York University and Arizona State University 2008
History 5540
Taught at York University on Thursdays, 11.30-2.30 Ross South 536
In conjunction with Arizona State University (Taught at Arizona State University on Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

Course Website: You will access this through http://moodle.glendon.yorku.ca

York University: Professor Colin Coates
Arizona State University: Professor Susan Gray

Course Description:

This course begins by examining the nature of environmental exchange between Europe and North America, and then turns to the study of the environmental impact that non-aboriginal settlers had on the continent. Alongside the biological changes involved in population growth and resource use, attitudes towards landscape (“wilderness,” rural and urban) will be considered. Because environmental issues cross national boundaries, the course looks at literature concerning both the United States and Canada. The course will be taught by faculty at both ASU and York Universities, and will be open to graduate students at both institutions. Canadian and US faculty and students will share course readings, discussions, and some writing assignments through electronic media and during an exchange visit between the two campuses.

Course Assignments:

This course rests on a series of required weekly readings in North American environmental history from both sides of the U.S./Canadian border, and including material covering the Northeast, the West and Southwest and the North. All course readings have been placed on reserve in the Scott Library, or are available electronically. Most assigned books are available for purchase in the York University bookstore, particularly those which are in short supply at the Scott Library.

There are three written assignments. Twice during the semester, each ASU and York student will be paired with a counterpart from the other institution to discuss together a set of weekly readings and to prepare jointly a five-page paper in response to an essay assignment on the readings devised by the instructors. The discussions and essays are intended as comparative, cooperative exercises. Students may use a variety of media to communicate to one another their ideas about the readings and to draft a single paper, including chat room, email, and the invention of Alexander Graham Bell. The papers will be due in class on the day that the readings are discussed, including those days on which ASU and York meet by video conference and face-to-face. Authors of papers should expect to take a large role in class discussions. To ensure workload equity, students will be paired with a different partner for each essay, and only the higher of the two marks on the papers will be counted toward the final grade. As a final paper, all students will write a ten-page paper synthesizing course readings. All papers should be double-spaced and employ proper citation format.

Because the quality of this course will be determined by the quality of discussion, course participation will count for 20% of the final grade. The two five-page papers will comprise 40% of the grade, and the final ten-page paper the remaining 40%.

6 Sept. Week 1: Introductions and course orientations

13 Sept. Rosh Hashanah – no classes at York

20 Sept. Week 2: The Columbian exchange
• Liza Piper and John Sandlos, A Broken Frontier: Ecological Imperialism in the Canadian North Environmental History (2007)

27 Sept. Week 3: Extermination

4 Oct. Week 4: First nations and the environment I

11 Oct. Week 5: First nations and the environment II (Videoconference I)

18 Oct. Reading break: travel to Phoenix (Thursday to Sunday)

Week 6: Rivers—Grand Canyon I (Friday)
- Donald Worster, A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell (F788 P88 W67 2001)

Week 7: Gender and Sense of Place—Grand Canyon II (Saturday)

25 Oct. – No class

1 Nov. – Week 8: Invaders

8 Nov. Week 9: Forestry and Fire
15 Nov. Week 10: Normative agrarian landscapes (Video-conference II)
- Brian Donahue, Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms and Forests in a New England Town (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001)

22 Nov. Week 11: Tourism
- Claire Elizabeth Campbell, Shaped by the West Wind: Nature and History in Georgian Bay (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005)

29 Nov. Week 12: Cities/urban environments

6 Dec. Week 13: Course appraisal / Video conference III
- [http://niche-canada.org/comment/reply/160 - comment-form](http://niche-canada.org/comment/reply/160 - comment-form)