

**World Forest History Syllabus Spring 08** : <http://sites.google.com/site/forest452/>

**Forest/ Envir/History 452**

Spring 2008

2-5:00 pm Wednesdays 3 credits

Professor Nancy Langston

This seminar for graduate students and seniors will explore the shared history of people and forests around the world, paying special attention to the ways history can help us understand current environmental issues. We will examine how and why forests have changed over time, how different peoples have used or abused the forest, how societies have struggled to establish policies governing forests, and how perceptions of forests have evolved. With its attention to the changing relationships between nature, culture, and production, forest history offers a powerful tool for understanding human effects on the forest. Topics for discussion will include:

- \* How and why have forests changed? How have those changes affected wildlife and people?
- \* Who has historically had access to forests? Who has been denied access, and why? How did access change with the development of forest industries, federal forestry programs, and environmental protections?
- \* Whose meanings of the forest have defined the use of the forests?
- \* How have societal conflicts shaped the ways scientific research has been translated into forest policy? What have been the effects on the forests and people?
- \*What can forest history contribute to environmental policy?

**CLASS FORMAT**

The first hour of each seminar meeting will consist of a lecture and discussion introducing the historic context of the reading. After a brief break, two students will spend 10-15 minutes discussing the critical questions the week's readings raised for you, and then leading a discussion. Ideally, you will summarize for all of us the perspective from which you approached the readings, then follow with your assessment of the authors' work.

**Attendance policy.** Discussions will only work if everyone makes a good faith effort to keep up with the readings and comes to class **on time** and ready to talk.

**Attendance is required; each unexcused absence will take half a grade off your final course grade (ie, two absences would drop you from an AB to a B).** If you know you're going to have an unavoidable conflict with a class meeting (for example, because of a field trip for another class or a job interview), please let me know as soon as possible. If you miss class because of illness or an unavoidable conflict, you can make up the missed credit by turning in an extra 2 page essay on any aspect of the reading. This essay will be due no later two class meetings after your missed meeting.

## **THE READINGS**

You have a lot of reading to do over the semester, and some of you may find the amount daunting. We'll talk in class about different strategies for reading books and journal articles. You will not be required to read every book in its entirety, so make sure you check your emails and the course website for the specific pages to focus on each week. The important thing to remember is that will not be reading to memorize specific names, dates, events, scientific phenomena, and so on. You won't be tested on details. Instead, I want you to absorb ideas, to identify themes and debates, to look critically at the evidence, to explore various methodologies, and to consider the implications of any given book or article.

## **READING JOURNAL**

You will be expected to keep a journal on the course readings. One to two pages of writing on each week's readings is sufficient. Three times during the course of the semester I will collect and review these journals, but you should write each week. I will email potential questions for your journal entries, but you may also write on any specific topic of your choice. I encourage graduate students to focus their reading journals on the tools, methodologies, questions, and approaches that have the greatest potential for each student's own research.

## **FIELD TRIP**

Saturday April 26<sup>rd</sup>, required, from 8 am until 5 pm (this replaces two class meetings, March 12 and April 23).

## **RESEARCH PAPER**

You will write a 10-15 page paper (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 pt font size, 2500 to 3500 words) analyzing the forest history of one particular place. While the content of your forest history will depend on your research needs or personal interests, I do want to see an integration of approaches. The most obvious example of such an integration would be an ecological and social history, where you explain how a place came to be the way it is (and why it is important). Other examples might be the impact of competing values in forestry on a place, or the role of forest institutions in shaping forest landscapes. Your papers should address the

importance of forest history in grappling with real-world problems.

This paper must be structured as a historical narrative. This means you will tell a story, rather than write a conventional scientific or social-scientific paper. While putting together a narrative may frustrate some of you, it is a central feature of environmental history. Many of you will enjoy the creative freedom you gain in escaping the typical academic format, with its mechanical structure (Introduction, Methods, Analysis, Discussion, Conclusion).

**Rough drafts.** Shortly before the final paper is due, you'll submit a rough draft for two fellow students to comment on. These drafts will not be graded, but they will offer you an opportunity to strengthen your own writing and to help your classmates improve theirs. Many people are reluctant to show peers their work until it achieves some arbitrary level of perfection. But this is a difficult and isolating way to work, especially because some of your best ideas will come from conversations you have with colleagues. Moreover, people you trust will catch problems early on, long before you offer your work to a public audience, a graduate committee, or anonymous journal reviewers. At the same time, we will all discover the tremendous range of ideas to be found in one small group.

## **GRADES**

Discussion participation: 40%

Journal: 20%

Research Paper: 40%

**Books: all are required, and all are available on 3 hour reserve at Steenbock.**

James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale UP 1999)

Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (U of Chicago Press, 1993).

Nancy Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West* (U. of Washington Press, 1995).

Michael Williams, *Deforesting the Earth: From Prehistory to Global Crisis. An Abridgement* (make sure you buy the abridged paperback version!) (U of Chicago Press 2006).

Nancy Peluso, *Rich Forests, Poor People: Resource Control and Resistance in Java* (Univ. of California Press, 1992).

Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Univ. of California Press, paperback edition 1997)

## **SCHEDULE**

### **1/23 Week 1: world forest history**

Nancy Langston, "Reflections on teaching world forest history," *Environmental History* 10(2005)

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/10.1/langston.html>

Read this before the first class, if you get a chance. Otherwise, read it before the next week's meeting.

### **1/30 Week 2: deep history**

Michael Williams, *Deforesting the Earth* (pp. 3-86).

### **2/6 Week 3: forests, power, and the state**

James C Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (Yale UP 1999). Pp. 1-83, 309 to 357.

Paul Sutter, "Reflections: What Can US Environmental Historians Learn from non-US Environmental Historiography?" *Environmental History* 8 (2003) <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/8.1/sutter.html>

### **2/13 Week 4: the state, conservation, and Africa: special visit with Prof. James McCann**

James C. McCann, "The Plow and the Forest: Narratives of Deforestation in Ethiopia, 1840-1992," *Environmental History* 2 (1997): 138-59.

Chapter from: *Misreading the African Landscape: Society and Ecology in a Forest-Savanna Mosaic*, James Fairhead and Melissa Leach (Cambridge U P, 1996).

Prof. McCann will visit with us for 45 minutes at the beginning of class, and we will attend his lecture at 4-5 pm on "Maize and Malaria in Africa."

### **2/20 Week 5: forests and Europe: culture and clearing**

Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (U of Chicago Press, 1993). **Ppg. 1-124 and epilogue.**

Michael Williams, *Deforesting the Earth*, 87-126.

### **2/27 Week 6: European expansion**

Chapters from Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Studies in Environment and History) (Cambridge U. Press, 1996) Introduction pp 1-15, Chapter 6, pp. 264-308, Conclusion, pp. 474-486.

Michael Williams, *Deforesting the Earth*, 191-225

### **3/5 Week 7: communities and forests in Asia**

Nancy Peluso, *Rich Forests, Poor People: Resource Control and Resistance in Java* (Univ. of California Press, 1992). Selections.

David Edmunds and Eva Wollenberg, "Historical Perspectives on Forest Policy Change in Asia: An Introduction." *Environmental History* 6 (April 2001): 190-212.

Ramachandra Guha, "The Prehistory of Community Forestry in India," *Environmental History* 6 (April 2001): 213-238.

**3/12 Week 8: no class (American Society for Environmental History meeting in Boise, Idaho). Work on proposal for research paper during class time; submit via email on March 15.**

### **3/19 Week 9: SPRING BREAK-no class**

### **3/26 Week 10: deforesting the tropics: Africa JOURNALS DUE**

Thaddeus Sunseri, "Reinterpreting a colonial rebellion: forestry and social control in German East Africa, 1874-1915." *Environmental History* 8 (July 2003): 431-451.

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/8.3/>

Other readings will be added, from Heasley, Sutter, and Leach and Fairhead.

### **4/2 Week 11: deforesting the tropics: Brazil**

Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: The Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (Univ. of California Press, paperback edition 1997), selections

Michael Williams, *Deforesting the Earth* 318-358.

### **4/9 Week 12: Latin American forests**

Andrew S. Mathews, "Suppressing Fire and Memory: Environmental Degradation

and Political Restoration in the Sierra Juarez of Oaxaca, 1887-2001," *Environmental History* 8(2003): 77-108.

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/eh/8.1/mathews.html>

Charles Mann, "1491," *The Atlantic Monthly* March

2002 <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200203/mann>

#### **4/16 Week 13 forests of the American West**

Nancy Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West* (U. of Washington Press, 1995).

#### **4/23 Week 14 no class on April 23; replaced by field trip on Saturday April 26<sup>th</sup>, 8 am to 4 pm: lessons of forest history**

Farrell E.P.1; Fuhrer E.; Ryan D.; Andersson F.; Huttli R.; Piussi P., "European forest ecosystems: building the future on the legacy of the past," *Forest Ecology and Management*, Volume 132, Number 1, 15 June 2000, pp. 5-20 (16

David R. Foster, "Conservation lessons and challenges from ecological history," *Forest History Today* Fall 2000: 2-11.

Foster, D. R., F. Swanson, J. D. Aber, I. Burke, N. Brokaw, D. Tilman, and A. Knapp. 2003. [The Importance of Land-Use Legacies to Ecology and Conservation](#). *BioScience* 53: 77-88.

#### **4/30 Week 15: lessons of forest history JOURNALS DUE**

Review research paper drafts

#### **5/7 Week 16 last class day: presentations; papers due**