HIST 1800 – Introduction to Global History: The Environmental History of the Modern World
Fall 2014

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HIST 1800 is a course designed to introduce History majors to broad themes in global history. Each section of 1800 is taught with a particular topical focus, and this course will focus on the relatively new field of environmental history, which examines how humans have both impacted and been influenced by environmental forces over time. More specifically, this course will examine one of the most important dimensions of the history of the world since 1500: the profound and sometimes troubling growth of the human presence upon the planet and the acceleration of human impacts upon environmental systems. We will focus on themes such as population growth, natural resource use, industrialization, urbanization, energy systems, food and agricultural modes of production, disease, colonialism and imperialism, the rise of environmental thought and politics, disasters, and climate change.

The course will be divided into three sections. The first, “The Emergence of the Modern World,” will look at the deep history of human-environmental interactions and the significant ruptures that began to occur between 1500 and 1800. The second, “The Modern World,” will examine the profound powers that human began to gain over the natural world (and each other) through industrialization and its associated developments. The third, “The Great Acceleration,” will look at the rapid increase in human environmental impacts since 1950 as well as the rise of global environmental politics.

This course is animated by my conviction that we are facing some profound environmental challenges at the beginning of the twentieth century, but my goal in this course is not a political one. Rather, it is to insist that we cannot make sense of our current environmental crises without understanding the past, environmental and human.

Books

The following books are required for the course:

- Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*
- Barbara Freese, *Coal: A Human History*
- Mark Dowie, *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict between Global Conservation and Native Peoples*

All books are available at the CU Bookstore as well as from the usual online outlets. Aside from these books, there will be a series of articles assigned throughout the semester that will be available electronically, either via the web or posted to Desire2Learn.
Course Work

Students will be expected to attend class regularly, to carefully read each of the assigned texts, and to participate in class discussions. A significant portion of your grade – 20% – will be based on your attendance and classroom performance. I will take attendance every day, and your attendance grade will be based on the percentage of the classes that you attend (each absence is a deduction of 2.5 points). While I appreciate knowing when you will miss a class, I do not excuse absences – a missed class is a missed class. Students will also be penalized for arriving late to class, so please arrive on time.

There will be three exams in the course – two midterm exams and a final exam. Each exam will test you on the material from 1/3 of the course, and thus each will be of equal worth. I will provide study guides as the exams approach. Together, the exams will be worth 60% of your grade.

You will also be asked to write a series of one-page reaction essays on days when you have assigned reading and we have discussion. The primary function of the reaction essays is to prepare you for discussion. Please use these essays as your chance to think through aspects of the reading that you would like to discuss in class. Please avoid summarizing the readings; while I do want you to demonstrate that you have read the material, I am much more interested in hearing what you thought about it and what you would like to talk about in class. Do not be fooled by the length of these essays. They may be short, but they demand time and care.

There are two other important rules for these reaction essays:

- **You must stick to the one-page limit; essays that spill beyond one page will not be accepted!** This means that you will have to express yourself with efficiency if you are going to say something substantial and interesting—which is the goal. Essays must be double-spaced and in a reasonable type size (12 point) and font (Times New Roman is good) with normal 1 inch margins.

- **Essays are due prior to class on the days they are due, and they should be submitted through D2L.** Late essays and essays from students who do not attend the discussion section, or who substantially arrive late, will not be accepted. The only exceptions will be in cases where students make arrangements with me significantly in advance – by which I mean at least a couple of days ahead of time.

Grading Breakdown

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Essays</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
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General Grading Policy for Essays

Below is a general outline of how I will grade written work:

**A – Excellent Work** is: original, exceptionally insightful, very well written/presented, efficiently organized, and thorough, with very few mistakes and a professional appearance.

**B – Good Work** is: insightful, clearly written/presented, organized, and thorough, with few mistakes and a professional appearance.

**C – Satisfactory Work** is: solid but unremarkable in terms of insight, lacking some organization and/or clarity, and adequately written/presented, with several mistakes.

**D – Poor Work** is: lacking insight, disorganized, poorly written, mistake-ridden, and reflective of a general lack of effort.

**F – Failing Work** is: work that fails to meet the most basic requirements of the assignment.

I encourage you to ask questions about these guidelines and to speak with me if they are unclear, or if you are confused or frustrated about a grade. I am open to reconsidering a grade, though you must make an argument for why I should do so.

Technology Policy

I do not allow the use of laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices in class. This is my policy for several reasons. First, I find that students are easily distracted when they have the temptation of internet connectivity. Second, I find that laptops and tablets, even when they are being used appropriately, have the tendency to suck students’ attention into the device, diminishing engagement with others in the class. Finally, research has shown that writing out class notes leads to greater retention of information than does the typing of notes.

There will be a class Desire2Learn page that will be up and running by the end of the first week of class.

Course Schedule

**PART 1 – THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN WORLD to 1800**

August 25 – Introduction
August 27 – Environmental History and Deep History
August 29 – DISCUSSION: The Problem of the Anthropocene

**READ:** Steffen et al, “The Anthropocene”

*Reaction Essay Due*
September 1 – NO CLASS – Labor Day
September 3 – The First Great Transition: The Rise of Agriculture and Its Impacts
September 5 – NO CLASS
   LISTEN: RadioLab Story on the Galapagos Islands: http://www.radiolab.org/story/galapagos/
   * Reaction Essay Due

September 8 – The World in the 15th Century
September 10 – The Columbian Exchange and The Biological Expansion of Europe (and Africa)
September 12 – DISCUSSION
   READ: Mintz, xv-73
   * Reaction Essay Due

September 15 – The Age of the Ocean
September 17 – The Unending Frontier, Part I
September 19 – DISCUSSION
   READ: Mintz, 75-150
   * Reaction Essay Due

September 22 – The Unending Frontier, Part II
September 24 – Mosquito Empires
September 26 – DISCUSSION
   READ: Mintz, 151-214
   * Reaction Essay Due

September 29 – EXAM #1

* The rest of the syllabus will be available soon

Other Important Dates

November 3 – EXAM #2

University Policies

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions: Injuries, Surgeries, and Illnesses guidelines under Quick Links at Disability Services website and discuss your needs with me.
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html. If you will be missing a class for religious observance, please inform me beforehand so that we can make accommodations for the work you will miss.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

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All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://honorcode.colorado.edu