

STSC168 (2016): Environment and Society

Lecture: MW 10-11am, Fisher-Bennett 231. Section: F 2-3pm or 3-4pm.

Instructor:

Professor Etienne Benson
(ebenson@sas.upenn.edu)
Office hours: Cohen 365, W11-12, 5-6

Teaching Assistant:

Jesse Smith (jessesmi@sas.upenn.edu)
Office hours: Cohen 3rd Floor Lounge, W11-12
or by appointment

Course Description

This course is an introductory survey of the environmental humanities and social sciences. Through topics such as industrialization, agriculture, urbanization, Malthusianism, environmentalism, extinction, and climate change, it introduces students to a wide range of scholarship concerning relationships between humanity and the nonhuman world that surrounds it. By the end of the semester, students should have a good sense of how various disciplines in the environmental humanities and social sciences—including history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and literary studies—contribute to our understanding of historical and contemporary environmental issues. This course fulfills the Sector IV: Humanities and Social Sciences requirement.

Course Format

The course consists of two 50-minute lectures on Mondays and Wednesday and a 50-minute discussion-oriented recitation section on Friday. Usually the Monday lecture will introduce a new topic, the Wednesday lecture will delve into more detail on a particular aspect of that topic, and the Friday recitation will provide an opportunity to review the lectures, to discuss the readings in detail, and to identify crucial areas of debate. Attendance is crucial, since you will be expected to draw on ideas and evidence introduced both in the readings and in the lectures in your assignments. Your grade for the course will be based on participation and written work.

Assignments and Grading

A rough outline of grading is below. Further details on each of the assignments will be provided over the course of the semester.

	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Length</u>
Participation	15%		
Short paper #1	15%	Sept. 19	1500-1600 words
Short paper #2	20%	Oct. 14	1500-1600 words
Short paper #3	20%	Nov. 23	1500-1600 words
Final paper	30%	Dec. 16	3-4 essay questions

Format of written work: All papers are to be submitted via Canvas as uploaded files in Word (doc or docx) format. PDFs will not be accepted. Use a standard 11- or 12-point font such as

Times New Roman and 1" margins. Title your papers and be sure to include your name, the course number, and date of submission; give page numbers at the bottom of each page. You are responsible for making sure that your assignment has been properly uploaded.

Late penalties: Papers that are turned in late will be penalized by half a grade for each day until they are submitted — that is, an outstanding A+ paper that is turned in one day late will receive an A; two days late, an A-; three days late, a B+; etc. No credit will be given for papers turned in more than 10 days after the due date.

Participation: Your participation grade will be based primarily on your participation in Friday recitations. You can receive an A for participation by taking careful notes on lectures and readings so that you can contribute in an informed way to recitation discussions. You will be evaluated on the quality, not the quantity, of your contributions to discussion, including your readiness to listen and to respond respectfully to your classmates' contributions. That said, if you find you are not speaking at all during recitation, it is unlikely that you will receive an A. In that case, you are encouraged to speak with the teaching assistant or instructor about ways of participating more actively.

Readings

All readings for this course are available as PDFs on the course Canvas site under "Files." You should have read and taken notes on each week's assigned readings before recitation on Friday. Please bring your notes and copies of the readings to recitation for reference. Your participation grade depends in large part on your ability to intelligently discuss the readings in recitation, and you will be expected to cite and discuss the readings in your written work.

Academic Integrity and Attribution of Sources

Citation standards: Your grade for this course will be based in large part on your written work, for which proper citation practices are essential. Please use the Chicago Manual of Style's Author-Date citation style. Examples are available at the following site under the Author-Date tab: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. Unless the specific wording of a source text is essential to your argument, it is almost always preferable to paraphrase in your own words rather than quoting directly. Any direct quotes should be set off in quotation marks and cited with a specific page number when available. Changes or insertions should be indicated with brackets; omissions should be indicated with ellipses. Both should be used sparingly. Example: "[T]he idea of nature contains ... an extraordinary amount of human history" (Williams 1980, 67).

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct: Representing others' work as your own is unacceptable and will result in a failing grade and possible disciplinary action. In general, you are expected to abide by Penn's Code of Academic Integrity, which prohibits any and all "activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance"

(http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html). If you are unsure how the Code applies to this course or to a particular assignment, please ask.

Religious Observations and Special Accommodations

This course follows Penn's policy on religious holidays, which states that no examinations may be given and no assigned work may be required on Christmas, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Passover, and Good Friday. Regularly scheduled lectures and recitations will still be held during those holidays. If you will be unable to participate in any part of the course due to religious holidays or other obligations or observations—including holidays not listed above—please inform the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester so that alternative arrangements can be made. The same applies if you will need a note-taker or other special accommodations.

Learning Resources

The Office of Learning Resources at the Weingarten Learning Resources Center offers individualized instruction and a variety of workshops to guide Penn students towards more efficient and effective academic study skills and strategies. To learn more about Weingarten's services, visit <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc>.

Use of Electronic Devices

Laptops, tablets, smartphones, and other digital devices can be extraordinarily useful but also have the potential to be extraordinarily distracting. For that reasons, the use of such devices will not be permitted during lecture or recitation (with one exception, described below). You should plan to take notes by hand during lecture and to bring those notes to recitation along with your notes on the readings. The one exception to this general prohibition is that you may bring to recitation a tablet or e-reader that can be laid flat on the table, which you may use to refer to digital copies of the readings and your notes. Tablets with physical keyboards or stands for holding the screen upright are not permitted. Otherwise, you are encouraged to print out the readings and bring them as hardcopies along with your notes. A few communal print-outs of the readings will also be provided for reference at each recitation.

Schedule of Class Meetings, Readings, and Assignments

The schedule is color-coded as follows: **Lectures**, **Recitations**, **Assignments**, **Special Notes**.

- Aug 31 (W) **Lecture: Introduction and overview**
- Sept 2 (F) **Recitation**. Post a link to an article or website discussing an environmental issue that interests you to the Canvas discussion thread by **2pm** and be prepared to describe it in recitation.
- Sept 5 (M)** **Labor Day – NO CLASS**
- Sept 7 (W) **Lecture: Defining “the environment”**

- Sept 9 (F) **Recitation**. Readings: Canguilhem, "The Living and Its Milieu"; Williams, "Ideas of Nature"; Sörlin, "Reconfiguring Environmental Expertise"
- Sept 12 (M) **Lecture: The long view (I)**
- Sept 14 (W) **Lecture: The long view (II)**
- Sept 16 (F) **Recitation**. Readings: Christian, "The Beginnings of Human History," "Intensification and the Origins of Agriculture," "Approaching Modernity" (Chs. 7, 8, and 11 in *Maps of Time*); Smail and Shryock, "History and the 'Pre'"
- Sept 19 Course selection period ends**
- Sept 19 (M) **Lecture: The industrialization of nature, the nature of industrialization**
Paper #1 (defining environment) due by 10am.
- Sept 21 (W) **Lecture: Infrastructure and/as environment**
- Sept 23 (F) **Recitation**. Readings: Pritchard and Zeller, "The Nature of Industrialization"; White, "Putting the River to Work" (Ch. 2 in *The Organic Machine*); Carse, "Nature as Infrastructure"; Anand, "Pressure"
- Sept 26 (M) **Lecture: City and country**
- Sept 28 (W) **Lecture: Race, class, and the urban environment**
- Sept 30 (F) **Recitation**. McNair, "The Swinish Multitude"; Benson, "Urbanization of the Eastern Gray Squirrel"; Biehler, "Ecologies of Injustice"
- Oct 3 (M) **Lecture: Feeding the world**
- Oct 5 (W) **Lecture: "Organic," "local," and other food ideals**. Readings: Cronon, "Pricing the Future: Grain" (Ch. 3 in *Nature's Metropolis*); Fitzgerald, "Eating and Remembering"; Paxson, "Locating Value in Artisan Cheese"; Freidberg, "Footprint Technopolitics"
- Oct 6-9 Fall break — NO RECITATION**
- Oct 10 Drop period ends**
- Oct 10 (M) **Lecture: The domestication of humans and other animals**
- Oct 12 (W) **Lecture: Pets**. Readings: Russell, "Coevolutionary History"; Ritvo, "Pride and Pedigree"; Haraway, "Examined Lives" (Ch. 4 in *When Species Meet*)
- Oct 14 (F) NO RECITATION. Paper #2 (food systems) due by 5pm.**
- Oct 17 (M) **Lecture: Populations and resources**
- Oct 19 (W) **Lecture: Malthusianism and Cornucopianism**
- Oct 21 (F) **Recitation**. Readings: Malthus, *Essay on the Principle of Population*, 3rd edition (1809), Chs. 1-2; Pomeranz, "Political Economy and Ecology on the Eve of Industrialization"; Cuff, "Catastrophist-Cornucopian Debates" (in *Oxford Companion to Global Change*); Jonsson, "Origins of Cornucopianism"
- Oct 24 (M) **Lecture: The Romantic landscape and the wilderness myth**
- Oct 26 (W) **Lecture: Imperial ecology and colonial conservation**

- Oct 28 (F) **Recitation**. Readings: Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness"; Neumann, "Africa's 'Last Wilderness'"; Lekan, "*Serengeti Shall Not Die*"; Mavhunga, "Seeing the National Park from Outside It"
- Oct 31 (M) **Lecture: Earth Day (1970) and the modern environmental movement**
- Nov 2 (W) **Lecture: The environmentalism of the poor**. Readings: Carson, *Silent Spring*, Chs. 1-2; Martinez-Alier, "Currents of Environmentalism" (Ch. 1 in *Environmentalism of the Poor*); Nixon, "Slow Violence, Gender, and the Environmentalism of the Poor"; Price, "Remaking American Environmentalism"
- Nov 4 (F) NO RECITATION**
- Nov 7 (M) **Lecture: Environmental expertise**
- Nov 9 (W) **Lecture: DIY/maker environmentalism**
- Nov 11 (F) **Recitation**. Readings: Wynne, "Misunderstood Misunderstanding"; Shapiro, "Attuning to the Chemosphere"; Dosemagen et al., "Grassroots Mapping"; Ottinger, "Constructing Empowerment through Interpretations of Environmental Surveillance Data"
- Nov 11 Last day to withdraw from course**
- Nov 14 (M) **Lecture: Knowing the global environment**
- Nov 16 (W) **Lecture: Geoengineering**
- Nov 18 (F) **Recitation**. Readings: Hulme, "Reducing the Future to Climate"; Fleming, "The Climate Engineers"; Stilgoe, "Geoengineering as Collective Experimentation"; "About" and "FAQ" pages for the Stratospheric Particle Injection for Climate Engineering (SPICE) project (<http://www.spice.ac.uk>)
- Nov 21 (M) **Lecture: The world picture**. Readings: Heidegger, "The Age of the World-Picture" (excerpt: pp. 67-72 only); Lazier, "Earthrise"; Mitchell, "World Pictures"
- Nov 23 (W) Friday schedule — NO RECITATION. Paper #3 (geoengineering) due by 5pm.**
- Nov 24-27 Thanksgiving Break – NO RECITATION**
- Nov 28 (M) **Lecture: The Anthropocene ...**
- Nov 30 (W) **Lecture: ... or the Capitalocene?**
- Dec 2 (F) **Recitation**: Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind" (2002); Steffen et al., "The Anthropocene" (2007); Crist, "The Poverty of Our Nomenclature"; Moore, "The Rise of Cheap Nature"
- Dec 5 (M) **Lecture: The discovery of extinction**
- Dec 7 (W) **Lecture: Mourning extinction, resurrecting species**
- Dec 9 (F) **Recitation**. Readings: Jefferson, excerpt from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787); Barrow, "Bones of Contention" (Ch. 1 in *Nature's Ghosts*); Van Dooren, "Pain of Extinction"; Chrulew, "Reversing Extinction"

Dec 12 (M) Lecture: **Concluding discussion.** Take-home exam questions will be made available immediately after lecture.

Dec. 16 (F) Take-home exam due by **midnight.**