**Updated 3/1/20**

**Hist 705: Environmental Histories of the “Global South” Prof. Meredith McKittrick Mondays 9:30-12** [**McKittrick@georgetown.edu**](mailto:McKittrick@georgetown.edu)

**ICC 214 301-785-0691**

**Office hours: M 12:30-1:30, W 9:30-10:30 Office: ICC 608**

This graduate seminar explores the environmental history of “the great divergence” by focusing on the global periphery—primarily Africa and Latin America, with forays into South Asia, the Middle East, and the United States. The externalization of industrial capitalism’s resource demands through colonial and neo-colonial regimes of extraction lies at the heart of the field of global environmental history. But this class also will examine alternative approaches and methods to exploring human-environmental interaction in colonial and post-colonial contexts. It will interrogate the usefulness of the term Global South and ask whether there are environmental histories of the “Global South” to be found within “Global Norths.” Finally, the class will consider some perennial problems in environmental history—declensionist narratives, source limitations, and the western-centrism of both scientific frameworks and the human/non-human binary.

Good scholars read outside of their geographical and chronological fields and, indeed, their discipline. This gets us out of too-familiar conversations and conceptual framings and serves as a source for new ideas, methods, and theoretical frameworks. This class is aimed at giving everyone – including your professor – new ideas and inspiration that we can apply to our own work.

Most weeks, we will read a monograph and an article. I will adjust readings as needed to accommodate student interests. Discussion will be informal and primarily led by students. You are encouraged to bring knowledge from your own background and interests into the conversation, and to recommend readings of your own. This will give us a much broader basis for making comparisons across space and time.

**Requirements**

1. Weekly reflection papers, posted to Canvas the day before our class. These should be 2-3 pages, double-spaced.
2. Active participation in discussion, including leading three or four discussions.
3. Due by Jan. 20: A four- to six-page (double spaced) essay on what you discerned about trends in environmental history by looking at the past 6-8 years of the journals *Environmental History* and *Environment and History* (plus a third journal if you identify one that looks interesting to you)*.* You should discuss the distribution of articles across geographical fields and chronological time scales, as well as any thematic or methodological patterns that emerge.
4. Due by March 9: A six- to eight-page bibliographic essay that explores literature on an environmental theme that interests you. It should draw on historical literature from the continent you study and at least two other continents. You are also encouraged to include literature from other relevant disciplines (anthropology, geography, the sciences, etc.) Having a lot of sources is less important than finding high-quality sources that will help you think about the topic in new ways – so aim for only six to eight books and articles, but make them seminal ones. The essay should address the argument, method, and sources of each reading, and what other major works it appears to be engaging or refuting.
5. A final research paper, 18 to 25 pages. This should include at least some primary sources. It can build on your midterm bibliography or be something completely different, but it needs to tackle an environmental history topic in your area of interest. It can be comparative, but does not need to be explicitly so – although I do hope you will draw on secondary literature from other parts of the world. Research paper topics are due April 6.

**Course policies** are attached to the end of this syllabus. Please read them!

**Course Schedule**

**Jan. 8: Foundations**

* Paul Sutter, “When Environmental Traditions Collide: Ramachandra Guha’s *The Unquiet Woods* and U.S. Environmental History,” *Environmental History* 14 (July 2009), 543-550. (Canvas)
* Ramachandra Guha and J. Martinez-Alier, Introduction and Chapter 2 of *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South.* Earthscan 1997. (Canvas)
* Michele Wagner, “Environment, Community and History: ‘Nature in the Mind’ in 19th- and 20th-century Buha, Western Tanzania,” in Gregory Maddox, James Giblin, and Isaria N. Kimambo, eds., *Custodians of the Land* (Boydell and Brewer 1996), 175-99. (Canvas)
* Corey Ross, “Introduction; Ecology, Power and Imperialism,” in *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire: Europe and the Transformation of the Tropical World.* Oxford University Press 2017. (Available electronically through Lauinger)

Recommended:

* Ramachandra Guha, “Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique,” *Environmental Ethics* 11:1 (1989), 71-83. (Canvas)
* Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind.* Yale UP 1967.
* Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya.* Oxford UP 1989.

**Jan. 13: Precolonial environmental relations**

* Robert Harms, *Games Against Nature: An Eco-Cultural History of the Nunu of Equatorial Africa.* Cambridge UP 1987. (Available electronically through Lauinger)
* Stuart Schwartz, *Sea of Storms,* excerpt.

**Jan. 20: MLK Day: No class**

***Due:*** Four- to six-page (double spaced) essay on what you learned about trends in environmental history (and its global representation) by looking at the past 6-8 years of the journals *Environmental History* and *Environment and History* (plus a third journal if you identify one that looks interesting to you)*.*

Use the journal finder to get to *Environmental History*. *Environment and History* can be found here: <http://www.whpress.co.uk/EH.html>

**Jan. 27: Commodities and European empires: Rubber**

***Discussion leader - Ishmael***

* WarrenDean, *Brazil and the Struggle for Rubber: A Study in Environmental History.* Cambridge 1987. (There are two copies in our library but no electronic option.)
* Corey Ross, “Colonialism, Rubber and the Rainforest,” *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire.* Oxford 2017. (Available electronically through Lauinger Library.)

**Feb. 3: No class: Work on midterm bibliography assignment**

**Feb. 10: Environment and empire: A view from the Ottoman empire**

***Discussion leader - Emma***

* Alan Mikhail, *Under Osman’s Tree: The Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Environmental History.* University of Chicago Press 2017.
* James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia.* Yale UP 2009, excerpt. (Available electronically through Lauinger)

**Feb. 17: President’s Day: No class. Work on midterm bibliography assignment.**

**Feb. 24: From colonial to postcolonial extraction**

***Discussion leader - Ishmael***

* David Gordon, *Nachituti’s Gift: Economy, Society, and Environment in Central Africa.* University of Wisconsin 2006. (Available electronically through Lauinger.)
* Ali, Tariq. “From a Colonial Hinterland to a Postcolonial National Economy: Jute and the Bengal Delta, 1850s to 1950s.” *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 3 (2016): 88-111.

**March 2: Energy regimes**

***Discussion leader - Marcella***

* Myrna Santiago, *The Ecology of Oil: Environment, Labor, and the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1938.* Cambridge 2006. (Available electronically through Lauinger.)
* Samuel Truett, “Neighbors by Nature: Rethinking Region, Nation and Environmental History in the US-Mexico Borderlands,” *Environmental History* 2:2 (1997), 160-178.

**March 9: Spring Break: No class**

Bibliographies are due

**March 16: American consumption and extraction**

***Discussion leader - Marcella***

* John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States.* University of Texas Press 2005. (Available electronically through Lauinger.)
* John M. MacKenzie, “Empire and the Ecological Apocalypse: The Historiography of the Imperial Environment,” in Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin, *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies* (University of Washington Press 1997).

**March 23: Water infrastructure part 1**

***Discussion leader - Ishmael***

* Jennifer Derr, *The Lived Nile: Environment, Disease, and Material Colonial Economy in Egypt.* Stanford UP 2019. (I have ordered this for our library.)
* Faisal Husein, “In the Bellies of the Marshes: Water and Power in the Countryside of Ottoman Baghdad,” *Environmental History* 19 (Oct. 2014), 638-664.

**March 30: Water infrastructure part 2**

***Discussion leader – Meredith***

* Joost Fontein, *Remaking Mutirikwi.* (Canvas)

**April 6: Conservation**

***Discussion leader - Marcella***

* Roderick Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa.* University of California Press 1998. (No electronic option.)
* Gregory T. Cushman – “‘The Most Valuable Birds in the World’: International Conservation Science and the Revival of Peru’s Guano Industry, 1909-1965,” *Environmental History* 10:3 (2005): 477-509.

**April 13: Easter holiday**

**Final research paper topic is due:** Tell me what historical question you seek to answer and what primary sources you have identified that you can use in the paper.

**April 20: Global souths within global norths part 1**

***Discussion leader - Emma***

* Traci Voyles, *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country.* University of Minnesota Press 2015. (Available electronically through Lauinger.)
* Everyone should pre-circulate one or two (max. 10 pages total) primary sources that relate to their research paper, and we’ll have a conversation about sources and methods. (If people feel we need a larger conversation about this, I’ll consider dropping one of the last two books or creating an additional class where we can do more on sources and methods.)

**April 27: Global souths within global norths part 2**

***Discussion leader – Emma***

* Bathsheba Demuth, *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait.* W.W. Norton 2019. (Not in Lauinger; I have ordered it.)
* Look at her dissertation and compare to her final book.

**We will schedule a workshop for peer-reviewing research paper rough drafts the week after classes end.**

**Final research papers are due in paper form by noon Friday, May 15.**

**Course policies**

*I. COMMUNICATIONS POLICY*

Like others, I struggle to keep email from occupying every minute of my day and cannibalizing the time I should be spending on other parts of my job. I manage this by designating specific times each day that I check email.

Except on unusually busy days, I will respond to your time-sensitive emails within 24 hours during the work week. I do not respond to email in the mornings before class and on weekends, and I rarely check email after 5 pm on weekdays. If you have a true emergency, you can text me at 301-785-0691.

*II. CLASSROOM CONDUCT: GROUND RULES*

Many of these are from https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/resources/inclusive-teaching-learning/establishing-ground-rules/

* Do not be late to class. Turn off or silence cell phones. Laptops are welcome but please stay on the relevant course sites. Block tempting sites during our course period if you need to (I like Leechblock but there are many options).
* Please learn each other's names.
* Respect the speaker, even when you do not agree with or respect the point the speaker is making.
* Listen carefully; do not interrupt—even when you are excited to respond.
* Try not to generalize about groups (even groups with which you identify) and do not ask another person to speak as a representative of a group.
* Keep an open mind—enter the classroom dialogue with the expectation of learning something new. Look forward to learning about–and being challenged by–ideas, questions, and points of view that are different than your own.
* Do not “monopolize” the conversation; give others a chance to contribute to the discussion.
* Support an atmosphere of learning and growth. Approach discussion as a means to “think out loud.” Allow others (as well as yourself) to revise and clarify ideas and positions in response to new information and insights.
* Bring out ideas, perspectives, or solutions that you think are not yet represented or haven’t yet been adequately discussed.
* Support your arguments with evidence. Be honest when you are not sure if you have enough evidence to make a strong argument or when your thoughts about a topic are still speculative or exploratory.
* Try not to make assumptions; ask questions to learn more about other perspectives, especially those that are different from your own.
* Talk with the instructor about patterns in the discussion that are troubling or that may be impeding full engagement by you or others. If it is not possible to talk with the course instructor, talk with the department chair, an academic advisor, or a trusted mentor.
* Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, harassment, or assault. University policy *requires* faculty members to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role it is to coordinate the University’s response to sexual misconduct.

*III. ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS AND RESOURCES*

* Citations for all written work should be in footnotes or endnotes and should follow the guide here: <https://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/research-guides/turabian-footnote-guide> Lectures should be cited as “McKittrick, lecture, date.”
* Students should be aware of the University Honor System and what it entails. Details can be found at [https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/policies/#](https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/policies/)
* If I suspect plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, I reserve the right to ask any student to come to my office to discuss their written work with me.
* Instructional continuity: In the event that university classes are canceled, students should check their email and Canvas for instructions.
* One of the most important skills to have for life success, including success in your classes, is time management. Some people are naturally good at it; some come from families where it was modeled and taught. Others do not have these advantages. If you struggle with managing your time, I encourage you to consult the web’s boundless resources – different techniques work for different people – or to visit the Academic Resource Center’s web page: https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/acad%20resources# This offers a variety of resources for improving time management and study skills.
* If you believe you have a disability, you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.