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 sorts) 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 roles of government, industrialization, pollution, resource management, and the modern environmental movement in shaping the way that Americans interact with the environment.

Course Requirements
Class meetings are devoted primarily to lecture, with periodic discussions of readings and videos seen in class. I use PowerPoint to supplement my lectures with outlines and images, but they are not posted on Canvas nor online. Students are expected to attend all classes and to keep up with the reading assignments which will serve as the basis for class discussions. Students are required to come to class prepared; assigned readings completed, assignments completed on time. When you come to class you should be prepared to take notes and to discuss the topics of the day. Attendance will be taken, and each absence above three (3) that is not excused by the Athletic Dept., Dean of Students, or medical doctor will result in one-half letter grade subtracted from the final course grade. ALL assignments must be completed; failure to complete even one graded assignment will result in an F in the course. Late assignments are NOT accepted.

Student Learning Goals
Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:
1. Describe broad knowledge of American Environmental history [Historical Comprehension]
2. Comprehend and critique primary sources from the period [Historical Analysis]
3. Analyze, critique, and synthesize the writings of modern scholars [Historiography]
4. Synthesize material read from a variety of sources to produce a larger analytical conclusion [Historical Interpretation]

Required Books
Ted Steinberg, Down to Earth: Nature's Role In American History (3rd edition, 2013)
Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac (any edition)
Edward Abbey, Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness (any edition)

Writing Assignments
Instructions for all writing assignments will be handed out separately.

Academic Integrity Policy
Refer to the UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin (http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/). Plagiarism (to take the work of another and present it as your own) is absolutely not allowed and will be punished according to UNCG guidelines, including failure of assignments and/or the course.
From the Writing Center website: “The purpose of the Writing Center is to enhance the confidence and competence of student writers by providing free, individual assistance at any stage of any writing project. Staff consultants are experienced writers and alert readers, prepared to offer feedback and suggestions on drafts of papers, help students find answers to their questions about writing, and provide one-on-one instruction as needed.”

**Grading Summary**

- Article Summary Papers 5% each = 25%
- Documentary Film Papers 2% each = 10%
- Leopold-Abbey Paper 25%
- Mid-term Exam 20%
- Final Exam 20%

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?
8/23-8/25  American Indian Ecology
Reading: *Down to Earth* pp. ix-Chapter 1
Watch the video clip defining environmental history by environmental historian Donald Worster: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJfwVXWP6X4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJfwVXWP6X4)

Week 2  
8/30-9/1  
Columbian Exchange: New Animals, Plants, and Diseases  
Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 2  
**Documentary Film #1:** *1492 the Columbian exchange - America before Columbus*, episode 1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrgDVTYG0z4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrgDVTYG0z4)  

Week 3  
9/6-9/8  
Colonial America & Nature  
Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 3  
**Documentary Film #2:** *America Before Columbus*, part 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9PTcGa-RQo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9PTcGa-RQo)  
**Article:** Katherine A. Grandjean, “New World Tempests: Environment, Scarcity, and the Coming of the Pequot War,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2011), pp. 75-100

Week 4  
9/13-9/15  
Industrialization and Plantation in Antebellum America  
Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapters 4-5  
**Article:** Stewart, Mart A. 2007. "From King Cane to King Cotton: Razing Cane in the Old South," *Environmental History* 12, no. 1: 59-79.

Week 5  
9/20  
The Civil War  
Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 6  

9/22  
Disease, especially in the South  
Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 7

Week 6  
9/27  
Disease cont.  
**Documentary Film #3:** *Influenza, 1918*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tdr4GE-Y74Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tdr4GE-Y74Q)  
Reading: *Down to Earth* Chapter 7  

9/29  
Americans Go West  
Film: *The West: Episode 3, The Speck of the Future*  
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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>The Developing American West &amp; Relationship to Industrialization</th>
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| 10/4-10/6 | **Reading:** *Down to Earth* Chapter 8  

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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Review for Mid-term Exam</th>
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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>NO CLASS: FALL BREAK</th>
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| 10/20  | Natural Disasters in U.S. History  
**Reading:** *Down to Earth* Chapter 9  

| Week 10 | Invasive Species & The Death of the Chestnut Forests  
**Reading:** *Down to Earth* Chapter 10  
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10/25   | The Urban Environment: Chicago as an Example  
**Reading:** *Down to Earth* Chapter 10  

| Week 11 | The Conservation Movement vs. Wilderness Preservation  
**Reading:** *Down to Earth* Chapter 11  
**Start Reading:** Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* & Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*  
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11/1-11/3 | Wilderness Protection & Toxic Pollution after WWII  
**Reading:** *Down to Earth* Chapters 12  
**Leopold, A Sand County Almanac & Abbey, Desert Solitaire**  
**Documentary Film #4:** *Rachel Carson's Silent Spring*  
Week 13
11/15-11/17
The Post-WWII Environmental Movement
Reading: Down to Earth Chapter 13
Leopold, A Sand County Almanac & Abbey, Desert Solitaire
Documentary Film #5: Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time

Week 14
11/22
LEOPOLD-ABBEY PAPER DUE

11/22
Environmental Racism & Environmental Justice
Reading: Down to Earth Chapter 14
Leopold, A Sand County Almanac & Abbey, Desert Solitaire

11/24
NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

Week 15
11/29-12/1
Backlash against the Environmental Movement & Modern Problems
Reading: Down to Earth Chapters 15-16

Final Exam
Thursday, December 8 @3:30