HIST 301 Seminar in Environmental History

Fall 2016: Islands and Coastlines

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:52, Coleman 219

Professor Claire Campbell [claire.campbell@bucknell.edu](mailto:claire.campbell@bucknell.edu)

Coleman 69 Office hours: Wednesday 10-12, & by appointment

Course Description

Environmental history asks us to consider our relationships with nature in the past: how nature has shaped human thought and human actions, and how, in turn, humans have shaped the ecologies around them. Like other fields of history, it looks for both change and continuity.

Some environmental history focuses on physical or material evidence (sites of resource extraction, patterns of settlement, the grooves of transportation routes). Or it may deal with the imaginative and ideological: how cartography, art, and science help us absorb the new and unknown in nature into political boundaries, bodies of knowledge, networks of exchange, and “sense of place.”

In this course, we’ll examine islands and coastlines in the north Atlantic world, but the questions raised apply to littorals – places where land meets sea – around the world. We’ll talk about everything from climate change and medieval Norse explorations to experimental sustainable design in the late twentieth century. We’re asking how have the ecologies of shorelines affected human history … What can history tell us about our impact on, and adaptation to, coastal environments … How have people made *habitats* out of shorelines?

This is a senior seminar, which means three things: reading, discussion, and writing. We’re going to cover a lot of ground, a lot of time, and a lot of topics. Environmental history is a fascinating way to understand both the past and our current situation on earth, but I know it may be new to you – come talk to me at *any time* about the material or the class.

Required texts, available in the bookstore. Copies are also on reserve at the library or as e-books.

1. *The Vinland Sagas: The Norse Discovery of America*, trans. Magnus Magnusson (Penguin, 1965, 1987)
2. Stephen Hornsby, *Surveyors of Empire: Samuel Holland, J.F.W. Des Barres, and the Making of the Atlantic Neptune* (MQUP, 2011)

[Available as an e-book, but you may want the print version for its superior illustrations.]

1. *Time and a Place: An Environmental History of Prince Edward Island,* eds. Edward Macdonald, Joshua MacFadyen, Irené Novaczek (MQUP, 2016)
2. Andrew Lippman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (Yale University Press, 2015)
3. Richard Judd, *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2014)

Additional readings as indicated below, available via Moodle or the library as e-books.

Course Outline

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| Date | Topic | Assignment |
| August 23 & 25  August 30 & September 1 | Environmental History  Islands & Coastlines |  |
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| September 6 & 8  September 13 & 15 | Coastlines & Climate in the Atlantic World | Proposal Due September 15 |
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| September 20 & 22  September 27 & 29 | Exploration, Mapping, and Power |  |
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| October 4 & 6  October 11 & 13  October 18 & 20 | Coastal Settlements  Fall Recess (October 11)  Library & Research Methods (October 20) | Outline due October 6 |
|  |  |  |
| October 25 & 27  November 1 & 3 | Imagined Islands | Rough Draft Due November 3 |
| November 8 & 10  November 15 & 17 | Coastal Challenges | Peer Review Due November 15 |
| November 22 & 24 | Thanksgiving |  |
| November 29 & December 1 |  | Final Paper Due November 29  Research Presentations |
| December 6 |  | Research Presentations |

Topics and Readings

August 23 & 25 Thinking about Environmental History

J. R. McNeill, “Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History” in *History and Theory* 42:4 (December 2003) 5-43.

W. Jeffrey Bolster, “Opportunities in Marine Environmental History,” in *Global Environmental History: An introductory reader,* eds. J.R. McNeill and Alan Roe (Routledge, 2013) 53-81.

Graeme Wynn, “Reflections on the Environmental History of Atlantic Canada,” in *Land and Sea: Environmental History in Atlantic Canada,* eds. Claire Campbell and Robert Summerby-Murray (Acadiensis Press, 2013) 235-255.

August 30 & September 1 Thinking about Islands & Coastlines

Selections from James Randall, *An Introduction to Island Studies* (ebook, in press)

- 1.1-1.3 (Vulnerability & Resilience; Isolation & Connectedness; Diversity & Cohesion)

- 2.1.3-2.1.4 (Functional and Institutional Definitions of an Island, Perceptual/Cultural/Psychological Definitions of an Island)

John Gillis, “Islands as Ecotones,” *Time and a Place*

Graeme Wynn, “Museums, Laboratories, Showcases: Prince Edward and Other Islands in Environmental History,” *Time and a Place*

Peter Pope, “Historical Archaeology and the Maritime Cultural Landscape of the Atlantic Fishery,” in *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History,* eds. Alan MacEachern and Bill Turkel (Toronto: Nelson, 2008) 36-54.

Richard Judd, “People and the Land in New England,” in *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2014) 1-16.

September 6 & 8 Coastlines & Climate in the Atlantic World

David Keenlyside and Helen Kristmanson*, “*The Palaeo-Environment and the Peopling of Prince Edward Island: An Archaeological Perspective,” *Time and a Place*

Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, revised ed. (New York: Penguin, 2011) ch.6-8, 178-276.

Joel Berglund, “Did the Medieval Norse Society in Greenland Really Fail?” in *Questioning Collapse: Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire*, eds. Patricia A. McAnany and Norman Yoffee (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 45–70.

September 13 & 15 Coastlines & Climate in the Atlantic World II

Selections, *The Vinland Sagas: The Norse Discovery of America* (Penguin, 1965, 1987)

- Introduction, pp. 7-29

- Grænlendinga Saga, Chapters 1-5, 7-8

- Eirik’s Saga, Chapters 2, 5, 8, 10-11

Gisli Pálsson and Astrid Ogilvie, “‘It looks like unfavourable weather is brewing’: Descriptions of weather in the Sagas of Icelanders,” In Sarah Strauss and Benjamin S. Orlove, *Weather, climate, culture* (Oxford, 2003) 251-274*.*

…. continued

Helge Ingstad, “Where was Vinland?,” *Land under the pole star,* trans. Naomi Walford(St. Martin’s Press, 1966) 153-166, 171.

Birgitta Wallace, “The Norse in Newfoundland: L’Anse aux Meadows and Vinland,” *Newfoundland Studies* 19:1 (2003) 5-43.

Mats G. Larsson, “The Vinland sagas and the actual characteristics of Eastern Canada: some comparisons with special attention to the accounts of the later explorers,” from *Vinland revisited, the Norse world at the turn of the first millennium,* ed. Shannon Lewis-Simpson (Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2003) 391-398.

September 20 & 22 Exploration, Mapping, and Power

Stephen Hornsby, *Surveyors of Empire: Samuel Holland, J.F.W. Des Barres, and the Making of the Atlantic Neptune* (2011).

September 27 & 29 Exploration, Mapping, and Power II

Thomas Raddall, *Halifax: Warden of the North* (Doubleday, 1965) 19-28, 35-43, 52-60.

Jeffers Lennox, “An Empire on Paper: The Founding of Halifax and Conceptions of Imperial Space, 1744–55,” *The Canadian Historical Review*, 88:3 (2007) 373-412.

Selections from *New England and the Maritime provinces: connections and comparisons,* eds. Stephen Hornsby & John Reid (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005). Ebook.

- Elizabeth Mancke, “Spaces of power in the early modern Northeast”

- David Sutherland, “Nova Scotia and the American presence: seeking connections without conquest, 1848-1854”

October 4 & 6 Coastal Settlements I

Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (Yale University Press, 2015).

October 11 & 13 Fall Recess/Coastal Settlements II

Joshua MacFadyen*, “*The Fertile Crescent: Agricultural Land Use on Prince Edward Island, 1861–1971,” *Time and a Place*

Edward Macdonald and Boyde Beck, “Lines in the Water: Time and Place in a Fishery,” *Time and a Place*

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Tom Peace, Jim Clifford, and Judy Burns, “Maitland’s Moment: Turning Nova Scotia’s forests into ships for the global commodity trade in the mid nineteenth century,” *Moving Natures: Mobility and Environment in Canadian History,* eds. Ben Bradley, Jay Young, and Colin Coates (U of Calgary Press, 2016) 27-54. <http://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/1880/51203/4/Moving_natures_2016_chapter01.pdf>

October 18 & 20 Coastal Settlements III/Library & Research Methods

Christopher Pastore, *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* (Harvard UP, 2014) chapters 4-6. Ebook.

Nancy Frazier, research librarian <http://researchbysubject.bucknell.edu/envhist>

October 25 & 27 Imagined Islands

Alan MacEachern, “The Greening of Green Gables: Establishing Prince Edward Island National Park, ca.1936,” *Natural selections: National parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001) 73-97.

Geoffrey Baldacchino, “Warm versus cold water island tourism,” *Island Studies Journal* 1:2 (2006) 183-200.

Selections from *A Landscape History of New England*, eds. Blake Harrison and Richard W. Judd (MIT Press, 2011).

* 1. - John T. Cumbler, “Building a tourist landscape in a fragile ecosystem: Cape Cod in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”
  2. - Robert Gee, “Bays and barrens and culture in cans: reconceptualizing coastal landscapes in downeast Maine”

Nova Scotia Archives. “‘Canada’s Ocean Playground’: The Tourism Industry in Nova Scotia, 1870-1970,” virtual exhibit. <http://novascotia.ca/archives/tourism/>

November 1 & 3 Imagined Islands II

L.M. Montgomery, *Jane of Lantern Hill* (1937) <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200881h.html>

Edward MacDonald, “A Landscape ... with Figures: Tourism and Environment on Prince Edward Island,” *Acadiensis* 40:1 (2011) 70-85.

November 8 & 10 Coastal Challenges

Richard Judd, *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014) parts II and III.

November 15 & 17 Coastal Challenges II

Chapter 15, “Island Futures and Sustainability,” *A World of Islands,* ed. Godfrey Baldacchino (Island Studies Press, 2007) 513-535.

Henry Trim, “An Ark for the Future: Science, *153* Technology, and the Canadian Back-to-the-Land Movement of the 1970s,” *Canadian Countercultures and the Environment,* ed. Colin Coates (U of Calgary Press, 2016) 153-178. <http://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/1880/51091/9/CanadianCountercultures_2016_chapter07.pdf>

Mark Nuttall, “Narwhal hunters, seismic surveys, and the middle ice: Monitoring environmental change in Greenland’s Melville Bay,” in *Anthropology and Climate Change: From Actions to Transformations*, eds. Susan Crate and Mark (Taylor and Francis, 2016). Ebook.

November 22 & 24 Thanksgiving

November 29, December 1 & 6 Research Presentations

Evaluation

Your grade consists of two major components: reading and discussion, and an in-depth research paper.

1. Class Preparation and Participation 60%

Discussion, driven by curiosity and a sense of discovery, and informed by the literature on the subject, is key to evolution of scholarship. To quote Bill Cronon, one of the United States’ leading historians, “Learning how to talk intelligently and enthusiastically about significant subjects is actually one of the most important skills you can learn in college.”

This is a collaborative environment in which we are learning together. Come prepared, and come to engage in considered, thoughtful, informed, and on-topic ways. Thorough preparation and engagement are aspects of professionalism. If you are not comfortable speaking in class, please approach this class as an opportunity to practice critical discussion skills.

The university and the classroom can be spaces for wonderful freedoms: freedom of thought, of discussion, of exploration. But they are also places that, like workplaces and the public sphere, require mutually respectful and professional behaviour. This means arriving on time and prepared, and treating each other civilly and generously in listening and conversation. (It also means refraining from using electronic devices in ways that might be considered disruptive or disrespectful to others.) We are very privileged to be here, and should treat these opportunities for learning with the utmost respect.

We will each take turns leading the discussion. This requires preparing a series of questions, prompts, provocations, etc. designed to involve and stimulate the group as a whole, draw our attention to details in the readings, and help us craft larger patterns.

In addition, each week you are to bring to class one paragraph that raises a question with the readings. This is how scholarship grows, through “discourse”: conversation, engagement, and debate with evidence and other interpretations.

2. Research Paper and Presentation 40%

Pick any island, or any coastline, in the world – saltwater or freshwater – and explore some element of its environmental history in a research paper of approximately 3500 words.

That’s it. The choice of location, period, and issue are entirely up to you. But I offer these suggestions:

* Focus, focus, focus. Design a clear thesis question to investigate – something you can articulate in one or two sentences – and clear parameters for when, where, and what you are going to read about. You may wish to apply one of the concepts that comes up in the readings and see how it played out in another place.
* At this level, the paper should contain a historiographical element. You’ll see that historians we will read often begin their articles by summarizing what *other* historians have already said about the subject, and how they intend to contribute to or challenge the conventional wisdom. You need to situate your work in the scholarly conversation.
* Your paper should also employ both scholarly monographs *and* articles, and primary sources where possible. These may be textual or visual; they may include fiction, autobiography, manuscript correspondence, or maps, paintings, and photographs. We have an enormous amount of material available to us through digitized archives. Examples include: Library of Congress, Boston & New York Public Libraries, McCord Museum, Island Imagined/UPEI Library, Nova Scotia Archives, Memorial University Digital Archives.
* We will spend a day (October 20) at the library with Nancy Frazier, the research librarian for history, to discuss scholarly research methods appropriate for each of your papers.
* The Bertrand Library has compiled links to help you access sources in environmental history: <http://researchbysubject.bucknell.edu/envhist>
* It may be that you will want some sources that will need to be obtained through inter-library loans. Budget your time accordingly.
* America History and Life is an excellent database suited to sources for North American history. See <http://researchbysubject.bucknell.edu/amhist?hs=a> .
* Whether or not you choose an island, you may wish to search the Island Studies Journal for source material. <http://www.islandstudies.ca/sites/islandstudies.ca/files/ISJ-Abstract-Compendium-2006-2015.pdf>
* For the peer review, everyone will read and comment on a draft of another’s research paper. Marks are given for the *reader’s* close attention to the foundations of a good paper (structure, organization, clarity, analysis, and evidence) and for thoughtful, constructive comments.
* Style matters. The objective of your paper is to convince your reader that your interpretation is correct. Part of this is academic credibility (appropriate referencing, the depth of research); but part too is the clarity of argument, the lyricism of the phrasing. There’s a science to research, but writing is an art.

Proposal (1-page) with annotated bibliography 5%

Outline 5%

Rough draft 10%

Peer review 5%

Final paper 10%

Presentation 5%

These will only be accepted during class time.

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day.

Please keep an electronic copy of any assignment you submit.

I do not assign extra work in lieu of the assignments outlined in this syllabus. It is incumbent upon you to fulfill these responsibilities.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity and honesty are at the core of the community of scholarship of which we are a part. I will follow University policies for academic honesty and plagiarism, which can be found at <http://www.bucknell.edu/x1324.xml>.

Please note the University Honor Code:

As a student and citizen of the Bucknell University community:

1. I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors.

2. I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.

3. I will let my conscience guide my decision to communicate directly with any person or persons I believe to have been dishonest in academic work.

4. I will let my conscience guide my decision on reporting breaches of academic integrity to the appropriate faculty or deans.

Bucknell University expectations for academic engagement

Courses at Bucknell that receive one unit of academic credit have a minimum expectation of 12 hours per week of student academic engagement. Student academic engagement includes both the hours of direct faculty instruction (or its equivalent) and the hours spent on out of class student work. Half and quarter unit courses at Bucknell should have proportionate expectations for student engagement.

Student Needs and Accommodation

If you have anything you would like to talk to me about that would you succeed in this class, please come see me.

Students with University-recognized disabilities who may need classroom accommodations should contact me as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. See <http://www.bucknell.edu/x7752.xml> for more information.

Learning Goals

We will aim to achieve the following learning goals of the History Department, as mapped onto those of the university, and Environmental Connections courses:

- Develop an understanding of the practice and purpose of the field of environmental history, and specifically, the relationships between people and nature in North America in the past (1, 2, 7)

- Consider the relationship between history and other disciplines, and the range of available sources, in understanding the relationship between environmental and historical change (3, 7)

- Speak and write reflectively and articulately in response to class material, scholarly interpretation, and different perspectives (2, 3, 4, 5)

- Investigate a topic of interest and analyze its environmental and historical significance in a scholarly paper that demonstrates intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, a thorough and considered plan of research, and a convincing and accessible format (1, 2, 3, 5)

- Learn more about the value of history in understanding the state of landscape and society in the present (7)

Environmental Connections Learning Goals

1. Students will analyze, evaluate, and synthesize complex interrelationships between humans and the natural world.
2. Students will evaluate critically their personal connections to the natural world in one of the following ways: reasoning about ethical issues, directly experiencing the natural world, connecting to their community, or relating individual choices to larger societal goals.
3. Students will apply knowledge of the physical, cultural, or social connections between humans and the natural world, according to their interests and disciplinary preferences, in at least one of the following ways:

Tracing the fundamental physical interconnections between humans, other species, and the environment

Explaining how natural systems function and how human actions affect them

Distinguishing between human impacts and natural changes

Elucidating the concept of sustainability

Analyzing current cultural narratives that shape our relationship to the environment

Analyzing societal mechanisms that influence our relationship to the environment

Assessing governance and political conflicts regarding human-environment relationships

Understanding the role of technological, economic and scientific knowledge in environmental decision-making and power relations between social actors.

History Department Learning Goals

1. Demonstrate a base of knowledge about important periods, events, and ideas in different cultures.
2. Understand the historical context of ideas and events and evaluate differing scholarly interpretations of the past.
3. Critically evaluate and analyze historical evidence, when appropriate, in the form of primary documents.
4. Write articulately and persuasively on historical themes and issues based on critical understanding and logical, rigorous, and creative thinking.
5. Speak articulately and persuasively on historical themes and issues, based on critical understanding and logical, rigorous, and creative thinking.
6. Demonstrate basic research skills and understanding of historical methods, including an ability to use the library and read intelligently and with purpose.
7. Demonstrate a synthesis of all of the above in an encompassing historical literacy.

Bucknell University Learning Goals

1. Learn, integrate and apply knowledge and methodological approaches through in-depth study of an academic discipline.
2. Integrate and synthesize a range of knowledge, perspectives and creative methods acquired through study and practice across multiple academic disciplines and diverse educational experiences.
3. Develop knowledge and skills for interpreting the commonalities and differences among human societies, including diverse cultural perspectives and traditions within the United States and internationally, to enable living and working effectively in a global context.
4. Develop knowledge and skills to identify and respond creatively and effectively to local and global challenges to humans and the natural world.
5. Understand the importance of and develop the capacities for self-assessment, ethical reasoning and effective interaction with others so as to act responsibly and to promote justice in professional and communal life.
6. Develop critical thinking skills to evaluate arguments and address complex issues using techniques including quantitative and qualitative analysis and scientific reasoning.
7. Develop skills in oral and written communication to articulate ideas and arguments clearly and effectively.
8. Develop information literacy and technological competency across disciplines.
9. Develop the desire and intellectual skills for lifelong learning.