

**Global Environmental History**  
**Summer 2025**  
**Professor Mark Healey**

**Professor:** Mark Healey, Ph.D.  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment through [Calendly](#)  
All meetings on Class Collaborate, link through HuskyCT

### **Course Materials**

This is an asynchronous online course; we will have no standard required meeting times. Students can complete assignment on their own schedule, though each assignment should be finished by the due date. No textbooks are required for purchase in this class; all materials will be available within HuskyCT, either through an Internet link or Library Resources.

The University has set minimum [device requirements for all students](#). NOTE: Chromebooks do not meet the minimum requirements.

### **Course Description**

We humans have reached a critical stage in our time on Earth. Human activities threaten to make our terrestrial home less habitable in the future. As scientists and activists raise alarms about the existential threats of climate change and biodiversity depletion, we must reassess the nature of our relationship with the planet and its other creatures. This course surveys the history of human-environment interactions, with special attention to the ways in which people have exploited, protected, and conceived of nature over the last 500 years. Starting from the premise that human history has always been intertwined with the Earth's natural systems, the course examines how communities of people have shaped and been shaped by their physical environments. While the course will draw on scholarship from a range of disciplines, it will guide students in exploring the environment using the sources, questions, and methods of history.

Topics include interactions between people and non-human organisms; imperialism, industrialization, and environmental change; science and global ecological awareness; environmentalism and inequality; and the fight against global warming. This course aligns with UConn Common Curriculum Topics of Inquiry 3 and 4.

## Course Learning Goals

This course aims to increase our collective and individual abilities to:

CLO 1 Appraise the value of environmental and global approaches to the study of history

CLO 2 Practice the analytical vocabulary of environmental historians to discuss the past

CLO 3 Analyze the relationships of different societies with the natural environment, including economic, political, gender, religious, and cultural dimensions. Examine a wide range of historical actors and explore how power, culture, and beliefs shaped distinct relationships with the natural world that changed over time.

CLO 4 Comprehend the historical antecedents of today's environmental challenges

CLO 5 Investigate the urgency of global warming, biodiversity loss, and other crises

CLO 6 Practice a variety of methods, questions, and sources to explore and explain history

CLO 7 Analyze primary sources and use them in constructing historical arguments

### Alignment of Learning Objectives with Assessments

Topic of Inquiry	Common Curriculum objective	Course student learning objective(s)	Course assessment(s)
TOI 3	1. Through dialogic engagement, students will be able to examine cultural, social and/or biological diversity within national and/or global contexts and the effects power and privilege have on various social group identities.	CLO 3	Discussions Questions, Journal Assignments
	2. Students will be able to recognize and discuss basic issues of social injustice and how their own identities intersect with structural forms of oppression and empowerment, and how to be respectful and responsible allies (and accomplices) to individuals and groups they do not identify with.	CLO 3	Discussion Questions, Journal Assignments
TOI-4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students will be able to investigate how human activities impact Earth systems.</li> <li>2. Students will be able to examine how Earth systems affect human activities and well-being.</li> </ol>	CLO 2, 3, 4, 5	Discussion Questions, Journal Assignments, Final Exam
	4. Students will be able to evaluate how public policies, legal frameworks, and/or other social systems affect environmental and social justice.	CLO 2, 3, 4, 5	Discussion Questions, Journal Assignments, Final Exam

## Course Outline

This course will consist of 8 modules: a brief course orientation, 6 substantive modules, and a final module for assessment. In each unit, there will be lectures, readings, and often other supplemental materials.

Each module will include a quiz, a discussion assignment, and a journal assignment. The quiz will cover the readings and lectures. The prompts for the discussion and journal assignments for each week are provided on HuskyCT, as is a rubric for scoring each. In general, the discussion assignments are closer engagements with issues raised by lectures and reading. The journal assignments offer students an opportunity to explore applying class concepts elsewhere. For most of the journal assignments, you will pick a location (of your choice) and do some additional research and exploration to see how the concepts developed in this module might apply to your location.

The specific due dates for each assignment are contained on the Course Schedule.

### **M0 Course Orientation (6/1-6/3)**

*Discussion (introductions)*

### **M1 What is Global Environmental History? (6/2-6/5)**

*Discussion*

*Journal*

*Quiz*

Jenny Price, "Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in LA", *The Believer* 33 (April 2006)

Part 1: <https://believermag.com/thirteen-ways-of-seeing-nature-in-la/>

Part 2: <https://believermag.com/thirteen-ways-of-seeing-nature-in-la-2/>

Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1-25

### **M2 Anthropocene (6/6-6/9)**

*Discussion*

*Journal*

*Quiz*

"Welcome to the Anthropocene"

"Water in the Anthropocene"

Anthropocene Website <https://www.anthropocene.info/index.php>

Will Steffen, Paul Crutzen & John McNeill, "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature" *AMBIO* 36, no. 8 (2007): 614-621

Rob Nixon, "The Anthropocene: Promise and Pitfalls of an Epochal Idea" in Gregg Mitman, Marco Armiero and Robert Emmett, eds. *Future Remains: A Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018)

### **M3 Crops & Commodities (6/10-6/14)**

*Discussion*

*Journal*

*Quiz*

Megan Gambino, "Alfred B. Crosby on the Columbian Exchange" *Smithsonian Magazine*, 4 October 2011, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/alfred-w-crosby-on-the-columbian-exchange-98116477/>

Rebecca Earle, "The Columbian Exchange" in *The Oxford Handbook of Food History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 341-357.

Anable Ford, Sherman Horn III, Thomas Crimmel, Justin Tran "Conserving the American Tropics: Exploring the Cropscape of the Ancient Maya" *Technology's Stories* vol 9, no. 1 <https://www.technologystories.org/conserving-the-american-tropics/>

Alfred Crosby, "Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon" in John McNeill and Alan Roe, eds. *Global Environmental History: An Introductory Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2012)

Richard Solomon, "How the Peach Came to Georgia", *Slate*, 5 January 2021

Sophie Sapp Moore, Monique Allewaert, Pablo Gómez, and Gregg Mitman, "Plantation Legacies" *Edge Effects*, 15 May 2021 <https://edgeeffects.net/plantation-legacies-plantationocene/>

### **M4 Cities & Industry (6/15-6/18)**

*Discussion*

*Journal*

*Quiz*

Anthony Penna, "Industrial Work", from Penna, *The Human Footprint: A Global Environmental History* (New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 196-234

"Water Power, Industrial Manufacturing, and Environmental Transformation in 19th century New England" *Energy History* <https://energyhistory.yale.edu/module/water-power-industrial-manufacturing-and-environmental-transformation-19th-century-new>

Rebecca Altman, "Upriver: A Researcher Traces the Legacies of Plastics", *Orion Magazine*, Summer 2021

<https://orionmagazine.org/article/upriver/>

## **M5 Environmentalism (6/19-6/22)**

*Discussion*

*Journal*

*Quiz*

William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7–28.

Ramachandra Guha, "The Ideology of Scientific Conservation" from *Environmentalism: A Global History* (New York: Longman, 2000)

Ramachandra Guha, "The Ecology of Affluence" in *Environmentalism: A Global History* (New York, Longman, 2000)

Joan Martínez Alier "The Environmentalism of the Poor" in *A Companion to Global Environmental History* (Blackwell, 2012)

Matto Mildenerger, "The Tragedy of The Tragedy of the Commons", *Scientific American Blog Network*, 23 April 2019

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/the-tragedy-of-the-tragedy-of-the-commons/>

## **M6 Land, Conservation, and Food (6/23-6/26)**

*Discussion*

*Journal*

*Quiz*

Marci Baranski & Mary Ollenberger, "How to Improve the Social Benefits of Agricultural Research" *Issues in Science and Technology*, xxxvi, no 3 (spring 2020)

North Dakota Plant Science, "Norman Borlaug and the Green Revolution"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lg9-HTtgFOk>

Andrew Watson, "The Mirage of Industrial Agriculture" *Niche Canada*, 27 October 2020

<https://niche-canada.org/2020/10/27/the-mirage-of-industrial-agriculture-fossil-fuels-groundwater-irrigation-and-feedlots-on-the-high-plains/>

Elena Kudnat, "Weed, Corn, and Drinking Water: An Interconnected History of Industrialized Corn in West Germany" *Environmental History Now*, 10 December 2020

<https://envhistnow.com/2020/12/10/weeds-corn-and-drinking-water-an-interconnected-history-of->

[industrialized-corn-in-west-germany/](#)

Jane Carruthers, “Nationhood and national parks: comparative examples from the post-imperial experience” in Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin, eds. *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997)

Prakash Kashman, “American Environmentalism’s Racist Roots Have Shaped Global Thinking About Conservation” *The Conversation*, 2 September 2020 <https://theconversation.com/american-environmentalisms-racist-roots-have-shaped-global-thinking-about-conservation-143783>

## **M7 Energy (6/27-6/30)**

*Discussion*

*Journal*

*Quiz*

John McNeil & Peter Engelke, “Energy and Population”, *The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene Since 1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 7-40

Rise of Coal in the 19th Century US

<https://energyhistory.yale.edu/module/rise-coal-19th-century-united-states>

Germán Vergara, “How Coal Kept My Valley Green: Forest Conservation, State Intervention, and the Transition to Fossil Fuels in Mexico”, *Environmental History* 23 (2018): 82-105

Benjamin Franta, “What Big Oil knew about climate change, in its own words”

<https://theconversation.com/what-big-oil-knew-about-climate-change-in-its-own-words-170642>

Robert D. Lifset “Nuclear Power in America: The Story of a Failed Energy Transition,” *Environmental History* 24 (2019): 524-533.

Thea Riofrancos, “Shifting Mining From the Global South Misses the Point of Climate Justice” *Foreign Policy*, 7 February 2022.

US Energy Use Visualization

<https://us-sankey.rcc.uchicago.edu/>

Global Carbon Atlas

<http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/outreach>

Global CO2 emissions, 1960-2019

<http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/CO2-emissions>

## **M8 Paths Forward (7/1-7/2)**

*Final Exam (in quiz format)*

## Course Requirements and Grading

### Summary of Course Grading:

Course Components	Weight
Quiz	20%
Discussion	25%
Journal	25%
Final Exam	30%

### Quiz

Each module will have a short quiz, with 5-10 questions, covering readings and lectures. Once you start each quiz, you will have thirty minutes to complete (and feel free to write if you have any technical difficulties). The average of all these quizzes will be 20% of the final grade.

### Discussion

For each module, there will be a discussion prompt, which will include full instructions. These will be 250-400 word synthetic engagements with specific questions about the reading and lectures. The discussion prompt for each module will require the submission of a first discussion post and then, within 2 days, a response to one discussion post by a classmate. Both will be graded according to the rubric provided.

### Journal

For each module, there will be a journal assignment to explore the themes of the module in greater depth. In the first module, you will choose a location (could be your hometown, a vacation spot, a factory complex, a place you find particularly fascinating) to serve as your "site." Over the later modules, you will examine how the processes discussed in that module shaped your site -- how was it impacted by industrialization, for example. For some modules, you will need to do some additional research, and guidance will be offered on that. In each case, you will be finding what evidence you can to draw conclusions about how

### Final Exam

The final exam will consist of two components: a formal exam (like the quizzes) which will be worth 15% of your grade and a final essay in which you will draw on evidence from the class to discuss how environmental history can be relevant to thinking about contemporary challenges. The exam will ask questions based on material already discussed, and a brief study guide will be provided at the beginning of module 6. The essay prompt will become available at the beginning of module 6 as well.

### Grading Scale:

Grade	Letter Grade
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Excellent	A
	A-
Very Good	B+
Good	B
	B-
	C+
Average	C
Fair	C-
Poor	D+
	D
Merely Passing	D-
Failure	F

## **Due Dates and Late Policy**

All course due dates are identified in the [Course Schedule](#) and on individual assignments. Everything is due on the date specified at 11.59 PM Eastern Daylight Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submission times accordingly. *The instructor reserves the right to change dates accordingly as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated by email and on announcements in HuskyCT.*

Because of the speed of this summer course, it is essential for you to stay on track. All work must be turned in by the deadline; no late work will be accepted.

However, each student has 5 “passes” to hand in material late without penalty during the course. You need only alert the professor that you are doing so, and indicate when you will be completing the work. This should not be more than 3 days after the original due date.

If you know in advance that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time, please contact the professor at least 12 hours before.

## **Feedback and Grades**

I will make every effort to provide feedback and grades within 48 hours of deadlines. To keep track of your performance in the course, refer to My Grades in HuskyCT.

## **Weekly Time Commitment**

You should expect to dedicate 25 hours a week to this course. This expectation is based on the various course activities, assignments, and assessments and the University of Connecticut’s policy regarding credit hours. More information related to hours per week per credit can be accessed at the [Online Student website](#).

## **Student Authentication and Verification**

The University of Connecticut is required to verify the identity of students who participate in online courses and to establish that students who register in an online course are the same students who participate in and complete the course activities and assessments and receive academic credit. Verification and authentication of student identity in this course will include:

1. Secure access to the learning management system using your unique UConn NetID and password.
2. Additional Method: filmed video introduction by each student in Course Orientation Module.

## Copyright

*My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture in order to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. You may not download copies of my lectures or other materials for use outside of this class, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me.*

## Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work.

Generative Artificial Intelligence: We will be discussing the environmental, legal, and political impacts of Generative AI systems in this course, in order for you to better understand the (limited but key) uses and dramatic costs of these technologies.

You may not use AI (ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, or similar) for any assignments in this course. Any use of AI will result in a zero for that assignment.

Review these important [standards, policies and resources](#), which include:

- The Student Code
  - Academic Integrity
  - Resources on Avoiding Cheating and Plagiarism
- Copyrighted Materials
- Credit Hours and Workload
- Netiquette and Communication
- Adding or Dropping a Course
- Academic Calendar
- Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships
- Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

## Students with Disabilities

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government.” (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from [Blackboard's website](#))

## **Software/Technical Requirements (with Accessibility and Privacy Information)**

The software/technical requirements for this course include:

- HuskyCT/Blackboard ([HuskyCT/ Blackboard Accessibility Statement](#), [HuskyCT/ Blackboard Privacy Policy](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) ([Adobe Reader Accessibility Statement](#), [Adobe Reader Privacy Policy](#))
- Google Apps ([Google Apps Accessibility](#), [Google for Education Privacy Policy](#))
- Microsoft Office (free to UConn students through [uconn.onthehub.com](#)) ([Microsoft Accessibility Statement](#), [Microsoft Privacy Statement](#))
- Dedicated access to high-speed internet with a minimum speed of 1.5 Mbps (4 Mbps or higher is recommended).
- WebCam with microphone

For information on managing your privacy at the University of Connecticut, visit the [University's Privacy page](#).

**NOTE:** This course has NOT been designed for use with mobile devices.

## **Help**

[Technical and Academic Help](#) provides a guide to technical and academic assistance.

This course is completely facilitated online using the learning management platform, [HuskyCT](#). If you have difficulty accessing HuskyCT, you have access to the in person/live person support options available during regular business hours through the [Help Center](#). You also have [24x7 Course Support](#) including access to live chat, phone, and support documents.

## **Study Groups**

Are you interested in forming a study group with other students in the class? Drop me an email and I can coordinate conversation among interested students.

## **Minimum Technical Skills**

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Record and upload short videos.
- Open and access PDF files.

## **Evaluation of the Course**

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the [Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness](#) (OIRE).

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.