

ENVS375: Natural and Cultural History of Oregon

Workload (Student Engagement Inventory)

Educational activity	Hours	Comments (if any)
Course attendance	30	1 3hr session/wk
Assigned readings	40	~60 pages per week,
Written assignments	110	11hrs/ week
TOTAL HOURS	180	

Assessment.

Assessment type	% of grade
Weekly papers	70%
Term Project (paper 20%, presentation 10%)	30%
TOTAL	100

Instructors: Bitty Roy with guests Josh Roering, Matthew Dennis

Time: Tuesday 2-5pm

Place: Heustis 130

Office and Office Hours (and by appointment):

Office hour: Mondays 10-11

Roy, 461A Oynx Bridge

bit@uoregon.edu

541-346-4520

Expanded Course Description:

The goal of this seminar is to broaden and deepen your understanding of the natural and cultural history of Oregon through directed readings. In this seminar we will establish together a learning community, based on respect, cooperation, and constructive critical exchange. As controversial issues arise, it is essential that we respect each other, expressing ourselves clearly, courteously, and concisely, in ways that open up, rather than close down, conversation and promote learning. Each meeting will be guided by a set of key themes and problems, or questions, and will require that you complete and think carefully about the assigned readings. To promote critical thinking and enhance discussion, each week you will be required to write a short essay or paper (approximately 500 words) in response to a question. These papers should help to focus your thoughts and enable you to take an informed and active role in class discussion.

The purpose of the term project is to enable you to learn more by doing an independent project that either links all three of the subject areas (geology, culture/history, biology), or delves deeper into one of them. Not only will you produce a written document, but you will also give a 15-minute presentation about it during week 10 of the term.

ENVS375: Natural and Cultural History of Oregon

Participation. All of you will participate in the discussions. Active participation is critical to your success in the class, and it will make discussions more enjoyable for all. In our learning community, participation is a responsibility. You all have insights, skills, and experiences to share, and there are many ways you can contribute. For example, you might be able to clarify a concept to a classmate, ask a question that opens a new area of inquiry, or summarize what has been said. The group will practice the arts of listening as well as speaking and ensure that all have an opportunity to contribute. Being an active participant does not mean filibustering or grandstanding.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. You are expected to do your own work on assignments. You are encouraged to discuss ideas and identifications with each other and to study together, but do not copy someone else's work, or allow them to copy yours.

Late Policy: Your work is due on the dates listed in the syllabus. For each day late, your grade will drop two letter grades. The only exceptions to this policy are documented illness (i.e., with a Doctor's note) or death in the family.

Special needs: If you need accommodation please let me know.

Seminar Readings, Questions and Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Tuesday 1 April

*2 hour Field trip to the Natural and Cultural Museum, UO Campus, then
1 hour discussion:*

Questions: Does nature have a history? What is "nature," and how is it related to "culture"? How are both related to the physical world? Is history fundamentally *humanistic*, or can the non-human world—or even the nonorganic world—have "history"? Are humans part of nature or separate?

Hour 1: Museum of Natural and Cultural History

Hour 2: Museum of Natural and Cultural History

Hour 3: back at the classroom, discussion

Week 2: Tuesday 8 April

Questions: How did the Willamette Valley appear to early biologists, geologists and settlers? How were native Americans managing the landscape? What grew here before farms of non-native plants? What has human settlement altered in terms of river form and flood frequency?

Readings:

Excerpts from Douglas, D. 1914. Journal kept by David Douglas during his travels in North America 1823-1827. William Wesley & Son, London.

(pages 58-69, 212-229, skim 230-239). Note that Multnomah is the old name for the Willamette

Excerpts from Dana, J. D. 1892. Geological observations on Oregon and northern California:

ENVS375: Natural and Cultural History of Oregon

U.S. Exploration Expeditions Wilkes. *Geology* 10:611-678.

Taft, O. W., and S. M. Haig. 2003. Historical wetlands in Oregon's Willamette Valley: Implications for restoration of winter waterbird habitat. *Wetlands* 23:51-64.

Schedule:

Hour 1: what did the Willamette Valley look like? Movie: Finding David Douglas

Hour 2: discussion of Douglass and Dana

Hour 3: birds and wetlands

Week 3: Tuesday 15 April

Questions: What do we mean, conventionally and historically, when we “own” and “improve” land? What are the origins of these ideas, and do these environmental alterations in fact constitute “improvement” when evaluated by different, modern criteria? Is it necessary to differentiate between native and non-native species? Are non-native species a social construct or a biological one? What should we call non-native species? Should we fight them? What are our alternatives?

Readings:

Crosby, A. W. 1978. Ecological imperialism: The overseas migration of Western Europeans as a biological phenomenon. *Texas Quarterly* 21:103-117.

Warren, C. R. 2007. Perspectives on the 'alien' versus 'native' species debate: a critique of concepts, language and practice. *Progress in Human Geography* 31:427-446.

Richardson, D.M., Pysek, P., Simberloff, D. Rejmánek, M. and Mader, A.D. Richardson, D. M., P. Pysek, D. Simberloff, M. Remanek, and A. D. Mader. 2008. Biological invasions - the widening debate: a response to Charles Warren. *Progress in Human Geography* 32:295-298.

Schedule:

Hour 3: discussion about owning and improving land

Hour 2: Invasions walk

Hour 3: Invasions discussion

Week 4: Tuesday 22 April

Questions: How does the landscape “change” historically—not merely through environmental alteration, but through the cultural and historical alteration of human aesthetics and experience? What is a forest? How does forest differ from a tree plantation? Are there compelling reasons to preserve forests? Why should we value diversity? How do landscape processes change following human settlement?

Readings:

Cronan, W. 1995. In search of nature. Pages 69-70 in: *Uncommon ground: toward reinventing nature*. Norton, New York.

Snyder, G. 2002. Ancient forests of the far west. Pages 662-683 in R. Finch and J. Elder, editors. *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*. Norton, New York.

Montgomery, D. R., K. M. Schmidt, H. Greenberg, and W. E. Dietrich. 2000. Forest clearing and regional landsliding. *Geology* 28.

ENVS375: Natural and Cultural History of Oregon

Durbin, K. 1997. Tragedy on Hubbard Creek: fixing accountability for Oregon's deadly landslides. *Cascadia Times*.

Schedule:

Hour 1: Discussion about aesthetics and landscape change

Hour 2: Josh Roering: forests and landslides

Hour 3: Discussion about forest values

Week 5: Tuesday 29 April

Questions: What is a “natural disaster”? What makes it natural or unnatural, a calamity or a nonevent? Are there features along the Oregon Coast that reflect its history of M=9.0 earthquakes every ~500 years? Where do sand dunes come from and why is Oregon so endowed with sand? How do humans influence organisms that live on and in dunes? Should we manage dunes systems? How?

Readings:

Phillips, P. W. 2007. Tsunamis and floods in Coos Bay mythology. *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 108:181-192.

Pynn, L. 2000. Written in the wood: The western red cedars of Cascadia. Pages 29-42 *Last Stands: A journey through North America's vanishing rainforests*. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, Oregon.

Atwater, B. 1987. Evidence for great Holocene earthquakes along the outer coast of Washington State. *Science* 236:942-944.

Wiedemann, A. M., and A. Pickart. 1996. The *Ammophila* problem on the Northwest Coast of North America. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 34:287-299.

Sullivan, W. L. 2008. Volcanos. Pages 85-93 *Oregon's greatest natural disasters*. Navillus Press, Eugene, Oregon.

Schedule:

Hour 1: Discussion of tsunamis and the Oregon coast

Hour 2: Oregon Dunes, lecture

Hour 3: Discussion: managing dunes

Week 6: Tuesday 6 May

Questions: How do humans interact with salmon? What are the consequences of salmon loss for native peoples? Are the rivers of the Northwest today so unnatural, so altered and so controlled, that they are simply machines? What about the salmon that navigate them? Are hatchery fish simply organic machines, not real salmon? To paraphrase Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*, II, ii, 1-2): “What’s in a name? That which we call a salmon / By any other name would smell so sweet.” In short, are salmon always salmon—is there a fundamental difference between hatchery-produced and wild salmon? Who decides, and what are the consequences and implications? Is human-mediated selection altering salmon? Why do salmon like some rivers more than others?

Readings:

Taylor III, J. E. 1999. Remaking salmon. Pages 203-236 in: *Making salmon: An environmental*

ENVS375: Natural and Cultural History of Oregon

history of the northwest fisheries crisis. University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington.

Verhovek, S. W. 2002. Arguing That a Fish Born in the Bucket is Not Endangered: 'Saving' Wild Salmon's Bucket-Born Cousins *New York Times*, February 4, A17.

Conover, D. O., and S. B. Munch. 2002. Sustaining fisheries yields over evolutionary time scales. *Science* **297**:94-96.

Gregory. 1996. Management of Wood is Critical. 155-160, and skim other material in pdf.

Schedule:

Hour 1: Salmon and rivers

Hour 2: TBA

Hour 3: Human caused selection

Week 7: Tuesday 13 May

Questions: “Whiskey’s for drinking; water’s for fighting over,” Mark Twain allegedly said. How have humans accommodated the aridity of the “Great American Desert”? How did successive human occupants of places like southeast Oregon—from Paiutes to white “pioneers” to industrial farmers and ranchers to contemporary preservationists—either adjust to the landscape or attempt to make it adjust to them? What have been the consequences? How and why has this been a source of conflict? How unique is the current climate of eastern Oregon? When and why was the region peppered with lakes and streams? How do plants and animals adapt to arid environments?

Readings:

William Kittredge. 1992. pages 12-29 in: *Hole in the Sky: A Memoir*. Random House, New York.

Marc P. Reiser. 2005. pages 336-42 in *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (rev. ed., 1993), excerpted in Carolyn Merchant, ed., *Major Problems in American Environmental History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2d ed.

Cliff Mass. 2008. The basics of Pacific Northwest weather, pages 9-27 In: *The weather of the Pacific Northwest*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.

Ferguson, D., and N. Ferguson. 1978. Adaptations to the arid environment. Pages 78-87 in: *Oregon's Great Basin country*. Maverick Publications, Bend, Oregon.

Schedule:

Hour 1: Discussion: adapting versus adjusting versus controlling water

Hour 2: Consequences of a changing climate for Oregon Forests: Bart Johnson

Hour 3: Discussion

Week 8: Tuesday 20 May

Questions: How do the recent environmental and political controversies of the Klamath Basin represent, in microcosm, the legacies and dilemmas of Oregon environmental history over the last 100 years? What can the controversy tell us about Native life,

ENVS375: Natural and Cultural History of Oregon

dispossession, and resurgence? About the myth and history of westward expansion and the American family farm? About the nature of conservation, reclamation, and agricultural development and degradation? About the battles over water and the West? About the destruction of habitat, the threats to endangered species, and controversial efforts to preserve them? About the politics of environmental regulation, modern environmental politics, and the reactionary “Sage Brush Rebellion”? About the possibility of restoration—of natural landscapes and sustainable, peaceful social life?

Readings:

Brad Knickerbocker, “Drought and a Western Legacy of US water policies pits farmers, Native Americans, and environmentalists against one another,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 24, 2001.

Hal Bernton, “Farm Country Gone Dry: Klamath Basin farmers and their small communities are reeling at the cutoff of federal irrigation water in favor of endangered fish,” *Seattle Times*, July 1, 2001.

Doyle, M.W., E.H. Stanley, J.M. Harbor, and G.E. Grant. 2003. Dam removal in the United States: Emerging Needs for Science and Policy, *EOS* 84(4): 29-33.

Facilitator: Professor Matt Dennis, History Department

Week 9: Tuesday 3 June

Questions: What are the connections between cities and surrounding suburban, rural, or wilderness areas? How natural or unnatural are cities, and how natural or artificial are suburban and rural hinterlands? How would one assess the environmental history of Eugene? What can we do to make cities and towns more diverse and ecologically sustainable? Can we make them less of an impediment to species needing to change in distribution as a result of climate change? What kind of a world do we want to live in 40 years from now and 200 years from now? Conservation has traditionally focused on rare species. Does this approach make sense? What about common species?

Reading:

Scott Timberg, “The Novel That Predicted Portland,” *The New York Times*, December 14, 2008.

Haupt, L. L. 2009. *Crows and Kairos: An invocation*. Pages 3-16 *Crow planet: Essential wisdom from the urban wilderness*. Back Bay Books, New York.

Gaston, K. J., and R. A. Fuller. 2008. Commonness, population depletion and conservation biology. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* **23**:14-19.

Week 10: Tuesday 10 June Term Project Presentations

2:00-2:15

2:15-2:30

2:30-2:45

2:45-3:00

3:00-3:15 break

3:15-3:30

3:30-3:45

ENVS375: Natural and Cultural History of Oregon

3:45-4:00
4:00-4:15 break
4:15-4:30
4:30-4:45
4:45-5:00

Final Exam 1:00 Mon., June 9 Written Term Project is Due, and there are 8 presentations

1:00-1:15
1:15-1:30
1:30-1:45
1:45-2:00
2:00-2:15
2:15-2:30
2:30-2:45
2:45-3:00

TERM PROJECT

The purpose of the term project is to enable you to learn more by doing an independent project on some aspect of the natural and cultural history of Oregon.

I will meet with each of you during the first week of the term to discuss your project with you. You will produce a written document (no more than 10 double-spaced pages of writing, photos and figures are not included in the page count, so please use them!), and you will also give a 15-minute presentation about your paper/project during week 10 or 11 of the term. The written part is due on the day of the final exam.

Suggestions (you may use one of these or come up with your own and clear it with me):

1. Produce a field guide on a place or a set of organisms for somewhere in Oregon.
2. Do an ecological assessment of somewhere in Oregon. The kinds of things you would want to include are: history, geology, habitats, vegetation, vegetation history (if known), birds and animals.
3. In the vicinity of Eugene, how has the Willamette River changed with the arrival of Europeans? What is the relative importance of natural (e.g., climate) variations with perturbations associated with land-use practices (timber harvest, gravel mining)? Use documentation as well as historical air photos to document these changes and explore potential mechanisms.
4. Native Oregonian environmental ideology and practice. How, why, and to what purpose did Native people transform their landscapes?
5. The environmental history of a little corner of Oregon: Changing space and place over time.
6. Damned If You Do . . . : A history [or case study] of water manipulation in Oregon.

ENVS375: Natural and Cultural History of Oregon

7. Oregon and the History of Outdoor Recreation: Preserving Nature, or Loving It to Death?
8. The Spotted Owl Controversy: “Spotted Owl Helper” and other Harmful Recipes.
9. An Environmental History of somewhere in Oregon.