

# **Environmental History of Modern Warfare**

## **Proposed Graduate Seminar**

**Dr. Tom J. Arnold, Professor, Department of History**

### **Course Description:**

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 seminar 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).

The more concrete goal of this seminar is to for each student to produce a 30-40 page research paper, due the last day of class. Creating a successful research paper requires a significant amount of work, including: identifying a meaningful research problem; accessing and evaluating sources; and critically and ethically integrating those sources to craft a compelling argument. Each week we will discuss the assigned readings on one topic, plus investigate strategies in research and writing. There will be assignments along the way to help you perform these tasks. This will be a collaborative effort, so expect to give and receive feedback.

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **Attendance and Participation**

Since this is a small, discussion-driven course that meets only once a week, attending and participating are vital. Complete all the assigned readings and be ready to discuss, debate and question them in class. Attendance is mandatory! Repeatedly missing class will negatively affect your grade (at my discretion). If you know in advance that you have to miss class, or if you are too sick to attend, have a personal emergency, please inform me as early as possible. Remember: you are still responsible for the required reading and writing assignments even if you miss class.

## **Assignments**

### **Weekly Reading Responses**

Every week, you will be asked to write an analytical response to the assigned readings. These should be approximately 500 words or two double-spaced pages long, and address at least two of the assigned readings. Since McNeill is primarily background info, you may address it but it does not count. There will occasionally be prompts, but for the most part you will be free to write about whatever aspects interest you the most.

You may skip one week for free, no penalty. You are still responsible for the readings.

You do not have to submit a response paper on the week you lead class discussion.

### **Leading Discussion**

Once during the semester, you will be responsible for leading discussion. You will need to have a good command of the readings, concrete goals for the discussion, and a flexible plan that will keep the class working toward them.

### **Final Research Paper**

We will start on this in Week 4, but it is advisable to choose a subject earlier rather than later. As part of the final paper, you will submit:

***Preliminary Bibliography:*** list of sources you think will be useful

***Outline/Prospectus:*** just like it sounds; it should describe the subject of your paper and how you will organize it.

***Rough Draft:*** later in the semester, you will share this with myself and another student to get feedback.

***Conference Presentation:*** On the last day of class, each student will give a 15-minute presentation on their paper, followed by Q&A and discussion. You will distribute the paper electronically to the class beforehand. Each student will send a one-page critique to me before class. PowerPoints and handouts are welcome. I will provide snacks.

### **Book to Buy:**

John R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World*

All **other readings** will be posted as PDF files.

## CLASS POLICIES

### GRADE COMPONENTS:

Final Research Paper (Includes Bibliography, Outline, Rough Draft)	50%
Readings Responses	20%
Leading Discussion	10%
Conference Presentation	10%
Overall Participation in Seminar Discussion	10%

**Grade Scale:** A (92-100), A-(90-91), B+(88-89), B (82-87), B-(80-81), C+(78-79), C(72-77), C-(70-71), D+(68-69), D(62-67), D-(60-61), F(0-59)

### Discussions

The purpose of a discussion is to look more closely at the readings and material covered in lecture, exploring major themes and exchanging opinions and insights. To that end, discussions 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.

### Participation

Be ready to ask questions and participate in the discussion. *Attendance does not equal participation*. I always encourage questions at any point during the discussion. *There is no such thing as a dumb question*.

### Classroom Etiquette

Please be courteous of your classmates and instructor by **arriving on time, and turning off all electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, tricorders, etc.)** while in class. Laptops are to be used for note-taking only, and you must obtain my approval to use them.

### Misc.

If you have any problems or situations that would prevent you from attending class, submitting questions, or whatever, don't hesitate to see me. We can discuss it and take the necessary measures. E-mail is the best way to reach me.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### **WEEK 1: January 28-Class Introduction, What is Environmental History?**

#### ***Readings:***

- “Prologue” in McNeill book
- Donald Worster, “Appendix: Doing Environmental History” in Worster, *The Ends of the Earth*, 289-307
- Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde, “The Problem of the Problem of Environmental History: A Re-Reading of the Field” *Environmental History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Jan., 2007), pp. 107-130
- John McNeill, “Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History” *History and Theory*, Vol. 42, No. 4, Theme Issue 42: Environment and History (Dec., 2003), pp. 5-43

### **WEEK 2: War and the Environment-Overview**

#### ***Readings:***

- John McNeill, "Woods and Warfare in World History." *Environmental History* 9.3 (2004): 388-410
- Chris Pearson, “Researching Militarized Landscapes: A Literature Review on War and the Militarization of the Environment.” *Landscape Research* 2011, 1-19.
- 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” and J.R. McNeill and David S. Painter, “The Global Environmental Footprint of the U.S. Military, 1789-2003” in *War and the Environment*.
- Malvern Lumsden, "Conventional" War and Human Ecology” *Ambio*, Vol. 4, No. 5/6, War and Environment: A Special Issue (1975), pp. 223-228

### **WEEK 3: Landscape & National Identity**

#### ***Readings:***

- David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany*, 3-21
- Tait Keller, “The Mountains Roar: The Alps during the Great War” *Environmental History*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (April 2009), pp. 253-274
- Marco Armiero, “Nationalizing the Mountains: Nature and Political Landscapes in World War I” in Marco Armiero and Marcus Hall, eds., *Nature and History in Modern Italy*, 231-250
- Thomas Lekan, “The Militarization of Nature and Heimat, 1914-1923” in Thomas Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945*, 74-99.

### **WEEK 3: The American Civil War**

#### ***Readings:***

- Mark Fiege, "Gettysburg and the Organic Nature of the Civil War" in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*, 93-110.
- Lisa M. Brady, "Devouring the Land: Sherman's 1864-1865 Campaigns," in *War and the Environment*, 49-67.
- Jack Temple Kirby, "The American Civil War: An Environmental View" (2005) <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntuseland/essays/amcwar.htm>
- Excerpts from Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land: Nature and Warfare in the American Civil War*

### **WEEK 4: Imperialism**

#### ***Readings:***

- David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany*, 144-161 "Colonizing the Moors"
- K. Sivaramakrishnan, "Histories of Colonialism and Forestry in India" in Paolo Squatriti ed., *Nature's Past: The Environment and Human History*, 103-144
- Thomas R. Dunlap, "Creation and Destruction in Landscapes of Empire" in Jeffrey M. Diefendorf and Kurk Dorsey, eds., *City, Country, Empire: Landscapes in Environmental History*. 207-225
- Bernhard Gißibl, "German Colonialism And The Beginnings Of International Wildlife Preservation In Africa" in *From Heimat To Umwelt: New Perspectives On German Environmental History*, Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, 2006, 121-144
- David Arnold, *The Problem of Nature: Environment, Culture and European Expansion*, 169-187 "Colonizing Nature"

### **WEEK 5: Colonial Wars**

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

#### ***Readings:***

- Roger S. Levine, "'African Warfare in all its Ferocity': Changing Military Landscapes and Precolonial and Colonial Conflict in Southern Africa," in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*, 65-92.
- Thaddeus Sunseri, "Reinterpreting a Colonial Rebellion: Forestry and Social Control in German East Africa, 1874-1915." *Environmental History* 8:3 (2003), 430-451.
- Greg Bankoff, "Wood for War: The Legacy of Human Conflict on the Forests of the Philippines, 1565-1946," in *War and the Environment*, 32-48.

## **WEEK 6: Urban Environmental History**

### **Readings:**

- McNeill, 50-83, 269-295
- Dieter Schott, "Resources of the City: Towards a European Urban Environmental History" in Dieter Schott et al eds., *Resources of the City: Contributions to an Environmental History of Modern Europe*, 1-27
- Dorothee Brantz, "The Natural Space of Modernity: A Transatlantic Perspective on (Urban) Environmental History" in Ursula Lehmkuhl and Hermann Wellenreuther eds., *Historians and Nature: Comparative Approaches to Environmental History*
- Bernd Herrmann, "The City in Nature and Nature in the City" in *Historians and Nature*
- Peter Thorsheim, "The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London," *Environmental History* 16 (January 2011): 38-68.

## **WEEK 7: WWI**

- Dorothee Brantz, "Environments of Death: Trench Warfare on the Western Front, 1914-1918," in Closmann, Charles, ed., *War and the Environment: Military Destruction in the Modern Age*
- Edmund Russell, "'Speaking of Annihilation': Mobilizing for War Against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-1945," in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*, 142-74.
- Roger Chickering, "The War on the Senses", in Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg 1914-1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007
- Joseph Hupy, "Verdun, France: Examining the Effects of Warfare on the Physical Landscapes", in Eugene Joseph Palka, Francis A. Galgano, *Military Geography: From Peace To War*. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill Custom Publishing, 2005

## **WEEK 8: WWII in Europe**

### **Readings:**

- Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, "Wartime Destruction and the Postwar Cityscape", in *War and the Environment*, 171-192.
- Simo Laakkonen, "War -- An Ecological Alternative to Peace? Indirect Impacts of World War II on the Finnish Environment," in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*, 175-94.
- Chris Pearson, "The Age of Wood: Fuel and Fighting in French Forests 1940-1944." *Environmental History* 11.4 (2006): 775-803.
- G.E. Wood, "Seasonal Mud" and "Random Mud", in G.E. Wood, *Mud: A Military History*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2006.
- Lahtinen, Rauno and Vuorisalo, Timo, "'It's War and Everyone Can Do As They Please!' An Environmental History of a Finnish City in Wartime" *Environmental History* 9:4 (2004) 679-700.

## **WEEK 9: Fascist Environmentalism**

### **OUTLINE DUE**

#### **Readings:**

- Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, Mark Cioc and Thomas Zeller, eds., *How Green Were the Nazis?: Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich*, 1-17
- David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany*, 252-309 “Race and Reclamation”
- Frank Uekoetter, “The Nazis and the Environment-a Relevant Topic?” in Timo Myllyntaus, ed., *Thinking through the Environment: Green Approaches to Global History*, 40-62
- Wilko Graf von Hardenberg, “Act Locally, Think Nationally: A Brief History of Access Rights and Continental Conflict in Fascist Italy” in Marco Armiero and Marcus Hall, eds., *Nature and History in Modern Italy*, 141-158

## **WEEK 11: WWII in Asia**

#### **Readings:**

- William Tsutsui, “Landscapes in the Dark Valley: Toward an Environmental History of Wartime Japan” in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally*, 195-216.
- Eugene Palka, “World War II In The Aleutian Islands: Physical Geographic Challenges in the Battle for Attu”, in *Military Geography: From Peace To War..*
- Edmund Russell, “Total war (1936-1943)” and “Annihilation (1943-1945)”, in Edmund Russell, *War and Nature: Fighting Humans and Insects with Chemicals from World War I to Silent Spring*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

## **WEEK 12: The Cold War**

#### **Readings:**

- Stephen Brain, “The Great Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature,” *Environmental History* 15 (October 2010): 670–700.
- Paul Josephson, “War on Nature as Part of the Cold War: The Strategic and Ideological Roots of Environmental Degradation in the Soviet Union” in John R. McNeill and Corinna Unger eds., *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*, 21-49
- Frank Uekoetter, “The End of the Cold War: A Turning Point in Environmental History?” In McNeill and Unger, *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*, 343-351
- Douglas Weiner, “The Changing Face of Soviet Conservation” in Worster, *The Ends of the Earth*, 252-273

### **WEEK 13: Limited Wars: Korea and Vietnam**

#### **ROUGH DRAFT DUE**

##### ***Readings:***

- David Zierler, "Against Protocol: Ecocide, Détente, and the Question of Chemical Warfare in Vietnam, 1969-1975," in *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*, 227-256.
- David Biggs, "Managing a Rebel Landscape: Conservation, Pioneers and the Revolutionary Past in the *U Minh Forest*, Vietnam," *Environmental History* 10:3 (2005), 448-476.
- Lisa Brady, "Life in the DMZ: Turning a Diplomatic Failure into an Environmental Success", *Diplomatic History* 32:4 (September 2008) 585-611.

### **WEEK 14: Resource Wars and The Environmental Legacy of Warfare**

##### ***Readings:***

- "Wealth Resources, and Power: The Changing Parameters of Global Security"
- "Oil, Geography and War: The Competitive Pursuit of Petroleum Plenty"
- "Water Conflict in the Nile Basin"
- "The New Geography of Conflict"

All in: Michael T. Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*. New York: Henry Holt, 2001.

### **WEEK 15: Conference Presentations**

#### **FINAL PAPERS DUE ONE WEEK LATER**