

HIST 1035: The Impact of Europeans on the North American Environment

#yorkhist1035 

Lecture: Fridays 10:30am – 12:30pm

Tutorials: Fridays 12:30pm – 2:30pm (Tutorial 1-2)

Department of History

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Course Description

This course explores the ecological consequences of Spanish, French, and British colonial expansion in North America from the end of the 1400s to the beginning of the 1900s. Environmental history has forced historians to rethink global imperialism in fundamental ways. Military, political, and social histories of the spread of powerful empires only tell part of the story. As Alfred Crosby reminds us, “[w]e have so long been hypnotized by the daring of the conquistador that we have overlooked the importance of his biological allies.” These included an enormous cast of non-human actors, such as microbes, chickens, pigs, horses, and cows. Geographic factors from wind to weather have played pivotal roles in shaping the course of colonial expansion. By exploring the impact of the biological expansion of Europeans in North America this course is intended to introduce students to major themes in the environmental history of global imperialism. Students will examine key topics in a variety of contexts, including epidemic disease, food production, the fur trade, novel species introductions, and the rise of global capitalism.

Organization of the Course

The course involves lectures by the instructor and tutorial discussions. Lectures will take place on Fridays from 10:30am to 12:30pm. Students are divided into tutorial groups that meet on Fridays where students will participate in a discussion of a given set of readings. Students are expected to participate actively in these tutorial discussions through careful and close readings of the course materials, thoughtful responses, and informed participation in small and large group discussions. **All listed readings are mandatory and essential to completion of this course. Active oral participation is crucial to success in this course.**

This course will also include online participation using Moodle and Twitter. Students are encouraged to follow the #yorkhist1035 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.

Regular weekly attendance at lecture is a central component of the course. Each week students will be required to complete a short one-question quiz at the beginning of lecture covering the previous week's lecture that is worth 5% of the final grade.

Readings

Required Textbooks:

Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003. ISBN 9780809016341

Crosby, Alfred. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. New York: Greenwood, 2003. ISBN 9780275980733

Online readings available through course website

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 before the tutorial class. Discussions depend upon students having done their reading.

Assignments and Evaluation

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

Book Review Essay	5%
Primary Source Analysis Essay	10%
Midterm Exam	10%
Primary Source Research Essay Proposal	5%
Primary Source Research Essay	25%
Weekly Quizzes	5%
Final examination	20%
Tutorial participation	20%

General Rules, Policies and Expectations

Prior to submitting the first assignment, **all students must complete the York University Academic Integrity tutorial** (http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html). 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/>. 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>.

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>), 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 her/his mailbox. Tutorial leaders will accept electronic copies of late assignments as a date-stamp. **Please also keep copies of all drafts and rough work.**

If you need to submit an assignment electronically, please follow these steps:

- Request permission to submit electronically from tutorial leader
- Email electronic copy as an attachment (students are responsible for ensuring document is attached)
- Submit identical hard copy in next class meeting or earliest possible date (if hard copy is different from digital copy, assignment will be graded 0%)

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. All deadline extension requests must be made in writing via email to tutorial leader.

We will accommodate students with disabilities working with the York University Learning Disability Services office (<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).

Book Review Essay

Due: October 25

All students must complete a short book review essay based on the book *The Columbian Exchange* by Alfred Crosby. Students will be provided with an essay question to answer in a 5-6 page paper. Please consult the detailed assignment description available on the course website.

Primary Source Analysis Essay

Due: December 6

In the primary source analysis essay, students will choose one question and one primary source from a list of options. Students will answer the question based on an analysis of the primary source. This essay will be 7-8 pages long. Please consult the detailed assignment description available on the course website.

Midterm Exam

November 22

Student will write an in-class midterm examination of course content in the first semester. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Primary Source Research Essay Proposal

Due: February 7

Students must submit a 3-4 page primary source research essay proposal in advance of completing the primary source research essay assignment. This proposal should include a substantial primary source (or set of sources), a preliminary description and summary of that source, a research question, and a working bibliography. Please consult the detailed assignment description available on the course website.

Primary Source Research Essay

Due: March 28

Students must submit a 9-10 page primary source research essay. This essay must include the analysis of a substantial primary source (or set of sources) related to the impact of Europeans on the North American environment. Please consult the detailed assignment description available on the course website.

Final Exam

The final examination will take place during the exam period in April and it will be based on course materials (lectures, readings, and discussion) from the entire course. You **MUST** be present for the final examination. Employment, vacation, etc. are not valid excuses for missing an exam.

Course participation

Your active participation in class is essential, and we will measure it in a variety of ways. Both the lectures and tutorials are essential and mandatory components of the course. Attendance is mandatory for tutorial sessions. You must show that you are engaging with course readings and themes by orally contributing thoughtfully to in-class discussions.

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 #yorkhist1035 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 lecture and tutorial (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 13, 2013

- 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: Approaching Environmental History

Friday, September 20, 2013

- Read: Steinberg, Ted. *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Prologue: Rocks and History, pgs. 3-7.
- Read: Worster, Donald, "Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History" *The Journal of American History* 76.4 (1990): 1087-1106.
- Read: Crosby, Alfred W. "The Past and Present of Environmental History" *American Historical Review* 100.4 (1995): 1177-89.

Week Three: What is Nature?

Friday, September 27, 2013

- Read: Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1.1 (1996): 7-28.
- Read: Stroud, Ellen. "Does Nature Always Matter? Following Dirt through History." *History and Theory* 42.4 (2003): 75-81.

Week Four: Human Migrations and European Expansion

Friday, October 4, 2013

- Read: Furniss, Elizabeth. "Pioneers, Progress, and the Myth of the Frontier: The Landscape of Public History in Rural British Columbia." *BC Studies*, 115/116 (1997): 7-44.
- Read: Axtell, James. "Europeans, Indians, and the Age of Discovery in American History Textbooks." *American Historical Review* 92.3 (1987): 621-632.

Week Five: Columbian Exchange I

Friday, October 11, 2013

- Read: Crosby, Alfred. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. New York: Greenwood, 2003. Ch. 1-3

Week Six: Columbian Exchange II

Friday, October 18, 2013

- Read: Crosby, Alfred. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. New York: Greenwood, 2003. Ch. 4-6

Week Seven: Ecological Imperialism

Book Review Essay Due

Friday, October 25, 2013

- Read: Crosby, Alfred W. "Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon" in *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*. Edited by Donald Worster, 103-117. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Assignment: Complete Academic Integrity Tutorial and return signed form http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html *This must be completed before you submit your first essay assignment*

Week Eight: Microbes I

Friday, November 8, 2013

- Library Research Session (Scott Library)

Week Nine: Microbes II

Friday, November 15, 2013

- Read: Crosby, Alfred W. "Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America" *William and Mary Quarterly* 33.2 1976: 289-299.
- Read: Daniels, John D. "The Indian population of North America in 1492." *William & Mary Quarterly* 49.2 (1992): 298-320.
- Read: Hodge, Adam R. "'In Want of Nourishment for to Keep Them Alive': Climate Fluctuations, Bison Scarcity, and the Smallpox Epidemic of 1780–82 on the Northern Great Plains." *Environmental History* 17.2 (2012): 365-403.

Week Ten: Contact and the Impact on Aboriginal Societies I

Midterm Exam

Friday, November 22, 2013

Week Eleven: Contact and the Impact on Aboriginal Societies II

Friday, November 29, 2013

- Read: Trigger, Bruce. "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: Romantic versus Rationalistic Interpretations" *Journal of American History* 77.4 (1991): 1195-1215.
- Read: Dickason, Olive Patricia. "Europeans and Amerindians: Some Comparative Aspects of Early Contact." *Historical Papers* 14.1 (1979): 182-202.
- Read: Goldring, Philip. "Inuit Economic Responses to Euro-American Contacts: Southeast Baffin Island, 1824-1940." *Historical Papers* 21.1 (1986): 146-172.

Week Twelve: The Horse and Gun Revolution on the Great Plains

Primary Source Analysis Essay Due

Friday, December 6, 2013

- Read: Hamalainen, Pekka. "The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures." *Journal of American History* 90.3 (2003): 833-862.
- Read: Dan Flores. "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850" *Journal of American History* 78.2 (1991): 465-485.
- Read: Carson, James Taylor. "Horses and the Economy and Culture of the Choctaw Indians, 1690-1840" *Ethnohistory* 42.3 (1995): 495-513.

Week Thirteen: The Northwest Fur Trade

Friday, January 10, 2014

- Read: Hackett, Paul. "Averting Disaster: The Hudson's Bay Company and Smallpox in Western Canada During the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 78.3 (2004): 575-609.
- Read : Isham, James, *Observations on Hudson's Bay, 1743*. Toronto : Champlain Society, 1949, pgs. 65-95.

Week Fourteen: Resettlement: Surviving in a New Land

Friday, January 17, 2014

- Read: Cook, Ramsay, "Cabbages Not Kings: Towards an Ecological Interpretation of Early Canadian History" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 25.4 (1990): 5-16.
- Read: Champlain, Samuel de, *Voyages of Samuel de Champlain: 1604-1610*, Volume 2, Boston: Prince Society, 1878, pgs 34-37; 49-55 ; 174-200.

Week Fifteen: Resettlement: Introducing Alien Animals

Friday, January 24, 2014

- Read: Anderson, Virginia DeJohn, "Animals into the Wilderness: The Development of Livestock Husbandry in Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake" *William and Mary Quarterly* 59.2 (2002): 377-408.
- Read: Melville, Elinor G.K. "Environmental and Social Change in the Valle del Mezquital, Mexico, 1521-1600" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32.1 (1990): 24-53.

Week Sixteen: Resettling New England I

Friday, January 31, 2014

- Read: Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003. Ch. 1-4

Week Seventeen: Resettling New England II

Primary Source Research Essay Proposal Due

Friday, February 7, 2014

- Read: Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003. Ch. 5-8

Week Eighteen: The Idea of Land and Property

Friday, February 14, 2014

- Read: Greer, Allan. "Commons and Enclosure in the Colonization of North America." *American Historical Review* 117.2 (2012): 365-386.
- Read: Spry, Irene. "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada." In *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies* edited by A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, 203-228. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983.

Week Nineteen: Remaking the Landscape

Friday, February 28, 2014

- Read: Wood, J. David. *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-Creation before the Railway*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000. Ch. 1 "Progress" and the Confrontation with Nature, Ch. 2 Changing the Face of the Earth, pgs. 3-22.
- Read: Little, J. I. "West Coast Picturesque: Class, Gender, and Race in a British Colonial Landscape, 1858-71." *Journal Of Canadian Studies* 41.2 (2007): 5-41.

Week Twenty: Backwoods of Upper Canada

Friday, March 7, 2014

- Read: Forkey, Neil S. *Shaping the Upper Canadian Frontier: Environment, Society, and Culture in the Trent Valley*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003. Ch. 6 The Trent Valley Oracle: Catherine Parr Traill, pgs. 97-110.
- Read: Traill, Catherine Parr, *The Backwoods of Canada*. London : Charles Knight & Co., 1846, Letters VIII-X, pgs 95-130.

Week Twenty-One: Rice Plantation Agriculture in the US South

Friday, March 14, 2014

- Read: Chaplin, Joyce E., "Tidal Rice Cultivation and the Problem of Slavery in South Carolina and Georgia, 1760-1815" *William and Mary Quarterly* 49.1 (1992): 29-61.
- Read: Eltis, David, Phillip Morgan and David Richardson. "Agency and Diaspora in Atlantic History: Reassessing the African Contribution to Rice Cultivation in the Americas." *American Historical Review* 112.5 (2007): 1329-58.
- Read: Edelson, S. Max. "Beyond 'Black Rice': Reconstructing Material and Cultural Contexts for Early Plantation Agriculture" *American Historical Review* 115.1 (2010): 125-135.

Week Twenty-Two: Decline of the Bison

Friday, March 21, 2014

- Read: Isenberg, Andrew. "Toward a Policy of Destruction: Buffaloes, Law, and the Market, 1803-83" *Great Plains Quarterly* 12.4 (1992): 227-241.
- Read: Doback, William A. "Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881" *Western Historical Quarterly* 27.1 (1996): 33-52.
- Read: Isenberg, Andrew C. "The Returns of the Bison: Nostalgia, Profit, and Preservation." *Environmental History* 2.2 (1997): 179-196.

Week Twenty-Three: Agricultural Expansion Primary Source Research Essay Due

Friday, March 28, 2014

- Read: Evans, Clinton. *The War on Weeds in the Prairie West: An Environmental History*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002. Ch. 4 Dominion of the West, 1867-1905, pgs. 77-108.
- Read: Bower, Shannon Stunden. "The Great Transformation? Wetlands and Land Use in Manitoba during the Late Nineteenth-Century" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*. 15.1 (2004): 29-47.

Week Twenty-Four: Northern Expansion

Friday, April 7, 2014

- Read: Piper, Liza and John Sandlos, "A Broken Frontier: Ecological Imperialism in the Canadian North" *Environmental History* 12.4 (2007): 759-795.
- Read: Piper, Liza. "Subterranean Bodies: Mining the Large Lakes of North-west Canada, 1921-1960." *Environment & History* 13.2 (2007): 155-186.