To understand the past, historians must consider the role of the reciprocal relations between humans and non-human nature. This course provides an overview of land use and environmental change in Canada and the United States by examining changes in non-human nature, socio-economic interactions of humans and their environments, and human perceptions of the natural world. Lectures, readings, and discussion will cover a wide range of topics, including ecological imperialism, deforestation, agriculture, urbanization, conservation, wildlife, energy consumption, environmental movements, and climate change. Students will have the opportunity to explore the role of nature as agent of historical change.

Format:

The class will meet every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for one-hour lectures from 10:00am to 11:00pm. Friday lectures will involve student participation.

Participation & Discussion

Every Friday there will be a discussion lecture based on the week’s readings. Students must prepare a one-page written answer to a discussion question that will be posed at the end of Wednesday’s lecture. This written answer will count towards the final participation mark. The instructor will then lead a discussion for the Friday class.

Assignments & Marking:

There are two written assignments for this course. The first written assignment is a short primary document response essay (5 pages) based on a choice of a number of different primary documents. Students must answer an essay question regarding the selected primary document.

The second written assignment is a research essay (18-20 pages) based on a selection of themes in North American environmental history.

All late written assignments will be penalized one full letter grade per day (up to five days) and all term work should be submitted no later than the last day of classes.

There will also be a take-home final exam for this course.

The course instructor will be available to meet with students during office hours to discuss upcoming assignments and returned work. Contact through email should be limited to short discussion. Any concerns of a more detailed nature should be brought up during office hours. The course instructor cannot discuss grades over email.
Should you wish to discuss a graded assignment, please allow 24 hours to review the mark and comments before contacting the course instructor or teaching assistants (this includes email).

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure in an assignment to suspension from the university. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in the University of British Columbia calendar:

http://www.students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,286,0,0

Required Texts:

- Custom course pack

Evaluation:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Short Response Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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Week 1: Approaching Environmental History (January 5, 7, 9)

Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, Prologue: Rocks and History, pgs. 3-7.
William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” [course pack].

Week 2: Aboriginal North America (January 12, 14, 16)

Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, Ch. 1 Wilderness Under Fire, pgs. 11-21.
Robert Boyd, “Strategies of Indian Burning in the Willamette Valley” [course pack].

Week 3: Ecological Imperialism (January 19, 21, 23)
Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, Ch. 2 A Truly New World, pgs. 22-39; Ch. 3 Reflections from a Woodlot, pgs. 40-54.

Alfred Crosby, “Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation of America” [course pack].

Liza Piper and John Sandlos, “A Broken Frontier: Ecological Imperialism in the Canadian North” [course pack].

**Week 4: Animals as Resources in Early North America (January 26, 28, 30)**


**Week 5: Remaking Landscapes (February 2, 4, 6)**

***Short Essay Due on Monday, February 2***


**Week 6: Agricultural Frontiers (February 9, 11, 13)**

Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, Ch. 5 King Climate in Dixie, pgs. 72-88; Ch. 7 Extracting the New South, pgs. 99-115; Ch. 8 The Unforgiving West, pgs. 116-135.


**Reading Week: February 16-20**

**Week 7: Conservation of the North American Forest (February 23, 25, 27)**

Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, Ch. 4 A World of Commodities, pgs. 57-71.

Michael Williams, “Clearing the United States Forests: Pivotal Years, 1810-1860” *Journal of Historical Geography* 8 (2) 1982: 12-28 [course pack].


**Week 8: The Parks Movement (March 2, 4, 6)**

**Week 9: Energy & Consumption (March 9, 11, 13)**


**Week 10: The Nature of Cities (March 16, 18, 20)**


**Week 11: Science and Environmental History (March 23, 25, 27)**

***Long Essay Due on Wednesday, March 25***


**Week 12: The Modern Environmental Movement (March 30, April 1, 3)**


**Week 13: Climate Change (April 6, 8)**

Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, Ch. 16 In Corporations We Trust, pgs. 269-295. Liza Piper, “Colloquial Meteorology” in MacEachern and Turkel, *Method & Meaning*, pgs. 102-123.