HIST 4500 – Canadian Environmental History: Cities and Hinterlands

#yorkhist4500

Fridays 11:30am to 2:30pm
Department of History
Instructor: Sean Kheraj
Office: Vari Hall 2124
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00pm-2:00pm; Fridays 10:00am-11:00am
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Twitter: @seankheraj

Course Description

In a 1954 Canadian Historical Review article, J.M.S. Careless argued that “the functioning of metropolitanism may do more to explain the course of Canadian history than concepts of frontierism borrowed from the United States and set forth before the significance of the modern metropolis was clear.” The Metropolitan Thesis, as it became known, examined the interrelationship between cities and hinterlands in Canadian history and the central role that this relationship played in the development of the modern Canadian state. This course explores metropolitanism in the context of Canadian environmental history. Environmental history examines the reciprocal relationship between humans and non-human nature from a historical perspective. HIST 4500 addresses the changing impact of human populations, their technologies, and their ideas on the natural environment, as well as how climate, topography, plants, and animals have enabled, constrained, and altered the path of human societies within the context of city and hinterland environments.

Organization of the Course

The course involves three-hour seminar sessions once per week. These sessions will combine discussion of key concepts and themes from course readings with student presentations and group work. All listed readings are mandatory and essential to completion of this course. Active oral participation is crucial to success in this course. Overall, students will focus on a single major research essay assignment over the course of the year along with a literature review in the first semester. They will work closely in small groups to aid one another in the preparation of their papers and other assignments.

This course will also include online participation using Moodle and Twitter. Students are encouraged to follow the #yorkhist4500 hashtag on Twitter for course announcements, discussion questions, and other relevant course information. Students may also participate in online discussion forums on Moodle for each week.

Readings
Required Textbooks:


In addition to the textbooks, this course uses online readings available through our course Moodle site. Readings listed under a particular week should be read by Friday of that week. Discussions depend upon students having done their readings.

Assignments and Evaluation

The grade for the course will be based on the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay Proposal</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research cluster participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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General Rules, Policies and Expectations

Please make sure that all work that you hand in and present for this class is your own. The university takes this issue very seriously. We expect you to be familiar with all of the university policies relating to academic integrity found here: [http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/). Violations of the York Senate Policy on Academic Honesty – including submitting work written by someone else or submitted in another course, failing to use quotation marks and citations when using or paraphrasing the printed or electronically-transmitted work of others, collaborating on written assignments, cheating during examinations, and aiding or abetting academic misconduct – will be treated severely. Recent penalties have included failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University, and withholding or rescinding a York degree. For further information, see [http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=69](http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=69).

Assignments should be handed in at the beginning of class on the due date. Please double-space all written assignments and print them in standard 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Include your name and the assignment’s title at the top of the paper (no separate title pages necessary). All sources should be books and journal articles (i.e., no internet sources unless obtained from the library’s e-resources) and should be cited, using the Chicago Manual of Style ([http://www.library.yorku.ca/eresolver/?id=996235](http://www.library.yorku.ca/eresolver/?id=996235)), in footnotes. You must also provide a properly formatted bibliography for each assignment. Only hard copies of assignments will be accepted; no electronic copies please. Students may submit email copies of assignments only as a
date-stamp. Do not slide assignments under the instructor’s office door. Assignments placed in the History Department drop box will not be date-stamped and will only be considered received on the date the instructor retrieves the assignment from his mailbox. Please also keep copies of all drafts and rough work.

Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized one letter grade per day (i.e., if one day late, an A paper receives a B+) up to a maximum of five days. **After five days, assignments will not be accepted.** We will consider exceptions to the lateness penalty only when they are supported by authoritative written documentation (i.e., a doctor’s note) or they can be legitimately substantiated. Students may not request deadline extensions within one week of a due date.

We will accommodate students with disabilities working with the York University Learning Disability Services office ([http://www.yorku.ca/cds/lds/](http://www.yorku.ca/cds/lds/)). Please contact the instructor directly to make sure we are informed of your needs. If you will require any kind of accommodation for religious reasons, please let us know as soon as possible. Attendance is otherwise mandatory (see “Course participation” section below).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay Proposal</td>
<td>October 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>All students are required to submit a short 2-3 page research essay proposal along with a 1-page bibliography. This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade. Please consult the detailed assignment description available on the course website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review Essay</td>
<td>November 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>All students are required to submit a literature review essay of 9-10 pages in length along with a bibliography. This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade. Please consult the detailed assignment description available on the course website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>April 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>For the research essay assignment, students will complete a 15-16 page essay on any topic in Canadian environmental history relating to metropolitanism (city-hinterland interrelationship). Students must make use of a minimum of one substantial historical primary source document for this assignment. Your essay must make an argument, relying for support upon additional secondary source research. The purpose of this assignment is to show your competence in the following areas: analysis of primary sources; ability to comprehend, analyze and think critically about course issues and themes, relating these issues and themes to your primary source(s); forming and defending an argument; writing (content, structure and style). We will discuss possible topics in class and we also expect that you will meet with the instructor about your chosen topic before you start to write.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>In the final weeks of the course, all students must complete an in-class presentation based on the research essay assignment. This presentation will be between 8-10 minutes in length. Please consult the detailed assignment description on the course website.</td>
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Course participation

Your active participation in class is essential, and we will measure it in a variety of ways. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken every class. You must show that you are engaging with course readings and themes by orally contributing thoughtfully to in-class discussions. Students will also engage in group work with small weekly assignments that are essential to completion of the major research essay assignment.

Students will also be able to participate online for partial credit each week. This can include contributions to Moodle discussion forums or Twitter discussions on the #yorkhist4500 hashtag. If students wish to participate on Twitter, they must register their Twitter handles with the course instructor.

Because this course aims to teach students about digital history, including online research and communication, students are expected to bring internet-connected computing devices to seminar (laptops, tablet computers, smartphones). These devices should be used exclusively for course-relevant purposes.

All course participation, including in-class discussion and online discussion, must be in compliance with the York University Student Code of Conduct (http://www.yorku.ca/oscr/pdfs/StudentCodeOfConduct.pdf). In order to ensure this, students should try at all times to be respectful toward one another and toward all faculty and staff. Active and respectful student participation is essential to establishing a productive and engaging learning environment for everyone.
Course Schedule

Week One: Introduction to Course

Friday, September 7, 2012
- Listen: Exploring Environmental History, Episodes 22-23
  - http://www.eh-resources.org/podcast/eh_podcast22.mp3
  - http://www.eh-resources.org/podcast/eh_podcast23.mp3

Week Two: Environmental History & Metropolitanism

Friday, September 14, 2012
- Research Cluster: Organize groups and register Twitter handles

Week Three: Canadians and the Natural Environment

Friday, September 21, 2012
- Research Cluster: Research Topic Brainstorm

Week Four: The Nature of Cities

Friday, September 28, 2012

• Research Cluster: Online archives and other resources

**Week Five: Library Primary Source Research Session**

*Friday, October 5, 2012*

**Week Six: Wilderness, Progress, and Decline**

*Friday, October 12, 2012*


• Research Cluster: Discussion of Research Topics

**Week Seven: Staples Thesis & The Fur Trade**

***Essay Proposal Due***

*Friday, October 19, 2012*


Week Eight: Montreal and its Hinterlands

Friday, October 26, 2012

  http://books.google.ca/books?id=Zuy3CsD_zkgC&lpg=PP1&ots=pD5e0Fdxj&q&f=false

Week Nine: Cities and the Agricultural Landscape of Ontario

Friday, November 9, 2012

  http://www.library.yorku.ca/find/Record/2233761

Week Ten: Timber, Coal, and Halifax

***Literature Review Essay Due***

Friday, November 16, 2012


**Week Eleven: Agriculture and the Prairie Cities**

*Friday, November 23, 2012*

http://seankheraj.com/readings/Alan%20FJ%20Artibise%20-%20The%20Urban%20West%20to%201930.pdf

http://www.library.yorku.ca/find/Record/2234310

• Read: Matthew Evenden, “Precarious Foundations: Irrigation, Environment, and Social Change in the Canadian Pacific Railway’s Eastern Section, 1900-1930” *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006): 74-95

• Research Cluster: Making a Research Plan

**Week Twelve: Salmon, Timber, and Vancouver**

*Friday, November 30, 2012*


**Week Thirteen: The Wet Prairie**

**Friday, January 11, 2013**

- Research Cluster:

**Week Fourteen: Conservation and Local Conflict**

**Friday, January 18, 2013**

- Research Cluster:

**Week Fifteen: Wildlife and Western Canada**

**Friday, January 25, 2013**

- Research Cluster:

**Week Sixteen: The National Parks Movement**

**Friday, February 1, 2013**

- Read: Binnema, Theodore (Ted) and Melanie Niemi, “‘Let the line be drawn now’: Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park


- Research Cluster:

### Week Seventeen: City Park Landscapes

Friday, February 8, 2013


- Research Cluster:

### Week Eighteen: Urban Pollution

Friday, February 15, 2013


- Research Cluster:
Week Nineteen: Becoming Suburban

Friday, March 1, 2013

- Research Cluster:

Week Twenty: Energy Metropolises and Frontiers

Friday, March 8, 2013

- Research Cluster:

Week Twenty-One: Research Presentations

Friday, March 15, 2013

Week Twenty-Two: Research Presentations

Friday, March 22, 2013

Week Twenty-Three: Research Essays

***Research Essays Due***

Friday, April 5, 2012