

**Latin American Environmental History**

History 600 / Environmental Studies 600

Fall 2018, 3 credit hours

Humanities 5245

1:20–3:15 Tuesdays

Professor Elizabeth Hennessy

Email: [elizabeth.hennessy@wisc.edu](mailto:elizabeth.hennessy@wisc.edu)

Office Hours:

Mondays, 2:30-3:30

115E Science Hall

(and by appointment)

Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30

4105 Humanities

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Latin America is home to some of the world’s most famous landscapes—from Amazonian forests considered the “lungs of the earth” to soaring Andean peaks where melting glaciers have become a deadly effect of climate change. From silver ore laboriously dug from colonial-era mines to vast plantations of sugar cane and bananas, Latin American natural resources have played a central role in the development of economies and societies in the region and around the world. This course will survey changing human relationships with the natural world in the region we now call Latin America from the pre-Columbian period; through colonization and the colonial era; through the independence struggles of the nineteenth century; to contested visions of nationalism, economic development, and appropriate use of natural resources in the twentieth century; on down to the environmental questions that the region faces today. We will examine both how different peoples have understood, lived with, used, and transformed the environment as well as how the natural world has shaped human histories.

We will draw on readings from multiple disciplinary perspectives (including history, anthropology and geography) to analyze processes of imperialism, capitalist development, and the degradation of natural resources—as well as forms of collective resistance and social movements. We will ask how these processes relate to the production of scientific knowledge, global environmentalism, and issues of social justice.

Together, the class will create a Cabinet of Curiosities website aimed to educate our peers about issues of nature, society, and power in the Americas, both in the past and today. We will present our cabinet at the Nelson Institute’s Fall Capstone showcase (in lieu of a traditional final exam). Based on either historiographical research or a service-learning project, each of you will select an object, place, or person to feature. You will select an image to represent your cabinet item and write an essay to accompany it (more details below).

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Through this course, students will

- Become familiar with key texts and arguments in Latin American Environmental History
- Learn to critically engage and analyze history books
- Develop skills for conducting historical research and writing
- Collaborate to define and address an interdisciplinary research problem
- Analyze a research problem from diverse perspectives, integrating multiple sources and ways of thinking

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

## CAPSTONE REQUIREMENTS

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Dominico Remps, *Cabinet of Curiosities*, 1690, via Wikipedia Commons

### Cabinet of Curiosities: Nature, Society, and Justice in the Americas

What objects, places, or (groups of) people illustrate changing relationships among nature and society in (Latin) America? For our class capstone project, we will collaborate to build a research-based, museum-style web exhibit designed to teach your peers about important episodes of Latin American environmental history of your choice. This course fulfills capstone requirements for both History and Environmental Studies majors, so there are two tracks through which you can approach this project.

**Track A (History majors):** The goal of the History capstone is to teach you how to write an original historiographical research paper. For this track, you should select a cabinet item (or people) that relates to an original research question developed through analysis of historical primary sources. (Generally, “historical” sources are more than about 50 years old, but I will interpret this generously if you wish to focus on something more recent.) You will write a final, argument-based essay of 15-20 double-spaced pages. I will distribute more details about the essay. From this essay you will extract a 300-word abstract that encapsulates your methods, sources, and argument to accompany your cabinet image on the website.

- Out of class training: Introduction to Historical Research seminar at Memorial Library
  - <http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/introhist>

**Track B (Nelson Institute majors):** The goal of Nelson capstones is to undertake a service-learning project that addresses an interdisciplinary research problem. Individually or collectively, you should organize a service project of several weeks' duration in which you work with a community partner organization on an issue that broadly relates to the Latino community and environmental justice in Madison/central Wisconsin. We will treat your service projects as ethnographic research and participant observation that should help you learn about the community through service work. You will keep regular field notes about your project, and take photographs (of people with permission only), and perhaps also conduct oral histories and other interviews. Your choice of what to feature in the cabinet should come from your project. You will write a final, argument-based essay based on your service research and secondary sources. The paper should be 15-20 pages, double-spaced. From this essay you will extract a 300-word abstract that encapsulates your methods, sources, and argument to accompany your cabinet image on the website.

- Out of class training: Introduction to Oral Histories
- Library Research Session on Latin American Sources with Paloma Celis

The project will culminate in a group research presentation [10-15 minutes total] as part of the Nelson Institute's Capstone Showcase held during our final exam time.

## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

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### Assignments

There will be two major categories of assignments in this course: reading assignments and writing assignments.

#### *Reading Assignments*

- Five 1-page (typed, single spaced, approx. 500 words) reading responses that critically analyze (not summarize) one or more of the week's readings. You must turn in 5 during course of semester, posted to Canvas by midnight on the Monday night preceding class. Between then and class time, you must read your classmates' responses for the week.
- Class discussion leaders – Teams of two students will lead class discussion once each during the semester. (If there are 12 total students, this will be a total of 6 classes.) This involves (1) meeting with me during office hours THE DAY (or week) BEFORE YOU PRESENT to discuss readings, reading questions, and your ideas for leading discussion; (2) circulating discussion questions to guide the class by the previous Monday by 6PM; (3) organizing and leading in-class time to discuss the readings and their significance; (4) a short self and partner evaluation. Days on the syllabus with asterisks \* are potential days to sign up to lead.

#### *Writing Assignments*

- Track A (History)
  - Attend Introduction to Historical Research session @ Memorial Library
- Track B (Nelson)
  - Attend oral history training @ Wisconsin Historical Society

- Both tracks:
  - Initial research report [due Sept 30] outlining your working research question and a one-paragraph explanation/justification of how it fits into the larger group project and listing 10 potential sources, in formal bibliographic style.
  - Annotated bibliography [due Oct 14] with 10 sources and a paragraph about each explaining its relevance / key arguments.
  - **Detailed** Outline [due Nov 4] should be 4-5 pages in length and include your working thesis statement, an updated justification of how your topic fits the larger project, and notes on relevant literature, your key sources, and preliminary conclusions.
  - Draft paper [due Nov 25] of 15-20 pages, should include an updated bibliography [no longer needs to be annotated]
  - 1-page of constructive criticism for your writing partner [approx. 500 words. Due Dec 2]
  - Final high-res image (with permission worksheet) & Abstract Due Dec.
- Final presentation Dec 13 to be organized and presented jointly at Nelson Capstone Showcase [10 minutes plus 5 for audience questions]
- Final paper [due at end of exam period, Dec 15] of 15-20 pages. Polished.

### Grading

Participation	10%
Reading responses (5)	10%
Lead class discussion	10%
Initial research report	5%
Annotated bibliography	10%
Outline with working thesis	10%
Draft paper	15%
Constructive criticism	5%
Final paper	20%
Final presentation	5%

A 93-100	B 83-87.5	C 70-77.5	F <59.5
AB 88-92.5	BC 78-82.5	D 60-69.5	

During the semester I will circulate a detailed holistic rubric outlining how I will grade writing. All assignments are due at the beginning of class in hard copy unless otherwise instructed. I will not accept emailed assignments. Late assignments will be marked down one percentage point per day late. (I.e., after class time on Tuesdays = 1 day late; Wednesdays = 2 days late, etc.)

### COURSE READINGS

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#### Required Books

- Richard Marius and Melvin Page. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2011.
- Jake Kosek, *Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006

- Claudia Leal, *Landscapes of Freedom: Building a postemancipation society in the rainforests of western Colombia*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018
- John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption & Environmental Change in Honduras & the United States*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.

### Suggested Background Readings

If you are new to Latin American History, I recommend:

John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*. New York: Norton, 2001.

If you are new to Environmental History, I recommend:

William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-28.

[http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Trouble\\_with\\_Wilderness\\_Main.html](http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Trouble_with_Wilderness_Main.html)

### Supplemental Advice

- Rick López, "How to Get to Know a History Book" [Canvas]
- William Cronon, Learning to Do Historical Research  
<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/>

### GRADUATE ENROLLEES

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Graduate students who wish to take this course for graduate credit must obtain the instructor's approval, attend seminar meetings, and reach a prior agreement with the instructor on a schedule of individual meetings, a list of required supplementary readings, and alternative writing (or other) assignments.

### Graduate Learning Objectives

In addition to learning objectives listed above, graduate students will also:

- Analyze current academic debates about Latin American environmental history
- Conduct original research and apply theoretical tools to inform an in-depth analysis or research proposal

### Graduate Grading Rubric

A	4	BC	2.5	D	1
AB	3.5	C	2	F	0
B	3				

### Graduate Assignments & Grade Structure

Participation & Small Assignments	20%
Weekly Reading Responses	20%
Final paper	60%

### Graduate Participation & Readings

Grads are expected to participate in class discussion, activities, and assignments as do all the other students. Graduate students will be responsible for all readings assigned to undergrads as well as additional readings.

Reading responses: Grads will write **eight** 500-word (1-page) responses to the weeks' readings, due on Monday at midnight. At least once a month, grads will meet with Prof. Hennessy during office hours to discuss readings and their research paper.

### **Final Research Paper or Proposal**

Graduate students will complete an extended version of the course writing project. You will complete a paper of 20-25 pages that incorporates original historiographical and/or ethnographic research on primary sources as well as the extended readings for graduate students.

## COURSE POLICIES

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### **TECHNOLOGY**

You are all adults and I will treat you as such and expect you to be responsible for your own conduct in class. You may use your laptops to take notes, but you may not shop, watch videos, play games, use social media, or IM during class. I will not permit you to use cell phones in class in any way. If you do, I will take your phone for the remainder of the class period.

### **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism amounts to turning in work or participating in class activities based on work that is not your own. It is a serious offense and grounds for failing an assignment (or worse) in my classroom. You must give attribution in your written work both when you directly quote someone else's words and when you use their ideas. For more information, consult Marius and Page, pages 23-28 and the UW-Madison Writing Center: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to [studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/](http://studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/).

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

## SEMESTER OVERVIEW

Week & Date	Reading	Project Assignment
1 – (September 4)	No class	
2 – September 11	What, and where, is Latin American Environmental History?	Explanation of Cabinet of Curiosities; Sharing research projects and potential themes
3 – September 18	*El Encuentro	Do intro sessions (out of class)
4 – September 25	* <i>Banana Cultures</i>	
5 – October 2	* <i>Banana Cultures</i>	Initial research question & annotated sources list due
6 – October 9	Science, Conservation, Ecotourism	
7 – October 16	* <i>Understories</i>	Annotated bibliography due
8 – October 23	* <i>Understories</i>	Provisional image & pitch due
9 – October 30	Documentary (No class)	
10 – November 6	No class: Research day	Detailed outline due Nov. 9 11:59pm
11 – November 13	* <i>Landscapes of Freedom</i> : Part I	
12 – November 20	* <i>Landscapes of Freedom</i> : Part II	
13 – November 27	Presentations	Drafts due
14 – December 4	Workshopping	Peer review due
15 – December 11	Workshopping	Image & Abstract Due: Make website!
December 13, 1-3pm		Nelson Presentation (Mandatory)
EXAM: December 15	Final papers due by 9:45 am	

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WEEKLY COURSE PLAN

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Readings and assignments listed here are subject to change. Changes will be discussed in class and updated on Canvas. It is your responsibility to keep up with changes and regularly consult the class web space.

**No Week 1!****Week 2 – September 11 –What, and Where, is Latin American Environmental History?**

Readings (in class):

- Christian Brannstrom and Stefania Gallini. “An Introduction to Latin American Environmental History,” in *Territories, Commodities, and Knowledges: Latin American Environmental Histories in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. C. Brannstrom, ed. London: Institute for Study of the Americas, 2004. pp. 1-20.

In class: sign up for 1 day to lead class discussion (with a partner)

**\*Week 3 – September 18 – El Encuentro**

Readings:

- Charles C. Mann. “1491” *The Atlantic*, March 1, 2002.  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/302445/>
- Doreen Massey, “Setting the Scene” in *For Space*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2005, pp. 1-4; 7
- Barbara Mundy, “Indigenous Civilization” in *Mapping Latin America*, Jordana Dym and Karl Offen, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, pp. 42-45.
- Leon Garcia Garagarza, The Year the People Turned into Cattle: The End of the World in New Spain, 1558, in *Centering Animals in Latin American History*

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday by Midnight
- Meet with me next Monday if you are leading discussion next week

**\*Week 4 – September 25 – Banana Cultures I**

Readings:

- John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption & Environmental Change in Honduras & the United States*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. [1<sup>st</sup> half]
- Marius and Page, “Identifying Key Sources,” pp. 69-84
- William Cronon et al, [How to Frame a Research Question](#)

In class: **Library Research Session on Latin American Sources with Paloma Celis**

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday by midnight
- Meet with me next Monday if you are leading discussion next week

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**\*Week 5 – October 2 – Banana Cultures II**

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Readings:

- John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption & Environmental Change in Honduras & the United States*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. [1<sup>st</sup> half]

Assignments Due:

- Initial research question & annotated sources list due
- Reading responses due Monday by midnight
- Meet with me next Monday if you are leading discussion next week

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**\* Week 6 – October 9 – Science, Conservation, Eco-tourism**

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Readings:

- Elizabeth Hennessy, *On the Backs of Tortoises: Darwin, the Galápagos and the Fate of an Evolutionary Eden*, DRAFT Manuscript Selections.
- Marius and Page on Taking Notes, pp. 88-99
- [“Field notes in ethnographic research,”](#) from R.M. Emerson, R.I Fretz & L.L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. [Just read Chapter 1]

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday by midnight
- Meet with me next Monday if you are leading discussion next week

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**\*Week 7 – October 16 – Understories**

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Readings:

- Jake Kosek, *Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico*, Duke University Press, 2006 [1<sup>st</sup> half]
- William Cronon et al., [Positioning your argument in a wider literature](#)

Assignments Due:

- Annotated bibliography due [more details to be discussed in class]
- Reading responses due Monday by midnight
- Meet with me next Monday if you are leading discussion next week

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**\*Week 8 – October 23 – Understories**

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Readings:

- Jake Kosek, *Understories* [2<sup>nd</sup> half]
- Marius and Page on Organizing, pp. 100-105
- William Cronon et al, [Arguments and Narrative](#)

Assignments Due:

- Provisional image and pitch due
  - Reading responses due Monday [Oct 20] by 10PM
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**Week 9 – October 30 – No class meeting (EH @ SAS)**

Assignments Due:

- Watch documentary TBD and write 500 word viewing response [Due next Monday by midnight]

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**Week 10 – November 6 – No class meeting (EH @ SAS)**

Assignments Due:

- Detailed outline (with thesis) due Friday (Nov 9), 11:59pm
- Meet with me next Monday if you are leading discussion next week

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**\* Week 11 – November 13 – Landscapes of Freedom I**

Readings:

Claudia Leal, *Landscapes of Freedom*

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday by midnight
- Meet with me next Monday if you are leading discussion next week

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**\* Week 12 – November 20 – Landscapes of Freedom II**

Readings:

Claudia Leal, *Landscapes of Freedom*

Marius and Page, "Writing and Revising Drafts" pp. 105-113

Assignments Due:

- Reading responses due Monday by midnight
- Write!

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**Week 13 – November 27 – In-process presentations & Peer-review**

Readings: None.

Assignments Due:

- **First Draft due by 1:20pm (via Canvas Dropbox)**
- **Everyone will give a short (3-minute) presentation of their project & thesis**
- By next class, partners should thoroughly read each others' papers and type up one page of constructive criticism [single spaced]

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**Week 14 – December 4 – Revising**

Readings: None.

Assignments Due:

- 1-page of constructive criticism reflecting on your partner's draft
  - Schedule a time to see me if necessary
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**Week 15 – December 11 – Collaborative Work Time**

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Readings: None.

Assignments Due:

- Final image, abstract, and permission worksheet due
- Build website (in class)
- Organize showcase presentation plan (in class)

**FINAL SHOWCASE: December 13, 1-3 PM**

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Assignments Due:

- Nelson Institute Capstone Showcase [15 minute group presentation of capstone project]  
EVERYONE'S ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.

**FINAL PAPERS DUE: Via Dropbox on Canvas by 9:45am, Saturday, December 15.**