HIST 336. Environmental History of Latin America
Winter 2010
Mon, Wed, Fri: 10:10 – 11:05 (Wilson 2010)

Professor Mark Carey

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course examines how diverse peoples have historically thought about, lived with, utilized, and transformed the environment in what is today Latin America. It also explores ways in which the physical environment helped shape human history—how climate, natural disasters, ecological life zones, natural resources, crop diseases, and epidemics influenced people's lives.

As we will see during the course, environmental history is a fascinating way to study the past and better understand the present. Our ideas about nature, landscape, science, technology, land use planning, and conservation emerged from historical relations with our physical environment. Yet these ideas about the environment are always embedded in power structures and social relations. Environmental management has thus favored those groups with the most power—power over others and over their surroundings. Nature, we will then see, is as much cultural, social, political, and economic as it is "natural" or ecological. To understand how these views changed over time, the course moves quickly through ancient indigenous societies, arrival of Europeans in the Americas, Enlightenment thinking about nature, the evolving natural sciences, the post-1870 capitalist commodification of natural resources, conservation, and environmental justice.

**** This course fulfills requirements in Environmental Studies and Latin American and Caribbean Studies***

CORRESPONDING LECTURE SERIES

We are privileged this term to have four superb guest speakers visiting campus for the "Nature and Politics in the Americas" lecture series that I have organized to correspond with the course. You *must* attend all four of these public lectures, which are all on Thursday evenings in Leyburn Library's Northen Auditorium. Course papers, group projects, and presentations of your own will be built around these speakers and their exciting research. The lectures are as follows:

Feb. 18:	"Nothing New about NAFTA: North American Connections and Their Historical Lessons" Sterling Evans, University of Oklahoma
March 4:	"Where are the Parks? Great Ideas, Cultural Contexts, and Conservation in Mexico" Emily Wakild, Wake Forest University
March 18	"50 Years of Climate, Culture, and Landscape Change in the Mt. Everest Region" Alton Byers, The Mountain Institute
March 25:	"Peasants, Political Violence, and the Environment in Chile" Thomas Klubock, University of Virginia

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Course learning objectives focus on three areas: (1) the development of historical literacy through historiographical analysis, which includes the ability to identify key points in a scholarly argument, to assess an argument's strengths and weakness, and to analyze key points of disagreement between two or more scholarly interpretations of a major historical development; (2) the development of critical writing skills to convey historical knowledge; and (3) the development of oral communication skills to convey historical knowledge.

COURSE READINGS

There are no assigned books for this course, only book chapters and articles. You can access most of these readings electronically through jstor, Project Muse, or other catalogs available through our library website. Some readings I will post as PDFs on the Sakai course website. I recommend that you log into Sakai to see if the assigned readings are there; if there is no PDF there, then you should simply access it on line yourself. I will also alert you in class about access options for upcoming readings.

Refer to the "Course Schedule" below for the readings for each class meeting.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Map Quiz	5%
Reading Quizzes (5)	15%
Short Paper	20%
Group Presentation	15%
Research Paper	30% (10% of this is for topic, outline, and presentation)
Participation	15%

MAP QUIZ

On the first day of class you will be given a blank map of Latin America and 50 terms (cities, regions, countries, geographical features, and other important place names). On Monday, January 18, you will be asked to locate these places on a blank map. For the quiz, you will be given a map and 11 places; you will have to locate 10 of them.

GROUP PROJECT AND GUEST SPEAKERS

The second half of this course focuses on four themes: the ecology of international trade; conservation and national parks; climate history; and environmental justice. Each of these corresponds with one of the guest speakers coming to W&L. Your task in groups of four people has four components:

1. The group must do research and reading to place the speakers' scholarship in the broader context of his/her topic. This will require outside research beyond assigned readings.
2. The group must give a 15-20 minute formal Power Point presentation to the class about your theme in Latin American environmental history and the scholar's specific historiographical contributions to that broader literature. Be creative, use multiple media, and have fun with this presentation. Creativity, accessibility, engagement with the class, and presentation quality are as important as the conclusions conveyed in these presentations.
3. The group must provide a 5-6 page synthesis write-up on the their research and conclusions—that is, a critical argument about how the scholar engages and contributes to the broader historiography on that topic (trade, conservation, climate, or environmental justice) in Latin American environmental history.
4. The group must generate five questions for the guest speaker—questions that will help guide our class discussion the day after each public lecture. Ask hard questions. Remember, each speaker has been investigating this topic for years; they know a lot and have thought about these issues. Pose questions on theory, specific historiographical debates, broader historical contexts and trajectories, and relevance for Latin American societies, policies, economies, race and class relations, culture, and environmental management today. This is our opportunity to hear some of the world's leading experts on these topics. Use the opportunity to engage them critically.

We will select topics and assign groups in the first week of the term. The timeline and deadlines for the speakers and group projects are as follows:

International Trade: Public Lecture by Sterling Evans: Feb 18, 7pm, Northen Auditorium
Group presentation and questions due: Feb. 17
Write-up due: March 1

Conservation: Public lecture by Emily Wakild: March 4, 7pm, Northen Auditorium
Group presentation and questions due: March 3
Write-up due: March 10

Climate: Public lecture by Alton Byers: March 18, 7pm, Northen Auditorium
Group presentation and questions due: March 17
Write-up due: March 24

Env. Justice: Public lecture by Tom Klubock: March 25, 7pm, Northen Auditorium
Group presentation and questions due: March 24
Write-up due: March 31

SHORT PAPER

The short paper is a 7-8 page essay that relates to the work of one of the four guest speakers. However, your short paper cannot examine the same topic as your group project. Thus, if your group project is on climate, you must write a short paper on one of the other three topics.

You may select which topic to write on for your short paper, which means you can also select the due date of your paper because it will be due the day the speaker comes to our class as follows:

International Trade:	Feb. 19
Conservation:	March 5
Climate:	March 19
Environmental Justice:	March 26

The goal is to compare the speaker's own work to the broader environmental history scholarship assigned in the course. In other words, you must analyze the specific assigned writings of one of our four guest speakers in the context of other readings you've finished for this course. What does the speaker have to say that is more or less compelling than the others? Which interpretation is most plausible, and on what grounds? How do scholars build on each others' work? These historiographical essays should focus solely on the assigned readings, though you may refer to outside readings if you approve them in advance. You must analyze at least four separate readings. The best papers will provide your own unique, original, and creative analysis of the course readings while simultaneously offering your own argument beyond the simple comparison of authors.

Papers should be 7-8 pages, double spaced with one-inch margins and 12 point font. The best papers (those earning A's) will demonstrate: (1) a solid understanding of course content and readings; (2) a high level of analytical depth; (3) effective use of historical evidence; (4) sophisticated, original ideas; and (5) clear, polished writing. Refer to the writing guidelines included at the end of this syllabus for more details about papers and grading.

RESEARCH PAPER

The research paper (12-15 pages) will be an historiographical essay analyzing a single topic in Latin American environmental history. The goal is not primary source research, though you could go in that direction if you approve your topic in advance. Rather, the objective is to understand how different scholars have approached a topic or issue. For example, you might be interested to explore the history of climate change in Latin America. How have different authors approached and analyzed the question of climate? What are the scholarly debates about historical climate-society relations? How have scholarly debates and questions changed over time?

Some sample paper topics may include the following: conservation, deforestation, ranching, ecotourism, native land use, cash crops (pick one, such as bananas), natural resource extraction (mining, oil, etc.), agriculture, climate, natural disasters, water, natural history, etc.

Like for the short paper, your final paper must: (1) analyze how and why the authors' interpretations are different; and (2) convey what you believe is the more compelling interpretation of that topic. Your final essay must analyze at least 3 books and 7 articles on your topic. The best papers will not only analyze the additional readings you do on your topic outside of class, but will also provide your own unique, original, and creative analysis of the course readings and themes. All papers must make a single argument expressed in a thesis at the outset.

To ensure that you produce excellent final papers, there will be several mileposts through the course: (1) select your topic and provide a working bibliography in Week 4; (2) hand in an outline in Week 9; and (3) present the paper in a formal presentation in Week 11 or 12. These check-ins will

help us work together to ensure high-quality source evaluation, historiographical analysis, and writing. Final papers must use footnotes following the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Refer to the writing guidelines included in this syllabus for more details about papers and grading.

Final papers are due on Wednesday, April 14 at 5pm.

READING QUIZZES

During the semester, you will take 6 unannounced, 10 minute, in-class quizzes asking you to analyze the day's assigned readings. Quizzes may consist of short answers or brief essays. Quizzes cannot be rescheduled or retaken except under extraordinary circumstances. I do, however, drop the lowest grade to count only the best 5 of your 6 quizzes. Nonetheless, it is absolutely imperative that you attend class regularly in order to take these quizzes.

PARTICIPATION

This course requires active participation in every class. All readings will be discussed on the day they are due, so you should arrive in class with readings finished and some questions in mind. Additionally, please interrupt me at any time to pose questions or ask for clarification.

Note the following guidelines for participation grades:

A

- attends all classes
- contributes to most discussions
- demonstrates that you have read *and* thought about assigned readings
- pushes the discussion in provocative directions that transcends readings and illuminates broader course themes

B

- attends class regularly and participates often
- shows that you have read most assigned readings
- contributions prove competence but do not necessarily demonstrate innovation or creativity

C

- absent from class repeatedly OR
- attends regularly but rarely participates
- contributions do not reflect in-depth understanding of readings

D

- absent from class repeatedly
- rarely participates in class
- contributions generally on topics that require no knowledge of course readings/themes

F

- excessive absences
- impinges on class discussion
- disrespectful, malicious, or threatening in class

COURSE POLICIES

- Students must complete all course assignments by finals week in order to pass this course.
- Late papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade (for example, B to B-) per day, including weekends.
- Papers are due in class, and those papers handed in after class on the due date will be considered one day late.
- Papers will not be accepted by email unless directed to do so.
- Extensions on papers or rescheduling of missed quizzes will occur only under extraordinary circumstances that must be verified in writing and approved beforehand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Mon 1/11 Course Introduction

Wed 1/13 What is Nature and what is Environmental History?
Read: William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-28.

Fri 1/15 Ecology and Wild Nature
Read: Ramachandra Guha, "The Authoritarian Biologist and the Arrogance of Anti-Humanism: Wildlife Conservation in the Third World," *The Ecologist* 27, no. 1 (Jan-Feb 1997): 14-20.
Read: Arturo Gómez-Pompa, "Taming the Wilderness Myth," *BioScience* 42, no. 4 (April 1992): 271-279.
Read: Juanita Sundberg, "NGO Landscapes in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala," *Geographical Review* 88, no. 3 (1998): 388-412.

Section 1: Pre-Columbian Landscapes and Environmental Change

Mon 1/18 The Ecological Indian and the Pristine Myth
Read: Kent H. Redford, "The Ecologically Noble Savage," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1991).
Read: William M. Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82, no. 3 (1992):369-385.

Due: Map Quiz

Wed 1/20 The Nature and Culture of Agriculture
Read: Nabhan, *Enduring Seeds*, Foreword, Prologue, chaps. 1-4

Fri 1/22 The Maya Collapse
Read: Diamond, *Collapse*, Introduction and chap. 5

Mon 1/25 Andean Ecologies and Inca Water Management
Read: Peter Gose, "Segmentary State Formation and the Ritual Control of Water under the Incas," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 3 (Jul. 1993): 480-514.

Section 2: Conquest Environments and Exchanges

Wed 1/27 Environmental Conquest and the Conquerors
Read: Lynn White, Jr. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203-1207.
Read: Guillermo Castro, "Environmental History (Made) in Latin America," http://www.h-net.org/~environ/historiography/latinam.htm

Fri 1/29 Columbian Exchange: Brazil
Read: Judith Carney. "'With Grains in Her Hair': Rice History and Memory in Colonial Brazil," *Slavery and Abolition* 25, no. 1 (2004): 1-27.

Mon 2/1 Columbian Exchange: Mexico
Read: Richard Hunter, "Positionality, Perception, and Possibility in Mexico's Valle de Mezquital," *Journal of Latin American Geography* 8, no. 2 (2009): 49-69.

Due: Final Paper Topic/Bibliography

Section 3: The Science of Empire

Wed 2/3 Botany, Natural History, and Empire
Read: Paula de Vos, "The Science of Spices: Empiricism and Economic Botany in the Early Spanish Empire," *Journal of World History* 17, no. 4 (2006): 399-427.

Fri 2/5 Alexander von Humboldt and the Nature of the American Tropics
Read: Nancy Leys Stepan, *Picturing Tropical Nature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), introduction (pp. 11-24) and chap. 1 (pp. 31-56).

Mon 2/8 Mountain Exploration and the Imperial Gaze: The Origins of Ecotourism?
Read: Deborah Poole, "Landscape and the Imperial Subject: U.S. Images of the Andes, 1859-1930," in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, eds. Gilbert Joseph, Catherine LeGrand, and Ricardo Salvatore (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 107-138.

Wed 2/10 Landscape, Race, and Neocolonial Nationalism in Peru
Read: Benjamin Orlove, "Putting Race in its Place: Order in Colonial and Postcolonial Peruvian Geography," *Social Research* 60 (1993): 301-336.

Fri 2/12 Maps, Plants, and the Nation
Read: Stuart McCook, "'Giving Plants a Civil Status': Scientific Representations of Nature and Nation in Costa Rica and Venezuela, 1885-1935," *The Americas* 58, no. 4 (April 2002): 513-536.

Section 4: Exporting Nature and Natural Resources

Mon 2/15 Capitalism, Environment, and Resource Extraction
Read: Stuart McCook, "Coffee and Flowers: Recent Research on Commodity Chains, Neoliberalism, and Alternative Trade in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review* 43, no. 3 (2008): 268-277.
Read: John Soluri, "People, Plants, and Pathogens: The Eco-social Dynamics of Export Banana Production in Honduras, 1875-1950," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, no.3 (Aug 2000): 463-501.

Wed 2/17 International Trade and Commodities in Mexico
Read: Sterling Evans, "King Henequen: Order, Progress, and Ecological Change in Yucatán, 1850-1950," in *Troubled Lands: Environmental Histories of Modern Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, forthcoming).

Fri 2/19 NAFTA in Historical Perspective
Attend lecture previous evening, Thursday, Feb. 18, 7pm, Northen Auditorium

Due: 3 questions for guest speaker, Sterling Evans

Section 5: Conservation and National Parks

Mon 3/1 Conservation in the Peruvian Amazon
Read: John Terborgh, *Requiem for Nature* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1999), chaps. 3-4 (pp. 23-58).
Read: Mark Dowie, *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict between Global Conservation and Native Peoples* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), chap. 6 (pp. 79-99).

Wed 3/3 National Parks in Mexico
Read: Emily Wakild, "Border Chasm: International Boundary Parks and Mexican Conservation, 1935–1945," *Environmental History* 14, no. 3 (2009): 453-475.

Fri 3/5 The Politics of Conservation in Mexico in the 1930s
Attend lecture previous evening, Thursday, March 4, 7pm, Northen Auditorium

Due: 3 questions for guest speaker, Emily Wakild

Mon 3/8 Views of the Amazon: Past and Present
Read: Candace Slater, "Amazonia as Edenic Narrative," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed., William Cronon (New York: Norton, 1995), 114-131.
Read: Hugh Raffles and Antoinette WinklerPrins, "Further Reflections on Amazonian Environmental History," *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 3 (Oct. 2003): 165-187.

Wed 3/10 Indians, Maps, and Nature Preservation

Read: Benjamin Orlove, "Mapping Reeds and Reading Maps: The Politics of Representation in Lake Titicaca," *American Ethnologist* 18, no. 1 (Feb. 1991): 3-38.
Read: Anthony Stocks, "Mapping Dreams in Nicaragua's Bosawas Reserve," *Human Organization* 62, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 344-356.

Fri 3/12 Ecotourism and Development in Central America
Read: Jill Belsky, "Unmasking the "Local": Gender, Community, and the Politics of Community-Based Rural Ecotourism in Belize," in *Contested Nature: Power, Protected Areas and the Dispossessed – Promoting International Conservation with Justice in the 21st Century*, eds., Steven R. Brechin, Pat C. West, Peter Wilshusen and Crystal Fortwangler (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 89-101.

Section 6: Natural Disasters and Climate

Mon 3/15 Climatic Disasters in the Andes
Read: Mark Carey, "Living and Dying With Glaciers: People's Historical Vulnerability to Avalanches and Outburst Floods in Peru," *Global and Planetary Change* 47, no. 2-4 (July 2005): 122-134.
Read: Ben Orlove, "Ethnoclimatology in the Andes," *American Scientist* 90 (Sep-Oct 2002): 428-435.

Due: Final Paper Outline

Wed 3/17 Mountaineers, Climate Change, and Tourism Landscapes
Read: Alton C. Byers, "Contemporary Landscape Change in the Huascarán National Park and Buffer Zone, Cordillera Blanca, Peru," *Mountain Research and Development* 20, no. 1 (2000): 52-63.
Read: Alton C. Byers, "Contemporary Human Impacts on Alpine Ecosystems in the Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) National Park, Khumbu, Nepal," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95, no. 1 (2005): 112-140.

Fri 3/19 Climate in the Andes and Himalayas Compared
Attend lecture previous evening, Thursday, March 18, 7pm, Northen Auditorium

Due: 3 questions for guest speaker, Alton Byers

Section 7: Environmental Justice

Mon 3/22 Conservation and Environmental Justice
Read: Richard White, " 'Are You and Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?' Work and Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed., William Cronon (New York: Norton, 1995), 171-185.
Read: Joan Martinez-Alier, "Ecology and the Poor: A Neglected Dimension of Latin American History," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23, no. 3 (Oct. 1991): 621-639.

Wed 3/24 Forests and Environmental Justice in Chile
Read: Thomas Klubock, forthcoming article on peasants, violence, and ecological change in Chile, 1920s-1930s

Fri 3/26 Peasants, Political Violence, and the Environment in Chile
Attend lecture previous evening, Thursday, March 25, 7pm, Northen Auditorium

Due: 3 questions for guest speaker, Thomas Klubock

Mon 3/ 29 Chico Mendes and the Rubber Tappers in the Amazon
Read: Margaret Keck, "Social Equity and Environmental Politics in Brazil: Lessons from the Rubber Tappers of Acre," *Comparative Politics* 27, no. 4 (July 1995): 409-424.
Read: Chico Mendes, "Excerpts from Chico Mendes's Fight for the Forest," *Latin American Perspectives* 19, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 144-147.

Section 7: Overviews, Conclusions, and Student Research

Wed 3/31 Presentations of Research

Fri 4/2 Presentations of Research

Mon 4/5 Presentations of Research

Wed 4/7 Presentations of Research

Fri 4/9 Environmental History in Latin America: Legacies and the Future

Final Papers Due, Wednesday, April 14th, 5pm

Writing Guide

Writing is one of the most important skills you can learn in college. I expect you to work hard on your writing and to hand in carefully researched, well-organized, and polished papers. You should submit papers that you would feel comfortable sharing with classmates or publishing for the campus community. In other words, keep an audience in mind beyond the professor and strive for the highest quality you can produce. And I will give you the level of detailed, productive comments that you would expect after your hard work.

The most effective writing is clear, concise, and simple. Be certain every word in your paper matters. Edit as if you could receive $10 for every word eliminated. Read the essay, "The Principles of Poor Writing," and do the opposite of its ironic, humorous guidelines.

Pay particular attention to passive voice; avoid it at all costs. You can spot passive voice by finding cases where you use the verb "to be" (is, are, was, were, have been, etc.) followed by an "ed" ending on a verb. For example: The revolution was started by bandits. Rewrite as: Bandits started the revolution. In many cases, the passive voice obscures meaning in history papers because it hides historical actors. Grammatically speaking, these sentences lack a subject. For example: Pancho Villa was seen as a hero. Seen by whom? Who saw Pancho Villa as a hero (and who didn't)? Rewrite as: Many landless peasants in Northern Mexico saw Pancho Villa as a hero. If you avoid all forms of the verb "to be," you will avoid passive voice and write more engagingly.

Your papers should also adhere to these guidelines:

- Follow the assignment, including required page lengths
- Take a stand, have an argument, say something you mean—and present this in a thesis statement that appears in the paper's introduction
- Organize your paper so that readers can follow it logically and easily; explain this organization in your introduction
- Introduce quotes in your own words; use quotations in moderation
- Make sure each paragraph has a topic sentence and transition
- Don't plagiarize (remember: you have to cite *ideas* as well as quotations)
- Cite properly with an acceptable citation system; historians use footnotes and follow the Chicago Manual of Style: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org
- *Proofread as if your life depends on it*

Grading Scale:

A+ = 98%	A+/A = 97	A/A+ = 96
A = 95	A/A- = 94	A-/A = 93
A- = 92	A-/B+ = 91	B+/A- = 89
B+ = 88	etc.	

Paper Grading Guidelines

These are general criteria for paper grades. While exceptional performance in one area can sometimes compensate for mediocre performance in another area, you must normally meet all the criteria to receive the better grade.

A

- an original analysis (not regurgitation) that is exceptional, creative, and unique
- a sophisticated and clear argument expressed in a thesis statement and throughout the paper
- accurate citations that consistently adhere to an acceptable citation style
- solid evidence to support all assertions and prove your thesis
- recognition of and effective challenges to counter arguments
- polished writing with clean, neat transitions and almost no syntax errors
- explicit engagement with the required assignment and with broader course themes
- demonstrates a mastering of the assigned documents and course readings

B

- an unpolished version of the A paper
- has all the information but is not original or creative; lacks the author's own analysis
- portions of the paper are descriptive rather than analytical
- writing errors appear with some frequency; a few inaccurate citations
- argument of the paper or the paper's organizational logic are not explicitly clear
- evidence not always provided or not effectively employed
- leaves doubt about the depth of understanding of course readings or lectures

C

- summarizes readings rather than analyzing them (i.e., reads like a book report)
- failure to fulfill completely all aspects of the assignment, including assigned page length
- sloppy writing with little apparent proofreading; paper gives indication of hurried work
- little evidence supporting assertions in paper; no citations or inappropriate citations
- lack of an argument or analysis
- suggests limited understanding of course issues and themes
- contains claims or assertions that are wrong
- suggests incomplete or hasty reading of assigned materials

D

- lack of understanding of the course objectives
- neglect of an entire component of the assignment
- significantly short of required length of assignment
- incoherent writing, logic, or organization
- failure to fulfill assignment, which includes both the writing assignment and the reading

F

- blatant misunderstanding of the assignment and course
- never handed in or extremely late
- maliciously poor quality
- plagiarized in one or more sections