

LARCH 454

Urban Environmental Histories: Emerging Perspectives

SPRING 2017 5 credits

Tuesday & Thursday, 8:30 -10:20 am

GOULD HALL 100

Instructor: Dr. Thaisa Way/ tway@uw.edu

UW/ College of Built Environments/ Landscape Architecture

“plurality of pasts exists because constituting a past always depends to some degree on socially mediated negotiations of a fit between descriptions and experience” (Roth 1).

Urban environmental histories engage social, ecological, economic, and cultural histories to develop narratives of the cities we live in. Understanding the world today requires understanding its cities. And understanding its cities requires knowing their history. This course considers how urban environmental histories are shaped and produced, through the lens of six cities and their histories.

Students will engage in reading, mapping, drawing, and research as we consider urban histories globally and as they inform American cities. We will explore intersections of history writing and representation via maps, drawings, and films.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- understand major themes in urban environmental history
- describe the role of mapping and visual researches as research tools
- describe the role of digital tools as research tools
- research urban environmental histories
- organize and design an online exhibit / graphic novel

Course Format

The course will engage weekly discussions as well as workshops. Each week we will read a book on the environmental history of one city or urban topic. We will devote one meeting to discussions of the book and its major themes. The second meeting will consider the visual, digital, and representational tools available to us to develop the ideas explored. Students are expected to explore outside of their comfort zones, to develop new skills, and expand their intellectual familiarity with the topics presented.

Course requirements

Weekly reading

Participation in discussions

Final project- Online Graphic Novel

Readings:

All of the readings should be completed prior to class meeting when the material is discussed.

Final Project:

As a culminating project, students will curate an online graphic novel on one aspect/ infrastructure of Seattle's urban environmental history.

Grading:

Participation: 60%

Final Project: 40%

Student Responsibilities

1. Regular attendance and active engagement in class (i.e. listening, contributing, taking good notes)
2. Arrive at class on time
3. Complete the reading before the class in which we examine it. No late work will be accepted.

Academic honesty The University takes the offenses of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, and so do I. Cheating is taking advantage of the work of others. Plagiarism is representing the work of others as your own without giving appropriate credit. If you are unsure what is OK or not OK, make sure to ask.

ABSENCES: Success in this course will depend on your being present and engaged in the discussions. Please alert the TA to any expected absences well ahead of time. In cases of unexpected absences (illness, family emergencies), you must contact us within a week of the absence to be considered for makeup credit.

Students with Disabilities: To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the UW Disability Resources for Students Office. If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the professor at the start of the quarter so we can discuss the accommodations. Letters presented later in the quarter may come too late to allow proper accommodations for examinations and other assignment

Foundational Resources:

- Castonguay, S., & Dagenais, Michèle. (2011). *Metropolitan natures : Environmental histories of Montreal* (History of the urban environment). Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis : Chicago and the Great West*. 1st ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.
- Deverell, William Francis, and Greg Hise. *Land of Sunshine : An Environmental History of Metropolitan Los Angeles*. History of the Urban Environment. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005.
- Falck, Z. (2010). *Weeds : An environmental history of metropolitan America* (History of the urban environment). Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Gandy, Matthew. *Concrete and Clay : Reworking Nature in New York City*. Urban and Industrial Environments. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002.
- Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier : The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Kelman, Ari. *A River and Its City : The Nature of Landscape in New Orleans*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Kelman, Ari, and NetLibrary Inc. *A River and Its City the Nature of Landscape in New Orleans*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
<http://www.netLibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=90462>.
- Klingle, Matthew W. *Emerald City : An Environmental History of Seattle*. The Lamar Series in Western History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Lawrence, Henry W. *City Trees : A Historical Geography from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006.
- Melosi, M., & Pratt, Joseph A. (2007). *Energy metropolis : An environmental history of Houston and the Gulf Coast* (History of the urban environment). Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Rutkow, E. (2012). *American canopy : Trees, forests, and the making of a nation* (1st Scribner hardcover ed.). New York: Scribner.
- Rawson, Michael. *Eden on the Charles : The Making of Boston*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010.,
- Sanderson, Eric W. *Mannahatta : A Natural History of New York City*. New York: Abrams, 2009.
- Tarr, Joel A. "The Material Basis of Urban Environmental History." *Environmental History* 10, no. 4 (2005): 744-46., ,
- Tarr, Joel. "Urban History and Environmental History in the United States: Complementary and Overlapping Fields." In *Environmental Problems in European Cities of the 19th and 20th Century* edited by Christoph Bernhardt, 25-39. New York/Muenchen/Berlin: Wasmann, Muenster, 2001.
- Walker, Richard. *The Country in the City : The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area*. Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.

Schedule:

Week/ Topic	Tuesday (Discussions)	Thursday (Workshops)
1: Urban Environmental History- an emerging domain of knowledge	Tarr, Joel A. "The Material Basis of Urban Environmental History." :744-46. Tarr, Joel. "Urban History and Environmental History in the United States: Complementary and Overlapping Fields.": 25-39.	Workshop: OMEKA PLATFORM / Exhibits and Blogging
2: Weeds and Urban Nature	Falck, Z. (2010). <i>Weeds : An environmental history of metropolitan America</i> (History of the urban environment). Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press. (ebook)	Workshop: Graphic Novels
3: Trees and Cities	Selected excerpts from : Lawrence, H. (2006). <i>City trees : A historical geography from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century</i> . Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press; and Rutkow, E. (2012). <i>American canopy : Trees, forests, and the making of a nation</i> New York: Scribner.	Workshop: Digital Mapping
4: Montreal as an environmental city	Castonguay, S., & Dagenais, Michèle. (2011). <i>Metropolitan natures : Environmental histories of Montreal</i> (History of the urban environment). Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press. (available through MUSE)	Workshop: Utopian Drawings
5: New York City as an Island	Gandy, Matthew. <i>Concrete and Clay : Reworking Nature in New York City</i> . Urban and Industrial Environments. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002. And excerpts from: Sanderson, Eric W. <i>Mannahatta : A Natural History of New York City</i> . New York: Abrams, 2009.	Workshop: Models and Modeling
6: London and Water	Broich, J. (2013). <i>London : Water and the making of the modern city</i> (History of the urban environment). Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press. (e book)	Team Work: Historical Narrative
7: New Orleans, as a River city	Kelman, A. (2003). <i>A river and its city : The nature of landscape in New Orleans</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press. (ebook)	Team Work: Content and Context
8: Houston and the Energy Landscape	Melosi, M., & Pratt, Joseph A. (2007). <i>Energy metropolis : An environmental history of Houston and the Gulf Coast</i> (History of the urban environment). Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press. (ebook)	Team Work: Graphic Narrative
9: Los Angeles as a Paradise	Deverell, W., & Hise, Greg. (2005). <i>Land of sunshine : An environmental history of metropolitan Los Angeles</i> (History of the urban environment). Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. (ebook)	Team Work: Text Narrative
10: Seattle : is it the emerald city?	Final Discussion/ Presentation of Exhibits	Workshop: Graphic Novels

Discussion Sessions:

Introduction and Overview - 20 minutes

Leading student presents 5 images and 5 quotes from reading as catalyst for discussion

Discussion- in depth and broad

Workshop Sessions:

Students will meet with Project Teams

Exploration of Research Method

Development of Team Project

TEAM PROJECT**Seattle's Infrastructure as an Urban Environmental History- An Online Graphic Novel**

Working in teams of 2, you will select an infrastructural system in Seattle and develop a historical narrative to be presented as a graphic novel. Using the OMEKA program as an online platform, we will collaborate on curating an exhibit on the urban environmental histories of selected infrastructural systems in Seattle Washington. Our exhibit will display and explain the site through the resources we have explored compiled as a graphic novel. This exhibit will be presented to the public at the end of the course as well as provide a foundation for future research by faculty and researchers across the UW campuses

For each of the projects- there will be a team with each of the following areas considered in the framework of your selected infrastructural system:

1. Ecological history (water, wind, climate, flora, fauna)
2. Economic history (industry, use, commerce...)
3. Social and Cultural History (people, community, cultural inscriptions and practices)
4. Political and Regulatory History (rules, regulations, zoning)
5. Performance and History (utilities, performance, networks,...)

LA 598- Graduate Student Course Requirements

As graduate students you are expected to take a more rigorous approach to your courses. Thus the following participatory activities are required as a part of your graduate level credit for the course in addition to those for the course in general (reading, participation, and the online exhibit).

Session Leadership: Each graduate student will team with another graduate student to lead one presentation focused on a city. You will sign up for the appropriate session during the first class meeting. The introductory presentations will be 15-20 minutes long to be presented at the start of the appropriate discussion period.

This leadership will include the following:

- meeting with Dr. Way at least 9 days prior to the session assigned
- providing all course students with an annotated list of chapters in the assigned book that they should focus on with a list of 3-5 questions they should be keeping in mind as they read. All students are expected to read the entire book however, it can be important to know what sections to focus more carefully on and what questions might help to frame the reading in preparation for the session discussion. The annotated list and questions should be provided to the class at least one week prior to the session itself. This clearly requires that the graduate leaders have read the book at least ten days prior to the session they will lead. That should be considered as you consider your work loads.
- leading the appropriate session by providing an overview, introduction to your perspective and then leading the class on a rigorous and explorative discussion. You are responsible for the entirety of the class session.
- please consider seriously drawing on the digital tools that we have learned the week of or prior to your session. This might mean showing work that uses such tools or by bringing in a hands-on project where students can use the tools to explore specific questions.