

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY OF EAST ASIA
GRADUATE READING COLLOQUIUM
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

Course Instructor: Prof. Stephen Halsey
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Course Description

This graduate level reading colloquium provides an introduction to the field of East Asian environmental history, focusing in particular on the period since 1600. We will not only examine the basic set of research tools used by specialists but also assess the major historiographic themes in this discipline. These include a wide range of issues such as disease, imperialism, economic development, industrialization, nuclear power, and the state. Case studies will explore the changing use of water, soil, minerals, air, and biota in China and Japan over the past five centuries, but we will also engage in systematic comparison with regions such as South Asia whenever appropriate. Doctoral students may desire to take this course in preparation for a comprehensive field examination in environmental history with a weighted Asia focus.

Course Requirements

Students will write **two short essays** of four pages each (20%) and a **final historiography paper** of fifteen to twenty pages in length (40%). **Participation** in class discussions will constitute 40 % of the final grade.

First Short Essay: Methodological Analysis

Students will write a short essay of four pages in length that analyzes the basic research methods used by environmental historians of East Asia. They may choose to examine any combination of the general course readings between weeks one and five (inclusive) and should describe the author's primary and secondary source materials, linguistic capabilities, etc. This essay is due at the beginning of class in hard copy format on **February 10**.

Second Short Essay: Thematic Analysis

Students will write a second short essay of four pages in length that analyzes an important historical theme covered between weeks six and ten (inclusive). Again they may choose to examine any combination of the general course readings and will submit their papers in class on **March 26**.

Final Historiography Paper

Students will write a final historiography paper of fifteen to twenty pages in length on a topic approved by the course instructor. They may choose from two distinct options, either analyzing a major theme such as industrialization or assessing the research methodologies used by environmental historians of East Asia. Successful papers will include a substantial sampling of works and will likely integrate a comparative or transnational dimension into their argument. Students with the requisite language skills are welcome to evaluate important books and articles in Chinese and Japanese.

Student Presentations

Students will present a rough draft of their historiography paper during the final week of class. Two days prior to our last meeting, they will email their work to the course listserve as an attachment in Word

format. Each student will have ten minutes to describe the thesis, argument, and sources for their paper, and colloquium participants will then offer constructive feedback on the presenter's work.

Course Texts

Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature*

Peter Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan, 1550-1850*

Conrad Totman, *Green Archipelago: Forestry in Pre-Industrial Japan*

Brett Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800*

Angela Ki Che Leung, *Leprosy in China: A History*

Ian Jared Miller, *The Nature of the Beasts: Empire and Exhibition at the Tokyo Imperial Zoo*

Brett Walker, *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan*

Elizabeth Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*

Ian Jared Miller, Julia Adeney Thomas, Brett L. Walker (eds), *Japan at Nature's Edge*

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Making of a Hinterland*

Richard Grove, Vinita Damodaran, and Satpal Sangwan, *Nature and the Orient*

Additional required readings are available for download in pdf format under the course documents link on the Blackboard course website.

Late Policy

Course papers are due at the beginning of class in hard copy form on the date specified in the syllabus or agreed to in writing with the instructor. Late work will be penalized **one full letter grade** (A becomes a B, etc.) each day, and extensions will be granted only under exceptional circumstances. **Please note that students must complete ALL assignments in order to pass this course; failure to do so will result in failure of the course.**

Attendance Policy

You are required to attend each class and participate in every discussion. Missing more than two class sessions without a viable medical excuse will result in a failing grade for class participation. More generally, chronic absenteeism or tardiness will result in a failing grade for class participation.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course and referral to the University Honor Council. Please do not commit academic suicide by breaking the university's rules.

Course Schedule

Jan 13 The Environmental History of East Asia: The State of the Field

Readings:

J.R. McNeill, "The State of the Field of Environmental History," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, vol. 35 (November 2010): 345-74.

Maohong Bao, "Environmental History in China," *Environment and History*, vol. 10, no. 4 (2004): 475-499.

Julia Adeney Thomas, "The Cage of Nature: Modernity's History in Japan," *History and Theory*, vol. 40, no.1 (2001): 16-36.

Jan 20 Early Modern China: An Exhausted Earth, Smithian Growth, or Both?

Readings:

Peter Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan, 1550-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

Helen Dunstan, "Official Thinking on Environmental Issues and the State's Environmental Roles in Eighteenth Century China," in Mark Elvin and T'sui-jung Liu, *Sediments of Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 585-616.

Jan 27 Green Archipelago: Japan in the Early Modern Era

Readings:

Conrad Totman, *Green Archipelago: Forestry in Pre-Industrial Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

Brett Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

Feb 3 State, Environment, and European Imperialism in Late Imperial China

Readings:

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Making of a Hinterland: State, Society, and Economy in Inland North China, 1853-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

Feb 10 The Cursed Body: Disease in Late Imperial and Modern China

Readings:

Angela Ki Che Leung, *Leprosy in China: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

Feb 17 Animals and the Imperial Imagination in Modern Japan

Reading:

Ian Jared Miller, *The Nature of the Beasts: Empire and Exhibition at the Tokyo Imperial Zoo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

Miller, ed., *Japan at Nature's Edge*, chapter 9.

Feb 26 Industrialization and Disease in Modern Japan

Readings:

Brett Walker, *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011).

Miller, ed., *Japan at Nature's Edge*, chapters 4 and 6.

March 3 War, Empire, and Environmental Change

Readings:

Patrick J. Caffrey, "Transforming the Forests of a Counterfeit Nation: Japan's 'Manchu Nation' in Northeast China," *Environmental History* 18 (2013): 309-332.

Micah Muscolino, "Refugees, Land Reclamation, and Militarized Landscapes in Wartime China: Huanglongshan, Shaanxi, 1937-45," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 69,

no. 2 (2010): 453-478.

William M. Tsutsui, "Landscapes in the Dark Valley: Toward an Environmental History of Wartime Japan," *Environmental History* 8.2 (2003): 294-311.

Ian Jared Miller, Julia Adeney Thomas, Brett L. Walker (eds), *Japan at Nature's Edge: The Environmental Context of a Global Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), chapter 1.

March 10 (Spring Break)

March 17 Great Cuttings and Great Famines: The Maoist Catastrophe

Readings:

Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature*

March 26 After Hiroshima: Environment in Post-war Japan

Readings:

Yun Hui Tsu, "Timothy Nature, Development, and Disaster in Postwar Kobe: An Exploration of Environmental Thinking in Japanese Local Politicians," *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2006):131-155.

Kenneth Wilkening, *Acid Rain Science and Politics in Japan: A History of Knowledge and Action Towards Sustainability* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004), 121-224.

April 2 The Big Dirty: China during the Reform Era

Readings:

Elizabeth Economy, *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010). Second edition.

April 9 In the Shadow of Fukushima: The Environment in Contemporary Japan

Readings:

Miller, ed., *Japan at Nature's Edge*, chapters 12-15.

April 16 A Comparative Excursion: South and Southeast Asia

Readings:

Richard Grove, Vinita Damodaran, and Satpal Sangwan, *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Apr 23 Student Presentations of Final Paper Drafts

Readings: Final Paper Drafts