



2018

History & Sustainability

David Glassberg

University of Massachusetts Amherst, glassberg@history.umass.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/sustainableumass_educationresources



Part of the [Cultural History Commons](#), [Environmental Sciences Commons](#), and the [Social History Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](#).

Glassberg, David, "History & Sustainability" (2018). *Sustainability Education Resources*. 37.
Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/sustainableumass_educationresources/37

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Sustainable UMass at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sustainability Education Resources by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

History 391N/691N: History & Sustainability

Fall 2018
Herter 201
M/W 4:00-5:15

D. Glassberg
Herter 637
office hours M 2-3, Tu 2-4, & by appt.
glassberg@history.umass.edu

Americans debate whether their ever-rising consumption of natural resources and standard of living can continue indefinitely into the future. This is not a new question; since the mid-1800s, movements for the conservation of nature have challenged the primacy of unbridled development and met fierce opposition from those charging that these movements threaten the American dream of individual economic opportunity. Through exploring the history of these ideas, students will gain a better understanding of the meaning of sustainability in contemporary America, especially in response to the forces of global capitalism and the challenges of a changing climate.

This course grows out of an earlier course called the Conservation of Nature and Culture. Like that course, its fundamental premise is that nature and culture are interconnected, and that movements for the sustainable use of natural resources engage matters of culture as well as technology and economics.

The students in this course come from a wide variety of majors, and include graduate as well as undergraduate students. So it is especially important for you to attend every class, do the readings, and contribute actively to class discussions from your unique point-of-view. Please hand papers in on time so that you can get feedback on your work before the next assignment is due. Your final grade will be based on:

- 1) class participation (15%);
- 2) one (undergrad) or two (grad) oral presentations and short (2-3 pg) write-up on supplementary reading; write up due the week after presentation (15%).
- 3) two short (4-5 pg.) synthesis papers on assigned readings; due 10/9 and 11/14 (40%).
- 4) one 10-15 pg. final research paper and oral presentation; prospectus due 10/24 (5%); oral presentation due 12/5, 12/10, or 12/12 (10%); paper due 12/18 (15%).

These books are on physical Reserve in the Library, and available for purchase at Amherst Books, 8 Main Street, Amherst

- H. D. Thoreau, *Walden* (any edition)
- A. Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (with additional essays)
- P. Sabin, *The Bet: Paul Ehrlich, Julian Simon, and Our Gamble Over Earth's Future*
- B. Minter & S. Pyne, eds. *After Preservation: Saving Nature in the Age of Humans*

Recommended: J. McNeil and P. Engelke, *The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene Since 1945*

Additional readings are posted on the course Moodle site. We will also make use of the journal *Environmental History* (on line through the Library) and the Library of Congress Website, *The Evolution of the Conservation Movement 1850-1920*. (<http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html>).

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week 1: What is Sustainability?

9/5 Introduction: Sustainability and Democracy

- T. Roosevelt, "Opening Address," *Proceedings of a Conference of Governors in the White House* (1909) (excerpt)
- D. Potter, "Democracy and Abundance," *Challenge* 3 (November 1954): 37-41.
- D. Meadows, "Definition of Sustainability" (February 1995)
- H. Mansfield, *The Same Axe Twice: Restoration and Renewal in a Throwaway Age* (2000), pp. 3-5.

Week 2: Sustainability and Empire

9/10 No class (Rosh Hashanah) make-up class TBD

How sustainable were North American indigenous societies before European contact?

- J. Diamond, "The Ancient Ones: The Anasazi and their Neighbors," in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (2005), pp. 136-56.

Student Presentation: S. Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (1999)

9/12 Europe Without Limits

- L. White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (March 1967): 1203-7.
- W. Cronon, "That Wilderness Should Turn a Mart," *Changes in the Land* (1983), pp. 159-70.

Student Presentation: R. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (1996)

Week 3: Sustainability, Subsistence, and the Marketplace

9/17 When Did New England Farmers Become Capitalists?

- C. Merchant, "Farm Ecology: Subsistence versus the Market," in *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, Science in New England*, pp. 149-74.
- B. Donahue, "Another Look from John Sanderson's Farm: A Perspective on New England Environmental History and Conservation," *Environmental History* 12 (January 2007): 9-34.
- R. Judd, "The Commons in Transition," in *Common Lands, Common People: The Origins of Conservation in Northern New England (1997)*, pp. 40-56.

Student Presentation: B. Donahue, *The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord* (2004)

9/19 No class (Yom Kippur) make-up class TBD

Research Skills Workshop in Library with Madeleine Charney

Week 4: Sustainability and Progress

9/24 Art and Nostalgia

- T. Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," *American Monthly Magazine* 1 (Jan 1836): 1-12.
- A. Miller, "The Fate of Wilderness in American Landscape Art," in M. Lewis, ed. *American Wilderness*, pp. 91-112.

Student Presentation: A. Miller, *Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-75* (1996)

9/26 Living Deliberately

- H.D. Thoreau, "Economy," "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," "Sounds," "Solitude," "The Bean Field," "Spring," "Conclusion," from *Walden*

Student Presentation: R. Primack, *Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau's Woods* (2014)

Week 5: Sustainability and Wilderness

10/1 National Parks

F.L. Olmsted, "Preliminary Report on the Yosemite and Big Tree Groves" (1865)
LC Conservation Movement Website.

M. Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness: Yosemite Indians and the National
Park Ideal, 1864-1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 65 (February 1996): 27-
59.

Student Presentation: K. Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers,
Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (2001)

10/3 Trouble with Wilderness

W. Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness, or Getting Back to the Wrong
Nature," *Environmental History* 1 (January 1996): 7-28.

D. Worster, "The Wilderness of History," *Wild America* 7 (Fall 1997): 9-13.

M. Feige, "The Democratic Promise of Nature Preservation," in Minter & Pyne,
After Preservation, pp. 114-22.

Week 6: Sustainability and the Conservation Movement

10/8 No class: Columbus Day

Tuesday 10/9 Conservation and Science

G. Marsh, "Preface," and "The Destructiveness of Man" in *Man & Nature, or
Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* [1864], pp. iii-vi, 35-44
LC Conservation Movement Website

G. Marsh, "Address delivered before the Agricultural Society of Rutland County,
VT, Sept. 30, 1847," LC Conservation Movement Website

Synthesis Paper 1 Due Tuesday 10/9

10/10 Conservation and Politics

G. Pinchot, "Principles of Conservation," chapter 4 (pp. 40-52) in *The Fight
for Conservation* (1910). LC Conservation Movement Website

T. Roosevelt, *Special Message from the President of the United States
Transmitting a Report of the National Conservation Commission* (February
1909), pp. 1-6. LC Conservation Movement Website.

C. Koppes, "Efficiency, Equity, Aesthetics: Shifting Themes in American
Conservation," in D. Worster, ed. *Ends of the Earth* (1989), pp. 230-51.

Student Presentation: N. Unger, "Nature's Housekeepers: Progressive Era Women as Midwives to the Conservation Movement and Environmental Consciousness," in *Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History* (2012), pp. 75-104.

Week 7: Sustainability Between the Wars

10/15 Sustainability and Urban Growth

A. Rome, "Nature Wars, Culture Wars: Immigration and Environmental Reform in the Progressive Era," *Environmental History* 13 (July 2008): 432-53.

L. Mumford, "The Intolerable City," *Harpers* 152 (February 1926): 283-93.

B. MacKaye, "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning." *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 9 (Oct. 1921): 325-330.

Watch film, American Institute of Planners, *The City* (1939)

Student Presentation: Benton MacKaye, *The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning* (1928)

10/17 Lessons of the Dust Bowl

D. Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*, pp. 3-25.

Watch film, P. Lorenz, *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1937)

Student Presentation: S. Phillips, *This Land, This Nation: Conservation, Rural America, and the New Deal* (2007)

Week 8: Sustainability and Ecology

10/22 Aldo Leopold and the Land Ethic

A. Leopold, "A Sand County Almanac"; "Thinking Like a Mountain," and "The Land Ethic," in *A Sand County Almanac*, pp. 1-98, 137-41, 237-64.

10/24 Discuss Final Paper Prospectus (Due)

Week 9: Sustainability and Modern Environmental Movement

10/29 The Great Acceleration

B. Commoner, "The Technological Flaw," in *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* [1971], pp. 138-56, 173-75.

A. Rome, "From the Solar House to the All-Electric Home: Postwar Debates Over Heating and Cooling," in *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of the American Environmental Movement* (2001), pp. 45-86.

Begin reading P. Sabin, *The Bet: Paul Ehrlich, Julian Simon, and Our Gamble Over Earth's Future* (2013).

Student Presentation: J. McNeil, *The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene Since 1945* (2014)

10/31 Limits to Growth?

G. Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162 (Dec 13, 1968): 1243-48.

J. Carter, "Energy and National Goals," July 15, 1979 (<https://www.c-span.org/video/?153917-1/president-carter-address>)

Student Presentation: M. Jacobs, *Panic at the Pump: The Energy Crisis and the Transformation of American Politics in the 1970s* (2016).

Week 10: Sustainability and Modern Politics

11/5 Growth Without Limits

P. Sabin, *The Bet: Paul Ehrlich, Julian Simon, and Our Gamble Over Earth's Future* (2013).

R. Reagan, "Interview about the Environment" (1976) video

S. Hannity, "The Green Swindle" (2010) video

Student Presentation: J. Turner, "The Specter of Environmentalism": Wilderness, Environmental Politics, and the Evolution of the New Right," *Journal of American History* (June 2009): 123-48.

11/7 Living Sustainably

L. Rockefeller "The Case for a Simpler Lifestyle," *Reader's Digest* (February 1976).

W. Berry, "The Unsettling of America" and "The Agricultural Crisis as a Crisis of Culture," in *The Unsettling of America* (1977), pp. 3-14, 39-48.

B. Devall & G. Sessions, *Deep Ecology* (1985), pp. 65-70.

Student Presentation: D. Brown, *Back to the Land: The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America* (2011)

Week 11: Sustainability and Globalization

11/12 No class (Veterans Day)

11/14: Sustainability and Globalization

R. Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique" (1997).

S. Stevens, "Indigenous Peoples, Bio-cultural Diversity, and Protected Areas," in *Indigenous Peoples, National Parks, and Protected Areas: A New Paradigm Linking Conservation, Culture, and Rights* (2014), pp. 15-46.

Synthesis Paper #2 due Wednesday November 14

No class 11/21 or 23 (Thanksgiving)

Week 12: Sustainability and Climate Change (1)

11/26 Sustaining Natural Heritage

B. Minter & S. Pyne, eds, *After Preservation: Saving American Nature in the Age of Humans* (2015), Introduction (1-8) and essays by McNeil (17-23), Marris (41-49), and Carrington & Vosick (133-45).

E. Kolbert, "The Sixth Extinction?" *The New Yorker* 85 (May 25, 2009): 53-

Student Presentation: D. Cole, E. Higgs, and P. White, "Historical Fidelity: Maintaining Legacy and Connection to Heritage," in D. Cole & L. Yung, eds. *Beyond Naturalness: Rethinking Park & Wilderness Stewardship in an Era of Rapid Change* (2010), pp. 125-41.

11/28 Sustaining Cultural Heritage

M. Rockman, et. al, *Cultural Resources Climate Change Strategy* (Washington, DC: National Park Service Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science and Climate Change Response Program, 2016).

C. Colten, R. Kates, and S. Laska, "Three Years After Katrina: Lessons for Community Resilience," *Environment Magazine* 50 (September/October 2008): 36-47.

Student Presentation: S. Fatoric and E. Seekamp, "Evaluating a Decision Analytic Approach to Climate Change Adaptation of Cultural Resources Along the Atlantic Coast of the United States," *Land Use Policy* 68 (2017): 254-63,.

Week 13: Sustainability and Climate Change (2)

12/3 Sustaining Hope

R. Randall, "Loss and Climate Change: The Cost of Parallel Narratives," *Ecopsychology* 1:3 (September 2009): 118-29,

K. Norgaard, "People Want to Protect Themselves a Little Bit: Emotions, Denial, and Social Movement Non-Participation," *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 76, No. 3, August 2006, 372–396.

R. Solnit, "Grounds for Hope," in *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities* (2015), pp. xi-xxvi.

D. Glassberg, "Place, Memory, and Climate Change," *The Public Historian* 36 (August 2014): 17–30.

Student Presentation: R. Lertzman, *Environmental Melancholia: Psychoanalytic Dimensions of Engagement* (2015).

12/5 Oral Presentations Based on Final Papers

Weeks 14: Oral Presentations

12/10 Oral Presentations Based on Final Papers

12/12 Oral Presentations Based on Final Papers

Exam Week:

Final Papers Due in Herter 637 no later than 5 pm on Tuesday 12/18