ENVI 229 | HIST 264
Fall 2023

Environmental History

Time: Tuesday / Thursday 8:30 - 9:45 am
Class Location: Schapiro Hall 241
Instructor: Professor Laura Martin
Office: Environmental Center Room 217
Email: LJM4@williams.edu

Course Description

This course is an introduction to Environmental History: the study of how people have shaped environments, how environments have shaped human histories, and how cultural change and material change are intertwined. As such, it challenges traditional divides between the humanities and the sciences. Taking U.S. environmental history as our focus, we will strive to understand the historical roots of contemporary environmental problems, such as species extinction, pollution, and climate change. We will take field trips to learn to read landscapes for their histories and to examine how past environments are represented in museum exhibits, digital projects, and physical landscapes. And we will develop original arguments and essays based on archival research. It is imperative that we understand this history if we are to make informed and ethical environmental decisions at the local, national, and global scale.
Course Organization

This class meets twice per week for 75 minutes. Class time will include facilitated discussions, guest speakers, in-class assignments, and field trips.

Readings listed on the schedule below must be completed before each class meeting. Come prepared to talk about each reading in detail, hard copy in hand.

Please dedicate one notebook in which to keep reading, class, and fieldtrip notes. You will be called upon to speak from these notes.

Office Hours

To sign up to visit office hours, please email me. Come to office hours with questions about readings, lectures, the environmental studies program, or just to chat.

Required Texts

The required books, listed below, are available at the Williams bookstore and online. The course packets (two volumes) are available for pick-up from the Center for Environmental Studies.

☐ Tom Wessels, Forest Forensics: A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape (Countryman Press, 2010)
☐ Tiya Miles, Wild Girls: How the Outdoors Shaped the Women Who Challenged a Nation (W.W. Norton & Co., 2023)

Assignments

The relative weight of assignments is summarized below. Students must complete all course assignments in order to pass the course. Each component of your final score is briefly described in this syllabus and more detailed guidelines will be distributed in class.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of final grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Source Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Participation

Attendance is required. Absences or habitual lateness will decrease your final grade. You cannot pass this class if you miss more than 4 class meetings.

Participation encompasses in-class writing assignments and contributions to class discussions. Class discussions are a collaborative process. Participation that falls within the “A” range shows me that you are keeping up with the work, thinking through the issues that each set of texts raises, and able to pose questions that take our conversation in new and worthwhile directions. It also shows your willingness to listen, to consider other students’ points of view, and to respond to them respectfully.

Final Presentation

During the semester, you will develop and execute an independent research project. Each student will work directly with primary and secondary sources. In-class workshops and an annotated bibliography accomplish preparatory work for the project. Further instructions for each step of the research process will be distributed in class.

Creating a Supportive Learning Environment

Be inclusive. In this course we will discuss issues regarding personal and communal identity, including race, ethnicity, class, gender, national origin, and ability. It is essential that we all – and at all times – cultivate mutual respect. We are here to learn and grow together. If you have any concerns about classroom climate, please share them with me.

Be present. This means attending to the collective project and being aware that you are constructing the learning environment with your peers. All phones should be put away inside a bag, on silent mode, at the beginning of class and not be used or visible until class has concluded.

Challenge yourself to be the best classmate you can be. This doesn’t mean that you need to be the first to raise your hand every time, but you should try to push your comfort zone a little. If you know you tend to the quiet side in class, try to speak up more than you ordinarily would, because your thoughts are valuable and your classmates want to hear them. Alternatively, if you know you’re the kind of person who always speaks first (or loudest), then try to sit back and listen more than your instincts tell you.
Policies

Contact

I use email regularly to make announcements, clarify points from lecture, and draw your attention to events and news items. You are expected to check your email daily. Email is also the best way to get in touch with me, and I reply during normal business hours.

Lectures and discussion sections may not be recorded without my explicit permission.

Honor Code

Please re-acquaint yourself with the college Honor Code (http://sites.williams.edu/honor-system/). I have re-printed a useful section here:

If a student is unsure how the Honor Code applies in a particular situation, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to find out from his or her professor how the Honor Code applies in that situation. An open and highly individualized system can last only as long as both the students and the faculty work together to create a true academic community.

In all written material, including ungraded assignments and drafts, students are expected to avoid the possibility of even unintentional plagiarism by acknowledging the sources of their work. Careful observance of accepted standards of reference and attribution is required. The basic rules are summarized below. Students are further advised to consult a recognized style manual to learn how to acknowledge sources correctly.

The basic rules of attribution for all academic assignments, including homework, require that:

1. A direct quotation (whether a single word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, or series of paragraphs) must always be identified by quotation marks, by indenting and single spacing, or by reduced type size of the quoted material, and a note must be used to state the exact source.
2. A paraphrase of the work of another must be acknowledged as such by a note stating the source.
3. Indebtedness to the specific ideas of others, or the summarizing of several pages, even though expressed in different words, must be acknowledged by a note stating the source.
4. In every instance, the use of another student’s laboratory reports, computer programs, or other material must be acknowledged by a note.
5. Even the use of a student’s own previous or concurrent work must be acknowledged; thus, a student must obtain the prior permission of both the previous and current instructors before submitting all or part of the same paper in more than one course.

Williams takes charges of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, and either can result in your dismissal. Cheating is taking advantage of the work of others. Plagiarism is representing the
work of others as your own without giving appropriate credit. If you are uncertain how the Honor Code applies to your work in this course – or if you are unsure how to distinguish between legitimate collaboration with your colleagues and academic dishonesty – please ask me.

Resources

Students with disabilities or disabling conditions who experience barriers in this course are encouraged to contact me to discuss options for access and full course participation. The Office of Accessible Education is also available to facilitate the removal of barriers and to ensure access and reasonable accommodations. Students with documented disabilities or disabling conditions of any kind who may need accommodations for this course or who have questions about appropriate resources are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessible Education at oae-staff@williams.edu.

As a Williams student, you can use the free tutoring services provided by the Peer Academic Support network. Step-by-step instructions for scheduling tutoring sessions are on the Peer Tutoring Program webpage (http://academic-resources.williams.edu/peer-tutor-program/).

The Writing Workshop (http://writing-programs.williams.edu/writing-workshop/) is available to all students free of charge. Drop in sessions are located in the foyer of Stetson-Sawyer library. You can also schedule hour-long appointments through the online scheduler. The Writing Workshop also offers a Writing Partner service to support students who may need more attention and guidance than can be provided within a regular Writing Workshop session.

Tath Haver is the library liaison for environmental studies and is also available to provide guidance. He can be reached at th13@williams.edu.
## Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>THURS 09/07</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>THURS 09/14</td>
<td>Landscape as Archive</td>
<td>□ Tom Wessels, <em>Forest Forensics: A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape</em> (Countryman Press, 2010).</td>
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<td>FIELD TRIP: Hopkins Forest</td>
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<td>TUES 09/19</td>
<td>Archival Research</td>
<td>□ “Why Do Research?” and “Interpreting Primary Sources,” modified from Wayne Booth <em>et al., The Craft of Research</em> (University of Chicago Press, 2008)</td>
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<td>FIELD TRIP: Meet at Williams Special Collections, Sawyer Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>MEETING TOPIC</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENTS</td>
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FIELD TRIP: North Adams |
DUE: Primary source project |
| TUES  | No class         | Fall Break                                                                 |
Guest Zoom speaker: Dr. Caterina Scaramelli (Boston University) |
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Guest speaker: Dr. Jayson Porter, Brown University (we will meet in the classroom) |
DUE: Annotated bibliography |
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| TUES 11/07  | Energy Democracy               | - Preface, *Power Beyond the Grid: Rural Electricity and Community Control Since the New Deal* (forthcoming)  
- Guest Zoom speaker: Dr. Abby Spinak, Harvard Graduate School of Design |
| THURS 11/09 | Writing Workshop               | - In-class writing workshop                                               |
- DUE: Primary source project revisions |
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<tr>
<td>THURS 11/23</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>Thanksgiving break</td>
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☐ Elizabeth Kolbert, “Why Bitcoin is Bad for the Environment,” *The New Yorker*, 22 April 2021 |
| TUES 12/05 | Final Presentations          |                                                                      |
| THURS 12/07 | Final Presentations          |                                                                      |