The American Environment
Hist 341-01

Instructor: Dr. Timothy Sistrunk
Office: 210 Trinity Hall  Office hours: T-Th 12:00-2:00 and by appointment
email: Tsistrunk@csuchico.edu

Required Reading:
Steinberg, Ted.  Down to Earth, Nature’s Role in American History
Isenberg, Andrew C.  The Destruction of the Bison
Carson, Rachel.  Silent Spring

Purpose and Objectives:

This course is designed to give the student an appreciation of the many ways that Americans have interacted with the natural world and the effects they have had upon it. Different conceptions of nature will also be explored as they have been applied to social, political and economic relationships over time.

To this end, the class will consist of lectures, films, slide presentations, student presentations and discussions. Our range of inquiry will be dictated, especially, by the original documents and secondary literature that we will be reading, however, throughout the course, there will be ample opportunity to explore students special interests.

Note: This course is an approved upper division theme course for theme D.

Grading:

Standard Grading scale  (100-90% = A; 89-80% = B etc...)

Paper 15%, Examinations (25% each) 75%, Participation 10%
(1000 pts. total)

Research Paper: (See the assignment sheet). The student will explore one of the two perspectives suggested about their personal environmental history.

The paper project will be worth 150 pts. The paper should be typed and double spaced. Grades will be based on the student's ability to use original sources to support an interpretation, his or her use of library materials and overall presentation (grammar, organization, spelling). The paper itself will be due in class on May 12. **Late topic statements will lose credit and papers and abstracts will lose ½ of a letter grade each day that they are not turned in after these dates.**

Participation: Be active, alive, awake! Discuss works intelligently, bring up questions in class, and show that you have thought about the reading. Class writings, presentations and discussions will also be evaluated as will overall class etiquette (25 pts). Students will submit 3 short response papers on the readings (25 pts). **Excessive absences will harm your grade.** (50 pts.)
Examinations  The first exam will cover weeks 1-4; the second exam will cover weeks 5-10; the third exam will cover weeks 11-15. Short answer, multiple choice and essay selection. A study sheet will be provided.

*** You must have a medical excuse from the student health center or on letterhead paper from your doctor if you miss an exam for medical reasons. If something unforeseen happens make-ups will be offered at a time convenient for the instructor. There are no make-ups of make-ups.

** Any student who has a disability of any kind that might prevent the fullest expression of her or his abilities should contact me the first week of the class so that we can discuss class requirements. Likewise, any student who foresees conflicts with assignments because of religious holidays should discuss these with me the first week of class.

Schedule (Subject to Change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>(Jan. 26, 28)</th>
<th>Introduction, What is Environmental History Earth, Preface, Prologue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>UNPAID FURLOUGH DAY January 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>(Feb. 2, 4)</td>
<td>Native/ Colonial New England Earth, Chapters 1, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>(Feb. 9, 11)</td>
<td>Colonial Impacts Earth, Chapter 3</td>
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<td>UNPAID FURLOUGH DAY S Feb. 12, 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>(Feb. 16, 18)</td>
<td>Commodification Earth, Chapter 4</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>(Feb. 23, 25)</td>
<td>Southern Contrasts Earth, Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Exam Feb. 23</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>(March 2, 4)</td>
<td>Bison Decline Isenberg</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>(March 9, 11)</td>
<td>Great Central Valley Earth, Chapters 6, 7, 8</td>
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<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>(March 23, 25)</td>
<td>Conservation and the West Earth, Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>(March 30)</td>
<td>Progressive Urbanization Earth, Chapter 10</td>
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Welcome to Upper Division Theme D: Environmental Issues

The Environmental Issues Theme aims to achieve these central goals and objectives:

- to impart an understanding of and an appreciation for the place of the human species in the global ecosystem,
- to examine the ways that the environment has influenced human behavior,
- to provide skills and information necessary to assess human environmental impacts and
- to pursue ways to maintain Earth’s life-support systems.

In order to provide unity and coherence, each course in the Environmental Issues Upper Division Theme has been designed by theme instructors in consultation with one another to employ a core set of concepts, theories, issues, pedagogical approaches and activities.

Concepts/Theories common to all theme courses:
- Interconnectivity – the ecological principle: highlighting the interrelationships that characterize the natural order and the place of humans in that order
• Unintended Consequences – the precautionary principle: caution is the best policy when altering the environment, due to the difficulty of foreseeing all the consequences of human activity
• Plurality of Worldviews – value pluralism: diverse interpretations of the relationships between humans and nature
• Disciplinary Perspectives – problems of evidence: what counts as knowledge and what counts as evidence depend on criteria that are often discipline specific

I. Issues common to all theme courses:
• Resource Use (Food, Water, Energy, Shelter)
• Human Population / Consumption
• Biodiversity Loss
• Global Warming / Climate Change

Approaches common to all theme courses:
• Common vocabulary – employing and explaining key terms across theme courses, for example, “ecological consciousness, biocentrism and anthropocentrism.”
• Spirit of Hope – A solution orientation so students emerge from theme courses with ideas and direction to address humanity’s current environmental crises
• California – Reference to the special environmental problems and opportunities presented by California’s unique social, political, economic and ecological identity
• Sustainability – Attention to the broader environmental questions raised by human development as concerns the economy, social equity, and the environmental consequences of human development

**Activities common to all theme courses:**
• Ecological Footprint – activities dealing with the impacts of various human production and consumption patterns
• Civic Engagement – projects designed to take students outside the classroom to make an impact on the community with what they have discovered in class