All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, 1836
Course Objective
In this course you will examine the interaction of humans and nature in American history from the colonial period to today. The approach will be roughly chronological, with emphasis on selected issues, events, and persons. The course will consider three large themes: 1. The way that Americans (of different types) have thought about nature and the relationship between people and nature. 2. The history of the human impact on nature and of nature’s impact on people in the area now known as the United States. 3. The role of government in industrialization, pollution, resource management, and the modern environmental movement.

Course Requirements
Students are required to attend class, read five core books, and complete all assignments. Graded assignments include quizzes on readings, a midterm and final exam, participation in class discussions, and extended written essays as described below. ALL assignments must be completed or you will not pass the course. The class only meets twice a week, so failure to attend class will automatically decrease your course grade. Generally, Mondays will be reserved for lectures and on Wednesdays I may lecture, show a film, discuss readings for that week, and possibly give a quiz on that week’s readings (be prepared by keeping up with the readings!).

Required Books
Ted Steinberg, Down to Earth: Nature's Role In American History (2002)
Elizabeth A. Fenn, Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82 (2001)
Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac
Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness

Writing Assignments
Paper Assignment #1
Using the Elizabeth Fenn book Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82 as an example, write a short history of the role and impact of one plant, animal, or microbe in U.S. history. Questions you will want to answer in your paper include: Where did this living organism originate and where and why does it exist in other places throughout history and today (or is it extinct)? What impact has it had on human history in North America and the way that humans relate to one another? What major events or processes has this organism played a key role in? Ideas about what organism to write about can be gleaned from Ted Steinberg’s Down to Earth: Nature’s Role In American History, lecture, and by talking with me. Use at least ten distinct primary sources, books, articles, and internet sources for your paper (the internet cannot be your sole source of information). The paper should be 7-10 pages, double-spaced, normal-size font (12 point), one-inch margins all around and include a title page and bibliography. This is an individual not a group effort; the writing must be your own. We will discuss possible topics and research tips in class.
Topic ideas due: September 12
Paper due date: October 17
Paper Assignment #2
After reading Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* & Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness*, as well as the other selections by them in *The Palgrave Environmental Reader* (pp. 149-166 & pp. 221-228) you will write a 7-10 page paper comparing and contrasting the ideas of these two major thinkers in 20th century American environmental thought. What ideas and approaches do they have in common? In what ways did their ideas about defining nature and the human role within it differ? Which writer more inspires you and why (be specific)? The paper needs to be double-spaced, normal-size font (12 point), and one-inch margins all around. This is an individual not a group effort; the writing must be your own.
Paper due date: November 30

NOTE: plagiarism (to take the ideas, writings, etc. of another and present them as your own) is strictly forbidden and will be punished to the fullest extent possible, including failure of the course and/or expulsion from the university. Please review UNCG’s policy on plagiarism: [http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/violation/plagiarism/](http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/violation/plagiarism/) and how to avoid plagiarism: [http://library.uncg.edu/tutorials/index.aspx?m=8](http://library.uncg.edu/tutorials/index.aspx?m=8)

Grading Summary

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
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<td>Paper #2</td>
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<td>Quiz on <em>Pox Americana</em></td>
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<td>All quizzes on weekly readings</td>
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<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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100%

Letter grades assigned as follows:

97-100 A+
93-96 A
90-92 A-
87-89 B+
83-86 B
80-82 B-
77-79 C+
73-76 C
70-72 C-
67-69 D+
63-66 D
60-62 D-
<60 F
Schedule
Week 1  What is Environmental History?
8/22-8/24  Reading: *Down to Earth* pp. ix-7
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Introduction

Week 2  American Indian Ecology
8/29-8/31  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 1: pp. 11-20
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Reading 7

9/5  No Class: Labor Day

Week 3  Columbian Exchange: New Animals, Plants, and Diseases
9/7  Reading: *Down to Earth* pp. 21-32
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Reading 1
Start reading Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82*

Week 4  Colonial America and Nature
9/12-9/14  Reading: *Down to Earth* pp. 32-38
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Readings 2-6
Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82*

9/12  Topic for Paper #1 due
(Provide me at least two possible topics and a very brief description of their role in American history.)

Week 5  Forest and Plantation in 19th Century America
9/19-9/21  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapters 3 & 4: pp. 39-70
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Readings 8, 10
Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82*

Week 6  Disease & Other Scourges in Southern Environmental History
9/26-9/28  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapters 5-7: pp. 71-115
Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82*

9/28  Quiz on *Pox Americana*

Week 7  The Developing American West
10/3  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 8: pp. 116-138
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Reading 9

10/5  Mid-term Exam

10/10  No Class: Fall Break
Week 8  The Development of the Conservation Movement  
10/12  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 9: pp. 138-156  
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Readings 11-14

Week 9  The Conservation Movement vs. Wilderness Preservation  
10/17-10/19  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 9: pp. 138-156  
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Readings 15-18

10/17  Paper Assignment #1 Due

Week 10  The Urban Environment, Industrialization, and Reform  
10/24-10/26  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapters 10 & 11: pp. 157-189

Week 11  Wilderness Protection & Toxic Pollution after WWII  
10/31-11/2  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapters 12 & 13: pp. 190-225  
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Readings 19-21  
Start Reading Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* & Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*

Week 12  The Post-WWII Environmental Movement  
11/7-11/9  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 14: 226-238  
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Readings 22-26  
Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* & Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*

Week 13  Environmental Racism & Environmental Justice  
11/14-11/16  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 15: pp.239-261  
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Readings 27-29  
Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* & Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*

11/21 & 11/23 No Class: Thanksgiving

Week 14  Backlash Against the Environmental Movement  
11/28-11/30  Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 16: pp. 262-281  
Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* & Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*

11/30  Paper Assignment #2 Due

Week 15  Modern Problems & Potential Solutions  
12/5  Reading: *Down to Earth* Conclusion: pp. 283-85  
*The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, Readings 30-32

Final Exam  Monday, December 12 @3:30