

Dr. Michael Lewis

**

History 389: Environmental History: The United States

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Section 151, Wednesday 6:00–8:30

GC 236–B

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Office Hours: Tu/Th 2:00–3:00, Monday 12:00–3:00, and by appointment

**Course Texts:

** Opie, _Natures Nation

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Cronon, _Changes in the Land

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Hurley, _Environmental Inequalities

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Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World*

White, *The Organic Machine*

Worster, _The Dust Bowl

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Course Description and Objectives**: This course has two primary goals. It will introduce you to environmental history as a type of historical inquiry, with specific goals and concerns, and second, it will give you an overview of the general environmental history of the United States. The course will be discussion-intensive, and will also allow you the opportunity to write a research paper demonstrating the environmental history approach.

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Grading Scale**:

A 90–100%

B 80%–89%

C 70–79%

D 60–69%

F 59% and below

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Course Requirements**:

Attendance : You will be allowed one absence with no penalty but remember, missing one class is the equivalent of missing an entire weeks worth of information! You will be responsible for making up any material missed. Any further absences will result in a substantial reduction in your grade. Please note that, while we all are occasionally forced to be late, a continued pattern of tardiness to class will not be tolerated, and will result in a reduction in your participation grade.

Preparation : You are responsible for completing the assigned readings for each week. This course will be discussion intensive. The university suggests that you should spend 2 3 hours at home doing work for every one hour in class (or roughly nine hours a week for this class). You should be able to complete this courses readings in less time than that. I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes over the readings at any time. Also note that your examinations will not just be derived from in–class discussions. You are responsible for all of the material assigned, even if it was not directly discussed in class. It is impossible to underestimate how important it is to read your class texts! It will make the class far simpler to understand, and will help your grade immeasurably.

Participation : Your participation in class, or lack thereof, will be noted. Active participation is not optional, but is a precondition for success in this class.

Examinations : You will have one in–class examination, and a final exam. If you miss a scheduled examination, you will not have the opportunity for a make–up, barring some truly spectacular and documented reason, cleared with me PRIOR to the examination.

Papers : You will be responsible for one major research paper of 10–12 pages. You will also be assigned brief essays to complete at home or in–class as a pre–cursor to discussions; these brief papers (1–2 pages) will count towards your participation grade.

Class trips: There will be two Saturday trips for this class. These trips are required. I understand, however, that some people have legitimate commitments that preclude their attendance at a trip outside of class. If you cannot make one or both of these class trips, please meet with me as soon as possible so that we can work out an alternative assignment.

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Grading Breakdown:

Participation: 25%

Mid–Term Examination: 20%

Paper: 30%

Final Examination: 25%

Writing Across the Curriculum: **Writing across the Curriculum is a nationally recognized initiative that is designed to improve students learning through encouraging different types of writing in all university courses. This course is committed to this program, and will use the following tools:

1.) You will be required to refine your note-taking skills in class

2.) Your examinations will be essay based. These essays will require you to think broadly about the primary themes of the course, and to marshal specific evidence in support of an argument.

3.) You will be required to do short writing assignments in-class and at home to allow you the opportunity to think through some general course questions.

4.) You will write one polished research paper in which you develop and pursue a historical argument demonstrating your mastery of the environmental history approach.

September 5, Week 1: Introductory class Syllabus hand out

September 12, Week 2: Kurlansky: *Cod* (read the whole book) , also, Opie, Introduction. **Turn in assignment.**

September 19, Week 3: Opie: Chapter 1.

September 26, Week 4: Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (complete), also,
Opie: Chapter 2

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September 29: Saturday: Class Field-trip

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October 3, Week 5: Opie, Chapter 3

**Deadline to discuss paper topic with me (required)

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October 10, Week 6: Opie, Chapter 4, Chapter 5

October 17, Week 7: Opie, Chapter 6, **the mid-term examination will be given in the last hour of class.

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October 24, Week 8: White: *Organic Machine* (complete).

October 31, Week 9: Opie, Chapter 7, Chapter 8

November 7, Week 10: Chapter 9

**Research Papers Due (November 7)

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November 14, Week 11: Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities* (complete)

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November 17: Saturday: Class Field Trip and discussion (to substitute for Week 12 class meeting on November 21st)

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Opie, Chapter 10

November 21, Week 12: No meeting. See above (November 17)

November 28, Week 13: Worster: *Dust Bowl* (complete)

December 5, Week 14: Opie, Chapter 13 (also *skim* Chapter 12)

December 12, Week 15: Opie, Chapter 15

**Final Exam: December 19 th, 7:45–9:45 pm

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