



Ensc. 200

Global Environmental History

Fall Term, 2004

Time and Place: Kingston Hall, Wednesday evenings from 7-10 pm

Instructor: John F. Varty

Contact: Office: 3246 Biosciences Complex; Office Phone: 533-6000 (ext. 78260)

Email: 6jfdv@post.queensu.ca

Teaching Assistants:

Nolan Heie: 9ndh@qlink.queensu.ca

Scott Gilbert: sgilbert7@cogeco.ca

Uyilawa Usuanlele: 2uu@qlink.queensu.ca

Overview:

Welcome to Ensc. 200! This course could just as easily be called "World History: An Environmental Narrative." We begin about ninety thousand years ago and trace a vast range of human-nature interactions into the twentieth century. The temporal range is thus vast, and the thematic trajectory is complex: we want to gain a better understanding of how human 'practices,' including political thought, social organization, and cultural expression, interact with the non-human world. Having a mere twelve weeks in which to do this, our task is admittedly daunting, and our coverage scandalously superficial. Nevertheless, a workable goal we might set for ourselves is a better understanding, through historical investigation, of the supreme contingency and even coincidence that prevails where humans interact with their non-human surroundings. Enjoy!

Course Requirements & Breakdown of Grades:

There are two written assignments and one final exam for this course. The first assignment, which is 5-7 pages in length, and is worth 15% of your mark, is a review of literature concerning methodological and theoretical challenges in environmental history. This first assignment is due **October 13**.

The second assignment is a critical review essay of Donald Worster's *Dust Bowl*. You are asked to read and critically assess this classic of environmental history in light of the readings you used for the first assignment. This assignment is to be 8-10 pages in length and is due **November 17**. The weighting for this assignment is 45%. More will be said about both assignments in class and, of course, in tutorial.

A final exam, worth 40% of your final grade, will be held during the December exam period. Date and time TBA.

Tutorials:

There will be two optional tutorial sessions for this course. They are scheduled for October 6th and November 10th – conveniently timed for discussion of critical assignment issues. In other words, you are not being graded for your tutorial performance, however you will find these optional sessions eminently helpful as you prepare your brilliantly conceived and elegantly argued term assignments. Please attend these sessions with the intention of contributing, and not merely getting a free ride from your hard-working peers.

Academic Dishonesty:

Don't do it! Academic dishonesty is a serious issue and will not be tolerated. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on exams, 'sharing' work with a friend, or plagiarizing a secondary source – either intentionally, or inadvertently, by failing to provide proper citations. If you are unsure about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please ask me, or refer to the Arts and Science Course Calendar. For information on the conventions of citing material in history, a booklet is available in the Department of History Main Office for a nominal charge. Oh yeah, and don't do it!

Late Policy:

I realize that this is not even an issue with this particular class, but extensions are not normally given for reasons other than illness (with proper medical documentation) or family emergency. Papers that are received late will be assessed a penalty of 2% per weekday. Weekends count as one day.

Required Texts/Readings:

The only book you have to purchase for this course is Donald Worster's *Dust Bowl*, which is available in the Campus Bookstore. Readings for the first assignment are available on the Web. A link will be created from the electronic copy of this syllabus, which is available through the School of Environmental Studies web page: <http://www.queensu.ca/envst/>
All readings for this course will also be available on reserve in Stauffer Library.

Lecture and Class Schedule:

September 15: Introductory: "What is History?"

September 22: Glaciation and the advent of the first 'modern-human' environments
Economy and Ecology of Upper Paleolithic humans

September 29: Humans' turn to settled agriculture: Exploring the centres

October 6: The Ecology of Mediterranean power
Tutorial session held in second half of class

October 13: Classical thoughts on the nature of nature

October 20: Technologies of water in Medieval Europe

October 27 & November 3: Revolutions: Agricultural; Capital; Industrial; Property

November 10: Markets, hunger and El Niño in the nineteenth century
Tutorial session during second half of class

November 17: The social, political, racial and economic dimensions of conservation in 19th C. US

November 24: A New Deal project: The Hoover Dam

December 1: Clashing Cold War ideologies and the natural world