HIST 180 – Global Environmental History of the Twentieth Century
Instructor: Edward Melillo

Office Hours (Rice 307): Spring 2008
Wednesday: 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Office Phone: (440) 775-8528
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Course Description: This course examines the environmental history of the world since 1900 with a particular focus on Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and China. We will use books, articles, three films, and a range of online media to illuminate the comparative and interdisciplinary possibilities of global environmental history. In addition to studying the past, we will explore how to use historical knowledge in the formulation of policy recommendations and grassroots initiatives for addressing contemporary environmental issues.
Format: Our class will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00-12:15 p.m. in King 343. Class attendance is mandatory; class participation is 10% of your final grade.

Required and Recommended Texts:
4. In addition, I have recommended: J.R. McNeill, Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World (New York: Norton, 2000). We will refer to this text on several occasions, so you may find it useful to own a copy. I will post all readings from McNeill’s text on Blackboard.
5. Unless I hand them out in class, all other readings will be available on Blackboard as scanned texts or as links to online articles.

Assignments:
1) Three short papers: During the third week of the semester, I will provide you with a list of five essay topics with accompanying due dates. Each of these topic questions will ask you to use your knowledge of environmental history to formulate a policy recommendation or design a grassroots initiative to help solve a contemporary environmental problem. From among the five topics, you should choose three on which you will write. You must write a paper for the first due date. Your essays should be between 5-6 pages in length (no longer) and double-spaced. Each essay is worth 15% of the final grade. You will hand in your essays at the end of class on the day that they are due. Late assignments will lose at grade point per day (e.g. A → A-).
2) Three Map Quizzes: At the beginning of the Latin America, Africa, and China units, I will ask you to locate on a map a series of relevant countries, key cities, and/or major ecological zones. I will provide you with study guides for these quizzes ahead of time.
3) Final Exam: The final exam will consist of short identification questions, a mapping exercise, an image identification section, and two essay questions.

Assessment of Your Work:
Your final grade will reflect your performance on the short papers (45%), your map quizzes (15%), your final exam grade (30%), and your class participation (10%).

Honor Code: The Oberlin community takes its honor code very seriously. You should be familiar with the honor code, which is available for download at: http://www.oberlin.edu/students/life/rules-reg.html
It is crucial that you write and sign the honor code on all work you hand in for this class. The Code reads: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code on this assignment.”
Course Schedule

Tuesday, February 5: Introduction

Thursday, February 7: No Class – I will be at a conference in Salt Lake City
Please read the following:

- *Something New Under the Sun*, xii-18, 212-226.

*Latin America:*

February 12 & 14: 1900-1930s

- **I will give you a list of essay topics in class.**

February 19 & 21: 1940s-1960s

- **Map Quiz – February 19**


- *Trouble in Paradise*, pp.129-211.
- In-class film: “Charcoal People” (Vanguard Cinema, 2001)
Essay 1 – February 28

Sub-Saharan Africa:

March 4 & 6: 1900-1930s

- Map Quiz – March 6

March 11 & 13: 1940s-1960s

- In-class film: “Darwin’s Nightmare” (Image Entertainment, 2007)


- Please read the contents of the following *afrol News* website on African deforestation: http://www.afrol.com/features/10278

Essay 2 – March 20

- March 25 & 27: Spring Break -
China:

April 1 & 3: 1900-1930s
• Robert Marks, “‘People Said Extinction Was Not Possible’: Two Thousand Years of Environmental Change in South China,” Ch. 2 in Alf Hornberg, ed., Rethinking Environmental History: World-System History and Global Environmental Change (New York: Altamira Press, 2007), pp. 41-60.
• The River Runs Black, pp. 1-57.
• Map Quiz – April 3

April 8 & 10: 1940-1960s
• The River Runs Black, pp. 59-175.

April 15 & 17: 1970s-2000
• The River Runs Black, pp. 177-274.
• In-class film: “Inside China” (PBS Home Video, 2006)

Essay 3 – April 17
The World:

April 22 & 24: Synoptic Views, Local Knowledge(s)
- In-class film: “Black Gold” (Mongrel Media, 2006)

Essay 4 – April 24

April 29 & May 1: Alternative Perspectives
- In-class film: “Harvest of Fear” (PBS Home Video, 2001)

May 6 & 8: History and Ecology
- Something New Under the Sun, 325-362.

Essay 5 – May 8

May 11-13: Reading Period