HISTORY 4380: U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY
Fall Semester 2015
10:45 AM – 12:05 PM – T/TH, OSH 113

Dr. Gregory E. Smoak

Office Hours and Contact Information: I will hold regular office hours in CTIH 313 on Tuesdays between 9:00 and 10:15 AM. Appointments may be made for other days and times to meet at my office at the American West Center, FD 618C. The best way to contact me is via email – greg.smoak@utah.edu

Catalog Description:
HIST 4380 U.S. Environmental History (3) Cross listed as ENVST 4380. Takes up major themes in human interactions with the North American/U.S. environment from the colonial period to the present. Major topics include: changing subsistence systems, political and religious interpretations of nature, the cultural subjectivity of scientific understandings of nature, and the rise of environmental movements.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:
At the end of the course students will have an in-depth understanding of the ways in which interactions between human beings and the natural world shaped the history of the United States. Students will also gain experience in the interdisciplinary methodology of environmental history. For more information on learning outcomes see: http://history.utah.edu/about/learning-outcomes.php

The course will be divided into three segments. The first phase of the course will explore the ways in which Native Peoples and Europeans used and shaped the American continent in the pre-contact and colonial periods. The second segment of the course will consider the attempts to rationalize nature for profit, with emphases on commercial agriculture (both slave and free), urbanization, and industrialization. The final phase of the course examines the impact of environmental politics in American life from the early conservation movement, through the rise of the modern environmental movement, to current debates concerning climate change and environmental justice.

General Course Requirements and Expectations:
1) Students are required to attend class, participate in discussions, keep up with assigned readings, and complete all assignments on time.

2) Proper behavior in the classroom is non-negotiable. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

3) In accordance with University policy, a grade of Incomplete or “I” will only be given in exceptional circumstances beyond a student’s control and only when a student is passing the
course and has completed 80% of the course requirements. If the course requirements are not completed within one year the registrar’s office automatically turns the grade of “I” to an “E.”

4) Assignment and course grades are determined on a Plus-Minus basis using the following rubric. A = 93-100; A- = 89-92; B+ = 87-88; B = 83-86; B- = 79-82; C+ = 77-78; C = 73-76; C- = 69-72, D+ = 67-68, D = 63-69; D- = 60-62; E = ≤ 59. EU = Unofficial withdrawal and will only be given when no record of student attendance exists.

5) Academic misconduct – plagiarism, sharing of quiz answers, using the same work for two courses, etc. – will result in an “F” for the assignment and possibly the course, as well as additional sanctions according to University and College policy. All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Code defines proscribed conduct including cheating, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Student rights in the classroom are also detailed in the Code. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php In addition, the academic misconduct policy of the College of Humanities can be found at: http://history.utah.edu/students/misconduct-policy.php

6) ADA Accommodations: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Grading:
Grades are based on three take home essays and six quizzes. All assignments are to be completed on the days assigned and cannot be made up without prior approval. It is your responsibility to contact me should an emergency arise.

In the essays you will be expected to integrate lectures and readings in your consideration of a question that will be distributed in class. The essays are specific to each segment of the course and are not cumulative. Essays will be due on the dates specified (generally one week after the question is distributed) and late essays will not be accepted without a documented reason. It is the student’s responsibility to call me as soon as an emergency arises. Each essay is worth 25% of the student’s final grade.

The six quizzes will focus on assigned readings. Three will be scheduled and held on days that we discuss the monographs. Three others will be related to an assigned article(s). The combined value of the quizzes is 25% of the final grade.

Readings:
During each segment of the course students will read one monograph, as well as a number of journal articles. It is essential that students keep up with the readings, as class discussions will be based on the assigned readings.
Monographs (read in this order):

Articles (read in this order):
SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Part 1: The Human Transformations of North America

AUG 25 Course Introduction
27 Putting History in Nature and Nature in History
   Discussion: Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness.”

SEP  1 Landforms and Lifeforms: The Environmental Prehistory of North America
3   Native Peoples and Pre-contact Environmental Change
8   Ecological Imperialism: Virgin Soil Epidemics and “Neo-Europes.”
10  Discussion: Cronon, Changes in the Land. QUIZ

15 European Settler Colonialism
17 Native Peoples and Post-contact Environmental Change – Part I
22 Native Peoples and Post-contact Environmental Change – Part II
   Discussion: Hämälainen, “The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures.”
QUICK 2
FIRST ESSAY QUESTION DISTRIBUTED


24 Organizing Nature for Profit
29 Agriculture and Environmental Change
FIRST ESSAY DUE

OCT 1 Early Industrialization and the Environment
6   An Environmental History of American Slavery
   Discussion: Fiege, “King Cotton.” QUIZ 3
8   Changing Conceptions of Nature in Industrializing America

   – Fall Break –

20 Nature and Industrial Capitalism
27 Carboniferous Capitalism
29 The Life and Death of the Organic City
   Discussion: Zimring, “Dirty Work.”

NOV  3 Discussion: Klingle, Emerald City   QUIZ 4
SECOND ESSAY QUESTION DISTRIBUTED
5   Movie: Battle for Wilderness
10 Incorporating the West: Mines, Cows, and Water
Part 3: Environmental Politics and American Life

12 Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency
17 Reclamation in the West
SECOND ESSAY DUE
19 The Dust Bowl and New Deal Conservation
Discussion: Weisiger, “Gendered Injustice.”
24 Discussion: Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature QUIZ 5
26 Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class Meeting

DEC 1 Environmental Politics and the Science of Ecology
FINAL ESSAY QUESTION DISTRIBUTED
3 Silent Spring and The Rise of Modern Environmentalism
8 Green Power and the Brown Backlash
Discussion: Steffen, “The Anthropocene,” and Ellis, “Used Planet.” QUIZ 6
10 Global Environmental Politics and Climate Change

17 FINAL ESSAY DUE – Deadline is 12:00 NOON