COURSE DESCRIPTION: Environmental history examines the changing relationship between human beings and their physical surroundings over time. In this course, we will actively question the boundary between nature and culture, showing how our social and natural history mutually inform one another. We will do so by asking three distinct but interrelated questions. First, how has the material context in which history unfolded impacted the development of our culture, society, and economy? Second, how and why did our ideas and representations of the natural world change over time? Finally, in what ways and to what ends have human beings actively though not always intentionally altered their physical surroundings?
Assessment:
Midterm Exam, Oct. 15th (20%)  
Final Exam, Dec. 12th, 2pm (30%)  
Term Paper, 5-7 pages, Dec. 10th (40%)  
Participation (10%)  

Participation: Your participation is a vital part of this course. Please come to class having completed the assigned reading, ready to engage in a lively and informed discussion.

Disabilities: Please contact me by the end of the second week if you have a documented disability so that we can make the necessary accommodations.

Term Paper: A printout of your term paper is due by 5pm on Dec. 10th. You may write about any topic that touches on the themes of this course. Be creative! I encourage you to come to my office hours to discuss your choice of paper topics. I am more than happy to provide written feedback on your term paper. If you would like feedback, please submit a stamped, self-addressed 8.5 x 11 inch manila envelope so I can mail you my comments.

Readings: Each week, I have chosen one or more texts as required readings. Everyone is expected to have read these sources thoroughly and come to class prepared to engage in a discussion based on familiarity with the arguments they present. In addition, I have also indicated several “optional / additional” readings. These are not required, and I do not expect you to read them or make reference to them in our discussions. Rather, I include them primarily for students who find the themes discussed during a particular week of special interest and relevance, and who would like to follow up with additional readings on that theme. The optional / additional sources may also be of potential use if you would like to more deeply engage some particular literature in your term paper.

Writing Resources: You are encouraged to make use of Brown's Writing Center, whose main offices are located in room 213 of the J. Walter Wilson Building. You can schedule an appointment to receive help and feedback on your writing here: http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Writing_Center/appointments/.

A Note On Plagiarism: Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses. Anyone suspected of such infractions will be referred to the Dean's Office.
COURSE TIMETABLE

Week 1: Introduction & Overview

Sept. 3rd: Introduction

No readings

Sept. 5th: The Nature / Culture Divide

Readings:

Week 2: Colonial America

Sept 8: Colonial Nature

Readings:

Sept 10: Enlightenment Nature

Readings:

Week 3: Establishing a New Nation

Sept 15: The American Incognitum

Readings:

Suggested / Recommended:

Sept 17: Landscape Painting & The Hudson River School

Readings:


**Week 4: Measuring the Romantic Wilderness**

*Sep 22: The Transcendental Wilderness*

Readings:


*Sept 24: Humboldtian Science*

Readings:


**Week 5: The Classifying Imagination**

*Sept 29th: Taking Stock*

Readings:


Optional / Suggested Reading:


*Oct 1st: Museums & Gardens*

Readings:


Optional / Suggested Readings:

Week 6: Governing Nature

Oct 6: Cotton

Readings:

Optional / Suggested Reading:

Oct. 8: Colonial Governance

Readings:

Optional / Suggested Reading:

Week 7: Midterm Exam

Oct 13: Columbus Day, no class

Oct 15: Midterm Exam

Week 8: Parks & Wilderness Preserves

Oct 20: City Parks

Readings:

Oct 22: National Parks

Readings:
Recommended / Suggested:
  Roderick Nash, “Preserve the Wilderness!” and “Wilderness Preserved,” in *Wilderness & The American Mind*, pp. 96-121.

**Week 9: Conservation & Preservation**

Oct 27: *Nature Conservation & Eugenic Anxiety*

Readings:


Oct 29: *The Hetch Hetchy Controversy*

Readings:
  Various Authors, *Conservation in the Progressive Era*, selections.

Recommended / Suggested:

**Week 10: The Science of Nature**

Nov 3: *Evolution*

Readings:

Nov 5: *Ecology*

Readings:


Recommended / Suggested:

***No Class on Friday Nov. 7th***
Week 11: Ecological Values

Nov 10: Aldo Leopold & The Land Ethic

Readings:

Recommended / Suggested:

Nov 12: Lebensraum

Readings:

Week 12: Gendered & Othered Nature

Nov 17: Gendered Nature

Readings:

Nov 19: Invasive Species

Readings:

Week 13: Thanksgiving Recess

Nov 24: Field Trip, The Nature Lab
Week 14: Environmental Activism During the 20th Century

Dec 1: Rachel Carson & DDT

Readings:

Dec 3: The Population Bomb

Readings: