, Resistance, and Indigenous Futures in the Native and Colonial Northeast,” *The New England Quarterly* 92, no. 4 (November 2019): 548–83, https://doi.org/10.1162/tneg_a_00789.
- Listen to my conversation with Dr. Hayley Negrin (University of Illinois at Chicago) via ReggieNet

Week 9: Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice

12 & 14 October:

- Read: Laura Pulido, “Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 27, no. 3 (July 2, 2016): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10455752.2016.1213013>.
- Read: Josiah Rector, “Neoliberalism’s Deadly Experiment” <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/10/water-detroit-flint-emergency-management-lead-snyder-privatization>
- Listen to my conversation with Dr. Touré Reed (ISU)

Week 10: Energy and Democracy

19 October:

- Read: Timothy Snyder, *Carbon Democracy* (selections via ReggieNet)
- Listen to my conversation with Dr. Eric Godoy (ISU)

21 October:

- Read: Andreas Malm, *Fossil Capital* (selections via ReggieNet)
- Guest Visitor: Dr. Andrew Hartman (ISU)

Week 11: Animal Histories

26 & 28 October:

- Read: Mahesh Rangarajan, “Animals with Rich Histories: The Case of the Lions of Gir Forest, Gujarat, India,” *History and Theory* 52, no. 4 (December 1, 2013): 109–27, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.10690>.
- Listen to my conversation with Dr. Will Cavert (University of St. Thomas). Additional readings TBA

4 November: Rough Draft Due

Week 12: Wilderness, past and present

2 & 4 November

- Read: William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness” and Ellen F. Arnold, “Engineering Miracles: Water Control, Conversion and the Creation of a Religious Landscape in the Medieval Ardennes,” *Environment and History* 13, no. 4 (2007): 477–502.
- Listen to my conversation with Dr. Katie Jasper (ISU)

Week 13: Climate Histories

9 November:

- Read: Paul Warde, Libby Robin, and Sverker Sörlin, “Climate Enters the Environment,” in *The Environment: A History of the Idea* (PDF via ReggieNet)

11 November:

- Read: Thomas Wickman, “The Great Snow of 1717: Settler Landscapes, Deep Snow Cover, and Winter’s Environmental History,” *Northeastern Naturalist* 24, no. sp7 (March 2017): H81–114, <https://doi.org/10.1656/045.024.s714>.
- Read: Robert Macfarlane, “The Blue of Time,” <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/the-blue-of-time/> or PDF via ReggieNet

Week 14: Environmental History for the Future

16 & 18 November:

- Read: Kate Brown, “Resurrecting the Soil,” <https://www.eurozine.com/resurrecting-the-soil/>

- Read: Katie Holmes, Andrea Gaynor, and Ruth Morgan, “Doing Environmental History in Urgent Times,” *History Australia* 17, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 230–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2020.1758579>.

No Class: Thanksgiving Break: Saturday, 23 November to Sunday, 1 December 2020.

Week 15: Work Time and Concluding Thoughts

2 December:

- Work time. Use this week to make a final push on your project for this course.

4 December: Virtual Roundtable/Concluding Thoughts