



HIST 5313.1W1

## Seminar in Environmental History

Summer I



Hans Wastson, "Bison Outside of Denver."

**Instructor:** Kendra K. DeHart, Ph.D.

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**Office:** LH 208

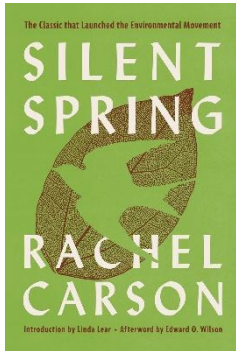
**Office Hours:** No scheduled office hours during summer sessions; however, I am more than happy to schedule individual in-person or TEAM meetings with you or have phone chats. Also, feel free to email me any time with questions or observations.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

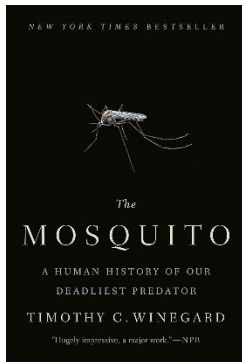
What is Environmental History? Fundamentally, Environmental History is an interdisciplinary field of study that examines the dynamic and reciprocal relationships between human societies and the natural world. Its underlying assumption is that the natural world plays an active role in human history. Human-nature interactions are thus a “two-way street. Humans don’t just act on nature; nature also acts on humans [and] influences their decisions, limitations, and opportunities.”

As an independent summer study, this course briefly explores the dynamic and often complex relationship between human societies and the natural world across diverse historical periods and geographical regions. Due to time constraints, students will mostly gain an introduction to the discipline of environmental history as well as interrogate a very important concept—what is “agency” in both the human and the non-human world?

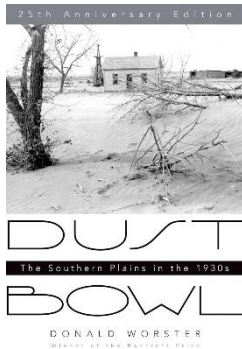
## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**



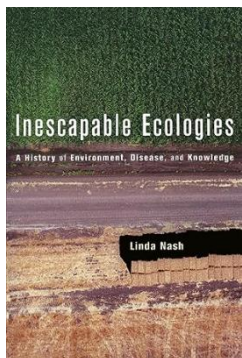
Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Boston: Mariner Books Classics, 2022.



Winegard, Timothy C. *The Mosquito: A Human History of Our Deadliest Predator*. New York: Dutton, 2020.



Worster, Donald. *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.



Nash, Linda. *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

**NOTE:** Supplemental primary and secondary readings will also be required. These readings will be uploaded to Blackboard for you to download, or they will be provided by the professor.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The graduating student in history will be able to:

1. The history student will demonstrate historical research skills in a logically organized, written paper that is mechanically correct and supported by relevant documentation of historical content.
  - Marketable Skills:
    - Students will learn the importance of meeting deadlines in a successful manner.
    - Students can identify the differences between primary and secondary sources, a crucial step in developing critical thinking skills.
    - Students can learn to select and organize data in a relevant manner.
    - Students can hone their writing skills.
2. The history student will demonstrate the ability to write about topics in historiography and how those topics are interpreted.
  - Marketable Skills:
    - Students can learn how ideas and interpretations change over time.
    - Students can learn how to evaluate different interpretations and ideas.
    - Students can learn how to use evidence to persuade various audiences.
3. The history student will demonstrate knowledge of American History, World History, and Non-American History.
  - Marketable Skills:
    - Students can develop a better understanding of the development of various cultures, political and economic systems, gender and race relations, and environmental change.
    - Students can develop a multicultural perspective necessary for an increasing globalized world.
    - Students can learn how to manage and absorb various perspectives and information.

The Student Learning Outcomes will be measured by the administration of exams, book reviews, presentations, and research papers.

## **GOALS OF THIS COURSE:**

At the end of this course, the student should have a greater appreciation of the history of women and their contributions to American history. The student will:

1. Identify and define what is environmental history.
2. Explore concepts of human versus nature interactions.
3. Identify and critically analyze individuals, programs, issues, and events who have contributed to the changing aspects of human's interactions with nature.
4. Identify and explain the shifting economic, political, social, and cultural movements that have contributed to the environmental movement in United States.
5. Differentiate between primary and secondary sources in US history.

6. Hone the craft of analytical writing through assignments that incorporate the skills of developing a thesis statement, contrasting an argument, analyzing texts, and properly citing sources.

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

1. **Attendance:** This is a web-delivered course designed to be an independent study. As such, we will not have virtual meetings unless individual students request them. You are responsible for keeping up with the assignments and syllabus. **Responsibilities for notifying faculty for arranging potential make-ups rest with the students.** If you miss an assignment, you must contact me directly via email with an explanation.
2. **Contacting the Instructor:** The instructor's email is the preferred method of contact. Students should use the phone number only for emergency situations, but note that not all phone messages will be returned.

All email messages to the instructor should **include your name, your class section number, and a simple message** stating the reason you are contacting the instructor. During the week, emails will normally be answered within twenty-four hours. Emails that arrive late Friday afternoon, Saturday, or Sunday most likely will not receive a reply until Monday, but you may send an email at any time.

3. **Make-Up Policy:** I will give make-up assignments only in extreme cases. Students who are unable to complete an assignment on the due date must notify the professor by email or phone within 48 hours. Students who do not give such notification and provide documentation will not be allowed to take to make-up the assignment.
4. **Late assignments:** Late assignments incur a 10-point penalty for every 24-hour period that passes from the due date and time until the instructor receives the assignment, unless other arrangements have been made.
5. **Your Responsibilities:** Each student has individual responsibilities that go beyond simply showing up for class and completing the assignments.
  - a. **Mutual courtesy and respect:** Courtesy and respect for others are essential elements of the academic culture. The academic environment welcomes a difference of opinion, discourse, and debate within a civil environment, and we will all engage in mutual courtesy and respect for one another. To that end, address comments to the entire class rather than to adjacent students, and remember the Golden Rule—treat others as you would like to be treated.
  - b. **Academic calendar and course information:** Students also have a responsibility to be familiar with the key dates on the academic calendar (such as deadlines for dropping the course and the first and last days of class) in addition to course-specific information (such as exam dates and all other course requirements as outlined in the syllabus).

6. **Academic Misconduct:** Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. Violation of college, state, or federal standards with regard to plagiarism, cheating, or falsification of official records will not be tolerated. Students violating such standards will be subject to discipline as outlined in the Student Handbook. Anyone caught engaging in academic misconduct in an exam or assignment will automatically receive an “F.” Specific examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:
- a. **Cheating:** Copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; Using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release; Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself.
  - b. **Plagiarism:** The appropriation, theft, purchase or obtaining by any means another’s work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one’s own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another’s work without giving credit therefore. **Importantly—AI Generated Content is considered plagiarized!**
  - c. **Collusion:** The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.

**Statement on Academic Honesty:** “The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.”  
—Excerpt from the Student Handbook

**\*\*NOTICE TO STUDENTS\*\*:** *At certain times this semester, we will be discussing historical events that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I am happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with me individually, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.*

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. **Introductory Post:** On Blackboard, please post a brief introduction of yourself. There is no limit here of what you can include—favorite food, music, family (including furry ones), hobbies, etc. Please do include what you consider to be your favorite era of American history along with what you would like to do with your MA.

2. **Book Notes:** Prior to submitting your book review, you will be required to submit book notes on each of the four books we will read this term. Your book notes should include the author's overall thesis as well as a chapter-by-chapter summary of the book's content.
3. **Book Reviews:** All students will read four books and write a book review on each of the books listed above. A handout will be provided on how to write a successful book review along with guidelines of what is expected. Book reviews must be no more or no less than three pages.
4. **Reflection Paper:** After reading two articles on Blackboard, you will post a brief reflection with a prompt provided on Blackboard.
5. **Final Reflection Paper:** After reading the articles and books assigned for this course, students will write a reflection paper identify and critiquing key themes in environmental history. The sky is the limit! No outside research is required. More guidelines will be provided on Blackboard. These papers will be between 5 to 7 pages. **This will count as the final exam for this course.**

### **GRADES:**

Students can earn a possible 1,000 points by the end of this course.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Introductory Post	50 pts.
Book Notes (4 @ 50 pts. each)	200 pts.
Book Review (4 @ 100 pts. each)	400 pts.
Reflection Paper	100 pts.
<u>Final Paper</u>	<u>250 pts.</u>
Total Possible	1,000 pts.

#### Grade Breakdown:

1,000 to 900 pts.	A
890 to 800 pts.	B
790 to 700 pts.	C
690 to 600 pts.	D
590 <	F

A Range = Outstanding. All assignments are turned in on time and reflect thoughtful and analytical thinking with a thorough understanding of historical events and trends.

B Range = All assignments are turned in on time and are above average but are not outstanding work. They demonstrate an understanding of historical events, but the analytical thinking is weaker than that for an "A."

C Range = Average. Assignments indicate an average understanding of historical events. Work tends to be narrative rather than analytical.

D Range = Below average. Writing is mostly narrative. There is no analysis and narrowly answers the question assigned. Assignments are incomplete.

F Range = Fail. Assignments are not turned in or are late without the instructor's approval. They are substantially below average and fail to answer the questions. Plagiarizing, of course, will result in disciplinary action.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is Sul Ross State University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartz, M. Ed., L.P.C, in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8691. Email: [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu)

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports.

### **Classroom Climate of Respect:**

This class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

### **SRSU Distance Education Statement:**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

**Library Information:**

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires logging in with your LobolD and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

**SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

*Note: This syllabus with its schedule is an expectation of class topics, learning activities, and anticipated student learning. However, the instructor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule that would result in enhanced or more effective learning on the part of the students. Students will have prior notification of any necessary changes in the schedule.*

**WEEK I: May 28 to May 30**

- **Read:** William Cronon's "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative" in the *Journal of American History* (March 1992) and Linda Nash's "The Agency of Nature of the Nature of Agency" in *Environmental History* (Jan 2005)
- **Due 6/3:** Reflection #1—What Is Environmental History?

**WEEK II: June 3 to June 7**

- **Due 6/9:** Book Notes & Book Review over *The Mosquito: A Human History of Our Deadliest Predator*

**WEEK III: June 10 to June 14**

- **Due 6/16:** Book Notes & Book Review over *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*

**WEEK IV: June 17 to June 21**

- **Due 6/23:** Book Notes & Book Review over *Silent Spring*

**WEEK V: June 24 to June 28**

- **Due 6/30:** Book Notes & Book Review over *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge*

**WEEK VI: July 1 to July 3**

- **Due 7/3:** Final Papers Due