

HIST/ENST 301
Seminar in Environmental History: Islands & Coastlines
Spring 2021 Remote (COVID) Wednesdays 1:50-4:40 pm

Contact

Professor Claire Campbell
claire.campbell@bucknell.edu
Office hours: 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.

Sometimes 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 as sites of environmental history. We’ll concentrate on the north Atlantic world, but the questions will apply to *littorals* – a French word for shoreline, 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’ll ask: 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 it may be new to you – please talk to me at *any time* about the material or the class.

Pandemic Caveat: We’ll meet in class time by Zoom (Wednesdays 1:40 pm), with all readings, discussion questions, and any supporting material available via Moodle. But synchronous/Zoom is taxing in particular ways, so we will need to make space and time for breaks (go outside!) and some asynchronous work as well.

As historians, we’re able to recognize that none of us have been in a situation like this before. We will all need to bring not just curiosity about the subject and dedication to learning, but patience, kindness, and good humour with each other and ourselves.

I would ask that you be present by keeping your camera on. If you do not feel comfortable doing so for any reason, please contact me; you may also prefer to substitute a virtual backdrop (in Settings → -> In Meeting (Advanced)).

We will be recording class meetings via Zoom. These recordings will be maintained confidentially and will only be accessible as needed to students enrolled in this class. If you are not willing to be part of a recording, please let me know.

Course Materials

Most readings are available electronically through the library and on the Moodle site, because of the current circumstances. If at all possible, though, I encourage you to purchase the “real” books in order to better engage with the material (and perhaps use them for your research), especially those that look of interest or those from which we’re reading a significant amount. You may wish to explore Abebooks for used copies, so please consult this syllabus for a full list of each week’s readings.

Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment / Notes
1	February 3	Environmental History of Islands & Coastlines	
2	February 10		
3	February 17	Coastlines and Climate in the Early Atlantic World	Library Lab February 17
4	February 24		
5	March 3	Coastal Contact, Conflict, & Colonization	Proposal due March 3
6	March 10		
7	March 17	Coastal Cities	Outline due March 17
8	March 24		No class
9	March 31		
10	April 7	Competing for Coastlines	
11	April 14		Rough Draft Due April 14
12	April 21	The Present & Future Coast	Peer Review due April 21
13	April 28		
14	May 5	Research Presentations & Conclusions	Final Paper Due May 5
15	May 11 (Tuesday)		

Cluster 1: Environmental History of Islands and Coastlines

Week 1: What is Environmental History?

Graeme Wynn, "Reflections on the Environmental History of Atlantic Canada," in *Land and Sea: Environmental History in Atlantic Canada* (Acadiensis Press, 2013) 235-255.

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.

Week 2: Islands and Coastlines

John R. Gillis, Conclusion, *The Human Shore: Seacoasts in History* (University of Chicago Press, 2013) 187-198.

Isaac Land, "The Urban Amphibious," *The New Coastal History: Cultural and Environmental Perspectives from Scotland and Beyond* (Springer, 2017) 31-48.

Matthew McKenzie, "Reassembling the Greater Gulf: Northwest Atlantic Environmental History and the Gulf of St Lawrence System," *The Greater Gulf: Essays on the Environmental History of the Gulf of St. Lawrence* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019) 20-34.

<http://www.environmentandsociety.org/arcadia/collection/17807>

Cluster 2: Coastlines & Climate in the Early Atlantic World

Week 3: Vinland and the North Atlantic

Selections, *The Vinland Sagas: The Norse Discovery of America* (Penguin, 1965, 1987; trans. Magnusson & Palsson) <https://archive.org/details/vinlandsagasnors0000unse>
- Grænlendinga Saga, Chapters 2-5, 7-8 and Eirik's Saga, Chapters 2, 5, 8, 10-11

Anne Stine Ingstad, *The New Land with the Green Meadows*, trans. Stenehjelm (Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1975, 2013) 21-23, 141-145, 150-151, 168-178.

Joel Berglund, "Did the Medieval Norse Society in Greenland Really Fail?" in *Questioning Collapse: Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire*, eds. McAnany and Yoffee (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 45-70.

Week 4: Coastal Cold and Colonial Response

Stephanie Pettigrew and Elizabeth Mancke, "European Expansion and the Contested North Atlantic," *Terrae Incognitae* (2018) 15-34.

Peter E. Pope, "The Consumer Revolution of the Late 16th Century and the European

Domestication of North America,” *Exploring Atlantic Transitions: Archaeologies of Transience and Permanence in New Found Lands*, eds. Pope and Lewis-Simpon (The Boydell Press, 2013) 37-47.

Thomas Wickman, Chapter 2: “Overwintering: Or, when the colonists stayed year round,” *Snowshoe Country: An environmental and cultural history of winter in the early American northeast* (Cambridge University Press, 2018) 56-90.

Gregory Kennedy, *Something of a Peasant Paradise? Comparing Rural Societies in Acadie and the Loudunais, 1604-1755* (McGill-Queen’s Press, 2014) 27-33.

Cluster 3: Coastal Contact, Conflict, & Colonization

Week 5: Indigenous Coastlines

Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (Yale University Press, 2015) Prologue and Chapters 1-3, ix-124.

Week 6: A Colonial Coast

Christopher Pastore, *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* (Harvard UP, 2014) Chapters 4-6, 130-227.

Cluster 4: Coastal Cities

Week 7: Colonial and National Ports

Stephen Hornsby, Chapter 5: “British American Towns,” *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in the Early Modern British America* (UPNE, 2005) 180-203.

Mary Ryan, Chapter 2: “Shaping a Port on the Patapsco: From Parcels to Lots” and “British Colony to American Town,” and Chapter 4: “The Streets: The Mundane Spaces of Democracy,” *Taking the Land to Make the City: A Bicoastal History of North America* (University of Texas Press, 2019) 64-86 and 152-163.

Week 8: No Class

Week 9: Urban Waterfronts

Stephen Mosley, “Coastal Cities and Environmental Change,” *Environment and History* (2014) 517–33.

Michael Rawson, Chapter 4: “Making the Harbor,” *Eden on the Charles: The Making of Boston* (Harvard University Press, 2010) 179-232.

Sean Fraga, The Coastal History Blog: “Elevated Waterfronts: Bird’s-Eye View Maps and Urban Coastal History” (2019) <http://porttowns.port.ac.uk/47-elevated-waterfronts-birds-eye-view-maps-and-urban-coastal-history/>

Cluster 5: Competing for Coastlines

Week 10: Industrial Occupants

Jack E. Davis, Chapter 10: “Oil and Texas Toe Dip” and Chapter 11: “Oil and the Louisiana Plunge,” *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea* (Liveright Publishing, 2018) 261-303.

Michael J. Chiarappa, “Dockside Landings and Threshold Spaces: Reckoning Architecture’s Place in Marine Environmental History,” *Environmental History* (2013) 12-28.

Week 11: The Allure of the Shore

Lucy Maud Montgomery, Chapters 15-17 and 34-35, *Jane of Lantern Hill* (McClelland and Stewart, 1937).

John T. Cumbler, Chapter 7: “The Golden Age of Tourism,” *Cape Cod: An Environmental History of a Fragile Ecosystem* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2014) 149-172.

Glen M. Grasso, “Escaping the Maritime Revival Movement,” *Fluid Frontiers: New Currents in Marine Environmental History*, eds. Gillis and Torma (White Horse Press, 2015) 39-51.

Cluster 6: The Present and Future of the Coast

Week 12: Return and Restoration

Mikkel Thelle, “Creating the Creative Urban Waterfront in Scandinavia: Harbour Areas from Industrial Multitude to Planned Creative Spaces,” *Cities and Creativity from the Renaissance to the Present*, eds. Van Damme et al (Taylor & Francis, 2017) 197-215.

Florian Urban, “Copenhagen’s ‘Return to the Inner City’ 1990-2010,” *Journal of Urban History* (2019) 1-23.

Stephanie Wood, “Blue carbon: the climate change solution you’ve probably never heard of,” *The Narwhal* (September 2020) <https://thenarwhal.ca/blue-carbon-climate-change-canada/>

Week 13: Living by the New Sea

Elizabeth Rush, “The Marsh at the End of the World,” in *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore* (Milkweed, 2019) 47-70.

Janna Graham, “The Banished Sea” (2020)

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thesundayedition/the-sunday-edition-for-june-14-2020-1.5604357/rising-sea-levels-threaten-marsh-ecosystem-and-key-transportation-link-between-atlantic-provinces-1.5604438>

Cluster 7: Research Presentations and Looking Forward

Evaluation

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

1. Class Preparation and Participation 60% (Seminar lead: 10%)

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 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.

How will this work?

We will each take turns leading the discussion. Each week at least two people will be responsible for the readings; they can decide how to share the material between them. 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. These will be due by 5 p.m. the *Wednesday before*. (That’s right, a full week. Otherwise I will supply discussion questions which you will direct, but for no points.)

Three hours is a long time, especially over Zoom, so plan on a break every hour. Discussants can also choose to assign “asynchronous” writing time or activity in the final hour by way of response.

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. Consider your research question as defined by *where, when, and what*. You’ll then pursue the *why and how*.
- At this level, the paper should contain a historiographical element. In other disciplines this is called a literature review. 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 and New York Public Libraries, Island Imagined/UPEI Library, Nova Scotia Archives, Memorial University Digital Archives.
- This is, at its heart, a history class, though it engages (and attempts to explain) the current state of affairs. Your paper should, at its heart, query the way historians do: what happened in the past, and why?
- We will spend part of a class in February in the library (virtually) with **Nancy Frazier**, the research librarian for history, to discuss scholarly research methods appropriate for each of your papers. Her contact information is on Moodle, and she is an *invaluable* resource.
- This syllabus is a good starting point for authors, journals, keywords, and topics. 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.
- Whether or not you choose an island, you may wish to search the Island Studies Journal for source material. <https://www.islandstudies.ca>
- 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.
- The last two classes will be devoted to presentations on your research project and findings (guidelines on Moodle).

Proposal (1-page) with annotated bibliography 5%

Outline 10%

Peer review 5%

Final paper 15%

Presentation 5%

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day.

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 responsibility, which can be found at <https://www.bucknell.edu/academics/current-students/academic-support-responsibility/academic-responsibility>.

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, at any point in the semester, please let me know.

If you may need academic accommodation, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources as soon as possible at oar@bucknell.edu :

<https://www.bucknell.edu/life-bucknell/diversity-equity-inclusion/accessibility-resources/accessibility-resources-students/academic-accommodations>

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.