HIST 1800 – Introduction to Global History: The Environmental History of the Modern World
Spring 2016

Professor
Paul S. Sutter
Office Hours: Wednesdays – 2:00-3:00 pm and by appointment
Hellems 212
303-492-6208
paul.sutter@colorado.edu

Teaching Assistant
Jill Bjerke - jillian.bjerke@colorado.edu

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. This course will focus on the relatively new field of environmental history, which examines how humans have both shaped and been influenced by environmental settings and 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, direct and indirect, upon environmental systems. We will focus on themes such as population growth and migration, natural resource use, industrialization, urbanization, energy systems, hunting and fishing, food and agricultural modes of production, disease, colonialism and imperialism, the rise of environmental thought and politics, disasters, and climate change.

The guiding and overarching concept for the course will be the “Anthropocene”: the notion that, over the last several hundred years (or longer for some), human activity on earth has become such a dominant and pervasive force that it ought to be recognized as the signature characteristic of our current geological epoch. We will talk about this concept in much greater detail throughout the semester.

The course will be divided into three sections. The first section, “The Emergence of the Modern World,” will begin with a quick look at the deep history of human-environmental interactions and then turn to the significant changes that began to occur between 1500 and 1800, what many historians call the Early Modern period. The second section, “The Modern World,” will examine the profound powers that humans began to gain over the natural world (and each other) through industrialization and its associated developments between 1800 and 1950. The third section, “The Great Acceleration,” will look at the rapid increase in human environmental impacts since 1950, particularly in the so-called developing world, as well as the rise of global environmental politics.

This course is animated by my conviction that we are facing profound environmental challenges at the beginning of the twenty-first 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.
Required Texts:
- Charles C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*
- Gillen D’Arcy Wood, *Tambora: The Eruption that Changed the World*
- Elizabeth Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change* (Revised and Updated Edition only)

All books are available at the CU Bookstore as well as from the usual online outlets, and they should be on reserve in the Main Library.

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. While I appreciate knowing when you will miss a class, I generally do not excuse absences – a missed class is a missed class, and students can still get an attendance grade in the A range with a few absences. Students will also be penalized for arriving late to class, so please arrive on time. Your participation grade will be more subjective but will reflect my sense of your overall engagement during class time as well as the quality of your contributions to class discussions.

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

You will also be asked to write a series of one-page reaction essays, which will usually be due on days when you have assigned reading and we have discussion. You should 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. Essays must be double-spaced and in 12 point type size with normal 1 inch margins.
- **Essays are due prior to class on the days when 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 arrive substantially 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. **Please also bring a paper copy of your essays to class.**
## Grading Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Essays</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Grading Range:

A = 93+; A- = 90-92.9; B+ = 87-89.9; B = 83-86.9; B- = 80-82.9; C+ = 77-79.9; C = 73-76.9; C- = 70-72.9; D+ = 67-69.9; D = 63-66.9; D- = 60-62.9; F = <60

### Letter Grade Equivalents:

A = 95; A- = 92; B+ = 88; B = 85; B- = 82; C+ = 78; C = 75; C- = 72; D+ = 68; D = 65; D- = 62; F = 0-60 (any F given will have a specific numerical value attached to it)

## General Grading Policy for Essays

Below is a general outline of how we 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 used appropriately, tend to suck students’ attention into the device, diminishing engagement with others in the class. Finally, research has shown that hand writing class notes leads to greater retention of information than does the typing of notes.
Course Schedule

PART 1 – THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN WORLD to 1800

January 11 – Introduction: What Is Environmental History?
January 13 – When Does History Begin? Environmental History and Deep History
January 15 – DISCUSSION: The Problem of the Anthropocene
   *Reaction Essay 1 Due

January 18 – NO CLASS – MLK Day
January 20 – The First Great Transition: The Rise of Agriculture and Its Impacts
January 22 – DISCUSSION – READ: Mann, 1-151
   * Reaction Essay 2 Due

January 25 – Collapse: Pre-Modern Parables of Environmental Decline
January 27 – The Columbian Exchange: The Biological Expansion of Europe and Africa
January 29 – DISCUSSION – READ: Mann, 157-247
   * Reaction Essay 3 Due

February 1 – The Age of the Ocean
February 3 – The Unending Frontier
February 5 – NO CLASS

February 8 – Settler Societies and Plantation Societies
February 10 – The World Hunt
February 12 – DISCUSSION – READ: Mann, 359-509
   * Reaction Essay 4 Due

February 15 – A Fire History of the World to 1800
February 17 – Catch Up/Review
February 19 – MIDTERM EXAM I

PART II – THE MODERN WORLD, 1800-1950

February 22 – The Second Great Transition: Britain and the Industrial Revolution
February 24 – Forests and Deforestation
February 26 – DISCUSSION – READ: Wood, 1-120
   * Reaction Essay 5 Due

February 29 – Modern Agriculture and the Fertilizer Revolution
March 2 – New Ways of Thinking About Nature
March 4 – DISCUSSION – READ: Wood, 121-234
   * Reaction Essay 6 Due
March 7 – Urbanization
March 9 – Conservation and the Global Environment
March 11 – DISCUSSION – READ: Tucker, 1-112
  * Reaction Essay 7 Due

March 14 – Health and Disease
March 16 – The Nature of Imperialism
March 18 – DISCUSSION – READ: Tucker, 113-222
  * Reaction Essay 8 Due

SPRING BREAK – March 21-25

March 28 – Warfare and Nature
March 30 – Catch Up/Review
April 1 – MIDTERM EXAM II

PART III – THE GREAT ACCELERATION, 1950 TO THE PRESENT

April 4 – What Is the Great Acceleration?
April 6 – The History of Climate Science
April 8 – DISCUSSION – READ: Kolbert, 1-90
  * Reaction Essay 9 Due

April 11 – Health and the Epidemiological Transition
April 13 – The Politics of Global Population
April 15 – DISCUSSION – READ: Kolbert, 93-189
  * Reaction Essay 10 Due

April 18 – The Green Revolution
April 20 – New Energy and Resource Landscapes
April 22 – DISCUSSION – READ: Kolbert, 193-278
  * Reaction Essay 11 Due

April 25 – Water Development
April 27 – The Many Faces of Environmentalism
April 29 – Conclusion
  * Reaction Essay 12 Due

FINAL EXAM – Wednesday, May 4, 4:30-7:00 pm
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.

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://hr.colorado.edu/dh/

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