COURSE DESCRIPTION

From the Catalog: Surveys writings from a relatively new genre of historical scholarship that attempts to explain the relationship between human society and the natural world. Course is reading and writing intensive, and requires students to conduct a research project.

Additional:
Any soldier who has marched through rain, snow or heat, or dug a vehicle out of the mud can tell you that nature can sometimes be an enemy in warfare. Others could point to how terrain helped them defend a position, or rain grounded the enemy’s aircraft, making nature an ally. Humans continually try to bend nature to their needs and desires, a process greatly accelerated with the coming of modern age in the mid-eighteenth century. How does this play out in age of mass armies and “total war”? What is the relationship between warfare and the environment? What areas can we study to find out?

In this class we will seek answers to these and other questions. The course covers warfare from the eighteenth century to the present, focusing on humanity’s relationship to the natural world. We will see how this relationship played out geographically, socially, economically and culturally. The class includes discussion of natural features (rivers, oceans, mountains etc.), large-scale human activities (urbanization, industrialization, “total war”, trade, etc.), and ideas (nature preservation, environmentalism).

REQUIRED BOOKS

Additional Readings: Required additional readings will be posted on Canvas and available online and as handouts.
LEARNING OUTCOMES: HIST 3950 is designed to develop:

- **historical knowledge**
  - focusing on complex issues of causation (in a course that will examine political ideologies, economic structures, social organization, cultural perceptions, and natural environments)

- **historical thinking**
  - recognizing the radically different nature of past experience
  - explain what influence the past has on the present
  - avoiding the interpretive trap of “presentism” (which imposes the experiences, assumptions, and prejudices of our time on earlier figures who could not possibly anticipate the modern world)
  - understanding and applying the variety of approaches to history
  - understanding the contested nature of historical interpretation (i.e. historians do not agree on everything)

- **historical skills**
  - focusing on careful, thoughtful reading of assigned texts,
  - aiming for clear, coherent, and meaningful writing in essay exams, and
  - developing critical appreciation of both primary and secondary historical sources

COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance**
I will take attendance every class session. However, things come up in life, so I will allow FOUR unexcused absences. Any unexcused absence after that subtracts 10 points from your Attendance & Participation grade. Excused absences include official University activities, and medical and/or family emergencies. You must inform me ahead of time about excused absences.

*If you miss a class,* it is your responsibility to make arrangements with a classmate to keep you informed on material covered in class, or come to office hours.

**Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism**
I expect students to abide by the policies on academic honesty outlined by Utah State University: [http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=265](http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=3&navoid=265)

Review this statement of USU policy on cheating, falsification, and plagiarism.

**Make-ups & Late Work**
I only grant make-up exams for emergencies and official university activities. You must notify me in advance if this will occur. Late papers may receive reduced grades or be refused entirely and receive a zero. This is at my discretion.
E-mail
Students are invited to come to office hours, (or make an appointment) which is the best means of discussing questions on course material. If you cannot attend office hours, I am happy to respond to emails M-F, and will make every effort to respond by the next business day (unless otherwise announced). Please note that I am unable to answer individual requests for students who were absent about what was covered in class via email, nor do I discuss grades over e-mail.

COURSE ETIQUETTE
Attending class, being on time, paying attention, asking questions and participating in discussions and activities will help your grade. Missing class, being late, not paying attention, and being disrespectful of other students and their opinions will hurt your grade.

Electronic and Other Devices: No recording or filming is allowed in lecture without my prior permission, given only to students who have a legitimate need. Unless stated otherwise, phones (smart or other) should be turned off or on vibrate and be put away during class. On-call emergency personnel should see me as soon as possible if they need to be exempted from this rule.

Laptops and Tablets: The only use for a laptop or tablet during class sessions for this course is to take notes on the lectures, if you really feel it is necessary. Otherwise, it should be shut off and closed. Recent research has shown that taking notes by hand is more effective than using a laptop or tablet. You make the call.

http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away

I reserve the right to revoke this privilege.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Lectures: I will present course material using PowerPoint presentations. I will also use websites, YouTube videos, art, music, movie clips and artifacts to help you understand the material.

Discussions & Activities are important components of this course. We will look more closely at the readings, exploring major themes and exchanging opinions and insights. Depending on how things go, I may split the class into two sections for discussions. Details to follow.

Please note that my classes are safe, tolerant environments for the free exchange of ideas. We will at times cover sensitive and/or controversial topics. I expect you to approach these ideas with civility, respect, and the critical distance appropriate to an academic setting, communicate your perspectives and arguments with appropriate sensitivity and sincerity, and respect others’ opinions. This is not Fox News or MSNBC; you will be asked to leave if your behavior is disruptive.
GRADING

Your Final Grade will consist of:

- Attendance and Participation 15%
- Response Essays 30%
- Midterm Exam 15%
- Final Exam 15%
- Research Paper 25%

Your Attendance and Participation grade is calculated on the amount of unexcused absences you accumulate, and your level of participation in class discussions. In terms of participation, everyone is different; you do not need talk a lot to do well: ask good questions, offer feedback, and respect your fellow students. If you have trouble speaking up in groups, please let me know.

Response Essays
I will ask you to submit three short (2-3 pages) response essays covering the assigned readings (see Schedule below). I will announce the questions in class and post them on Canvas. These will be opinion pieces, so content will be fairly open. I will distribute a handout early in the semester.

Research Paper
Each student will prepare a 7-10 page research paper using primary and secondary sources. I will provide a suggested list of topics and instructions early in the semester. Students are encouraged to choose their own topic with my approval.

Exams: these will not be comprehensive: each will cover only one half of the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE
(Subject to Change: I will notify you in advance)

WEEK 1: August 29-Sept 2: Intro/What is Environmental History?
Readings:
- McNeill, “Preface” and “Prologue”, 50-83
WEEK 2: Sept 5-9: Topics in Environmental History

Readings:

- McNeill 149-191, 269-323

9/5: Labor Day: NO CLASS

WEEK 3: Sept 12-16: War and the Environment-Overview

Readings:

- McNeill, 341-349
- Richard P. Tucker, “Introduction” and “The Impact of Warfare on the Natural World” in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*
- Charles Closmann, “Introduction: Landscapes of Peace, Environments of War” in *War and The Environment*

WEEK 4: Sept 19-23: Landscapes and Resources

Readings:


WEEK 5: Sept 26-30: The American Civil War

Readings:

- Mark Fiege, “Gettysburg and the Organic Nature of the Civil War” in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*
- Lisa M. Brady, “Devouring the Land: Sherman’s 1864-1865 Campaigns,” in *War and the Environment*

Friday, 9/30: RESPONSE ESSAY #1 DUE
WEEK 6: Oct 3-7: Imperialism in Asia and Africa
Readings:
- Stewart Gordon, “War, Military and the Environment: Central India 1560-1820” in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*

WEEK 7: Oct 10-14: WWI
Readings:
- Dorothee Brantz, “Environments of Death: Trench Warfare on the Western Front, 1914-1918,” in *War and the Environment*
- Selections from *Mud: A Military History*

WEEK 8: Oct 17-21; Fascist Environmentalism
Readings:

Thursday 10/20: Fall Break Makeup Day: MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 9: Oct 24-28; WWII Part 1

Friday, 10/28: RESPONSE ESSAY #2 DUE
WEEK 10: Oct 31-Nov 4; WWII Part 2
Readings:
- Edmund Russell, “‘Speaking of Annihilation’: Mobilizing for War Against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-1945” in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*

WEEK 11: Nov 7-11; WW2 Part 3/Postwar Europe
Readings:
- Andrew Jenks, “Model City USA: The Environmental Cost of Victory in World War II and the Cold War,” *Environmental History* 12 (July 2007): 552-77. CANVAS

WEEK 12: Nov 14-18; Cold War Part 1: The Soviet Union
Readings:

Friday, 11/18: RESPONSE ESSAY #3 DUE

WEEK 13: Nov 21-25; Cold War and Pop Culture
- William Tsutsui, "Looking straight at THEM!: Understanding the Big Bug Movies of the 1950s" *Environmental History* 12 (2007). CANVAS
11/23 & 11/25: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY: NO CLASS

WEEK 14: Nov 28-Dec 2; Vietnam and Chemical Warfare
Readings:
Friday, December 2: **RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

**WEEK 15: Dec 5-9: The Post-Cold War World**

*Readings:*
- McNeill, “Epilogue”
- Lisa Brady, "Life in the DMZ: Turning a Diplomatic Failure into an Environmental Success", *Diplomatic History* 32:4 (Sept. 2008) 585-611. [CANVAS]

**FINAL EXAM: WEDNESDAY, DEC 14:** 1:30pm-3:20pm