Courses submitted for inclusion in the HMVV Curriculum must already exist and/or have been approved by the Undergraduate Council.

**Course title:** American Environmental History  
**Department and Course Number:** HIST 40853  
**Instructor:** Todd M. Kerstetter

Please indicate below which *Learning Outcomes* and *Student Action Steps* best represent the focus of your course. Using the bulleted instructions on page 2 of this form, please provide examples that explain how students will, through the use of *Student Action Steps*, achieve the *Learning Outcomes* in your course.

**Competency:**  
TCU graduates will demonstrate a critical understanding of the processes that create change over time in the human experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Student Action Steps: Indicate which are to be used in your course or add others you will use to reach the Learning Outcome.</th>
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| Students will demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate historical discourse, and to develop evidence-based conclusions about the past. | Students will examine and analyze a variety of historical sources and interpretations. [ x ]  
Students will learn how to evaluate these materials and document the sources used to support their interpretations. [ x ]  
Students will present their evidence-based interpretations about the past.*** [ x ]  
Other: ***The evidence must be drawn from primary sources that are relevant to the course. |

*The *Learning Outcomes* are statements of what we expect our students to know or be able to do upon completion of a course in that category.

**The *Student Action Steps* identify the process(es) that will lead to the intended *Learning Outcome*. As such, *Student Action Steps* must specify an action(s) to be taken by a student to fulfill a specific *Learning Outcome* and be reasonable within the context and time frame of the course. The *Student Action Steps* above are provided as examples of how students might achieve the *Learning Outcomes*.
• Please provide 2 or 3 examples below that explain how students will, through the use of **Student Action Steps**, achieve the HMVV **Learning Outcomes** in your course. Although useful, reference to your syllabus does not substitute for a written explanation on this page. To facilitate understanding, please use language accessible both to faculty who might be outside your discipline as well as to students who might see such language in a course syllabus.

• Please attach a syllabus as a supporting document for your submission. Syllabi for HMVV courses should reflect the **Learning Outcomes** and the use of **Student Action Steps** that correlate with HMVV requirements.

• Please attach an additional HMVV course submission form if this course is being submitted for a second HMVV category.

Students will read monographs, newspaper articles, photographs, various works of art, public history displays, films, and primary sources distributed in class or provided via hyperlinks on a course Web page. Many of these sources change every semester. This is especially true for newspaper articles and Web-based resources. I try to tailor these to current events in an effort to link course materials to the “real” world. The monographs I assign typically include a mix of primary (firsthand accounts or tracts by environmentalists, for example) and secondary materials. Students in this class normally take two fieldtrips. One trip goes to the Amon Carter Museum to analyze works by Hudson River School painters and other works that might be on temporary display. Students must observe, analyze, and write about the art, how the art is displayed, and what each indicates about human relationships to the environment. The second trip goes to the Fort Worth Zoo to study the Texas Wild! exhibit. This trip comes at the semester's end and allows students to synthesize material from the course and apply in analyzing a public history display. Both fieldtrips provide the basis for written assignments and classroom discussion. Students must analyze monographs in book review essays. I try to choose monographs that reflect major developments in American Environmental History. Students must incorporate ALL materials in their exam essays.

I provide students with guidelines explaining how to write a book review. I provide students with assignment sheets before taking them on the fieldtrips. These sheets indicate which items they should view and offer sample questions to guide them in their analysis. The instructions also set parameters for written assignments, including guidelines for citations. I also provide in-class instruction about how to analyze primary sources. Whatever writing assignments I choose, I typically assign them in pairs. For example, there might be two book reviews, two fieldtrip essays, and two film critiques. This allows students to complete each type of exercise early in the semester, get feedback, and, I hope, use the feedback to write a better assignment later in the semester.

The course includes several opportunities for students to present evidence-based interpretations of the past. The mid-term and final exams provide the most significant examples. These comprehensive take-home essays ask students to synthesize a wide variety of materials (both primary and secondary) in forming their interpretation of human relationships to the environment. The fieldtrip essays do the same thing, but on a smaller scale. These ask students to make evidence-based interpretations about the past using material from lectures and reading assignments to analyze primary and secondary sources.