Instructor: Todd M. Kerstetter
Office: 308B Reed Hall
Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays: 2:00-4:00 p.m.
        Wednesdays: 2:00-3:00 p.m.
        By appointment
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Objectives:
History 40853 examines American history from the perspective of the complex relationships between humans and their environment. How did the environment shape American history? How have conceptions of the environment changed? Do humans interact with the environment any differently now than they did 600 years ago? Do some groups have better ways of interacting with the environment than others? These questions merely scratch the surface of the semester’s inquiry. The course also seeks to enhance students’ reading, analytical, and writing skills. Among other things, students will be expected to:

- master a broad body of historical knowledge;
- demonstrate an understanding of historical chronology;
- use historical data to support an argument or position;
- communicate effectively verbally and in writing;
- interpret and apply data from original documents; and,
- analyze secondary materials such as articles and monographs.

Critical Inquiry:
Critical inquiry courses must require students to draw on what they have learned to make reasoned judgments. Courses meeting this requirement are to acquaint students with the assumptions and methods used in the various disciplines. Comparing different sets of assumptions or different methods of analysis may be necessary but is not sufficient for courses satisfying the critical inquiry requirement.

In addition, students must be required (a) to make and defend informed choices, and (b) to justify positions, as an integral part of the course. Critical inquiry courses are meant to help students develop and learn habits of rational thought and critical analysis and articulate positions on issues.

Requirements:
Required readings
Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire.
Rachel Carson, Silent Spring.
Shepard Krech III, The Ecological Indian.
Anne Matthews, Where the Buffalo Roam.
Elliott West, The Way to the West.
Graded work

- Attendance and participation: 50 points
- Book reviews (2 @ 50 pts.; 3-5 pages ea.): 100 points
- Film critiques (2 @ 25 pts.; 2-4 pages ea.): 50 points
- Field trip essays (2 @ 50 pts.; 3-5 pages ea.): 100 points
- Mid-term exam: 200 points
- Final exam: 200 points
- Semester total: 700 points

Grading scale: A 90-100%, B 80-89%, C 70-79%, D 60-69%, F 59% and below.

Late assignments will be penalized 10% of the original point value for each 24-hour period that passes from the due date until the assignment is received.

**Book reviews:** Reviews are due as noted below.

**Film critiques:** Students must critique one film shown before the midterm and one film shown after the midterm. Critiques are due the class period immediately following film’s showing.

**Exams:** Exams will consist of take-home essays. Students will have approximately one week to complete these assignments. Due dates are noted in the course schedule below.

**Off-campus experiences:** Exhibits at the Amon Carter Museum and Fort Worth Zoo will be incorporated into the curriculum. Essays evaluating the exhibits are due as noted below.

Students accumulating more than two absences will see their participation grade reduced. Students accumulating more than four absences will see their participation grade reduced substantially and may have their semester grade reduced.

Students assume responsibility for making up missed work and arranging make-ups at a time suitable for the instructor. All make-up work must be completed on April 27 or 28.

**Course regulations:**

Students should behave courteously to their classmates and to the instructor. Please refrain from distracting activities such as reading newspapers and talking out of turn. Disable or mute electronic devices before class begins.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

- plagiarism on themes, papers, and/or reports;
- copying from another person during an examination;
- assisting another person to cheat; and
- changing a grade, notations, or answer on a paper that has already been submitted, graded, and returned.

Students found guilty of academic dishonesty will be penalized to the fullest extent, which may include failing the course. See the Undergraduate Bulletin for additional guidance regarding academic misconduct.

Each student bears responsibility for knowing and understanding University and College rules and regulations.
**Students with disabilities:** Students requiring accommodation for a disability (physical, learning, or otherwise) should contact the Coordinator of Academic Services for Students with Disabilities. Once the instructor has received a letter, which outlines need-specific accommodations, from the Coordinator’s office, then fair procedures targeted to the student’s learning requirements will be implemented.

**Class schedule and reading assignments (subject to change):**

**Week 1:** Introduction: What is environmental history?
- Jan. 13
- Jan. 15
  - Read Articles TBA; begin *The Ecological Indian*

**Week 2:** American Indians and the Environment
- Jan. 20
- Jan. 22
  - Film: *American Buffalo: Spirit of a Nation*
  - Read *The Ecological Indian*

**Week 3:** The Columbian Exchange
- Jan. 27
  - Discuss film (review due), *Ecological Indian*
- Jan. 29
  - Read *The Ecological Indian*

**Week 4:** Yeoman Farmer Republic
- Feb. 3
- Feb. 5
  - Read *The Way to the West*

**Week 5:** Ideals of Nature
- Feb. 10
- Feb. 12
  - Read *The Way to the West*

**Week 6:** Cotton South/Mining West
- Feb. 17
- Feb. 19
  - Discuss *The Way to the West* (review due)
  - Read *The Way to the West*

**Week 7:** The Expanding Nation
- Feb. 24
- Feb. 26
  - Read *Where the Buffalo Roam*

**Week 8:** The Expanding Nation—Bison revisited
- Mar. 2
  - Discuss *Where the Buffalo Roam*
- Mar. 4
  - Exam I due
Week 9: Conservation Ideals
Mar. 9 Film: Hoover Dam
Mar. 11 Read Acts of God

SPRING BREAK

Week 10: Wilderness Ideals and Urban Aesthetics
Mar. 23
Mar. 25 Read Acts of God

Week 11: Dust and Disaster
March 30 Film: Dust Bowl
Apr. 1 Discuss Acts of God (review due)
Read Acts of God

Week 12: Ecology and the Land Ethic
Apr. 6
Apr. 8 Read Silent Spring

Week 13: From Conservation to Environment
Apr. 13
Apr. 15 Discuss Silent Spring
Read Silent Spring

Week 14: The Contemporary Environmental Movement
Apr. 20
Apr. 22 Film: Yosemite: The Fate of Heaven
Read Desert Solitaire

Week 15: Conclusion
Apr. 27 Discuss Desert Solitaire

Final Exam Due: Tuesday, May 4, 2:00 p.m.