

HIST 172: AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Citrus College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2024
Credits:	3
Total Contact Hours:	54
Lecture Hours :	54
Lab Hours:	0
Hours Arranged:	0
Outside of Class Hours:	108
Total Student Learning Hours:	162
Strongly Recommended:	ENGL 101.
District General Education:	D1. History and Political Science
Transferable to CSU:	Yes
Transferable to UC:	Yes - Approved
Grading Method:	Standard Letter, Pass/No Pass

Catalog Course Description

An exploration of the relationship between the natural environment and human societies living in the area now occupied by the United States, from ancient times until the present. The course examines different cultural traditions and regional patterns of resource use, diverse concepts of the natural world, environmental regulation, the environmentalist and environmental justice movements, and contemporary responses to the climate crisis. 54 lecture hours.

Course Objectives

- Identify major turning points in the environmental history of North America prior to 1783 and of the United States from 1783 to the present.
- Evaluate and synthesize information about American environmental history from a variety of secondary and primary sources.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the contributions and experiences of various ethnicities, races, genders, and regions in American environmental history and environmental activism.

Major Course Content

1. Ancient North America
 - a. landscape and climate
 - b. human migration
 - c. climate changes and extinctions
 - d. Indigenous world views and cultures
 - e. patterns of resource use
2. Native-European Encounters
 - a. European concepts of "virgin soil" and wilderness
 - b. Columbian Exchange
 - c. conquest and enslavement
 - d. European settlement and land use
 - e. the mission system
3. "Nature" and the Market Revolution
 - a. plantation agriculture and slavery
 - b. African rice traditions
 - c. removals and land loss as genocide
 - d. the Gold Rush
 - e. railroads and antebellum infrastructure

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4. Industrialization and Urbanization
 - a. mass production
 - i. food
 - ii. equipment
 - iii. consumer products
 - b. agribusiness
 - c. energy use
 - d. water and air pollution
 - e. urban sanitation
 - f. early mass transit systems and suburbanization
 - g. the automobile
 5. Contested Legacies of Reform, Preservation, and Conservationism
 - a. progressive reforms, urban and rural
 - b. dams, irrigation, and power
 - c. creation of the National Parks System
 - d. conservation versus preservation
 - e. New Deal programs
 6. Postwar America
 - a. challenging the prosperity narrative
 - b. car culture
 - c. the Interstate Highway System
 - d. suburbanization and segregation
 - e. urban renewal and its critics
 - f. resource extraction
 7. Environmentalism
 - a. *Silent Spring*
 - b. 1970s environmental movement
 - c. creation of the EPA
 - d. California pollution and state regulations
 - e. nuclear and other hazardous waste
 - f. the environmental justice movement
 8. Contemporary issues
 - a. the Anthropocene debate
 - b. climate crisis
 - c. fire and drought in California
 - d. current regulations
 - e. international models and diplomatic efforts
 - f. current activist groups and strategies

Suggested Reading Other Than Required Textbook

Environmental History (journal)

Examples of Required Writing Assignments

Students will submit three one-to-two-page reading responses throughout the semester, reflecting upon content from an article or book chapter and integrating it with that of other course materials such

as previous readings or lectures. Students will evaluate the author's argumentation and the reading's contribution to their own understanding of environmental history.

Examples of Outside Assignments

Final Project: Students will identify an environmental factor (e.g., smog, drought) affecting quality of life of people in their community (e.g. the college campus or their own neighborhood), trace its historical origins, assess community awareness around this issue, and develop a short presentation, podcast, video, or written report designed to educate and engage community members.

Instruction Type(s)

Lecture, Online Education Lecture

IGETC Area 3: Arts and Humanities

3B. Humanities

IGETC Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences

4. Social and Behavioral Sciences, 4F. History

IGETC Area 6: Languages other than English

No