This is a course on world history as if nature mattered and it does. The goal of the course is to gain insight and understanding into the role that nature has played in human history and the ways in which environmental historians have interpreted that role. The course will cover the time span from the ancient world to the present with readings that offer broad, sweeping views as well as readings that treat narrower case studies. We will give some attention to the nature of historical explanation and the ways in which scientific knowledge has been brought to bear on understanding history. A central theme will be the concept of resources: What constitutes a resource? How has the idea of a resource changed over time? How have cultural values shaped both the notion of resources and the relationship of humans to the earth’s resources? Our central task will be to adopt a global perspective on world history that is informed by environmental insight but also takes into consideration cultural diversity and various historical contingencies. Environmental history is a fascinating interdisciplinary field, but it is fraught with conceptual problems and complex issues related to values and subjectivity which we will address over the course of the semester.

The format for the course will be discussions based on readings, brief informal lectures supplemented by slides or videos, an optional museum visit and/or field trip (details to follow), and possibly an outside speaker.

Course requirements:
1) regular attendance and participation
2) weekly response papers on readings, one printed page or less (single-spacing is fine), due at the beginning of the class corresponding to the reading, either Tuesday or Thursday. These should be thoughtful reflections on the readings. Feel free to speculate, question, challenge, and probe. Response papers will not be graded, but the general quality of your response papers will figure into the attendance/participation component of your grade.
3) two short essays (5 pages each), due Oct. 6 and Nov. 8, based on course readings; suggested topics will be handed out approximately two weeks before the due dates
4) a mini-research paper/project (7-10 pages) based on a combination of course readings and outside sources (which could include museum visits, films, etc.), due Friday, Dec. 9, details to follow
5) a short final essay (4-5 pages) due on Monday, Dec. 19

The breakdown for your final grade will be as follows: attendance & participation, 15%; first short essay, 20%; second short essay, 20%; mini-paper/project, 30%; final short essay, 15%.

Gene Cittadino
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Texts. The following books have been ordered at the NYU Bookstore and are also on reserve in the Bobst Library. We will be using all of these texts.

Stephen Mitchell, *Gilgamesh* (Free Press, 2004), this edition only
Peter Nichols, *Oil and Ice* (Penguin, 2010); hardcover version titled *Final Voyage* (the Bobst reserve copy has this title; the text is identical)

In addition to the above texts, there will be occasional shorter readings either handed out in class or made available on Blackboard.

Ground rules. **Attendance and etiquette.** I take attendance and expect you to attend every class. The class begins promptly at 11:00. Please respect your classmates and arrive on time; late arrivals always disrupt the atmosphere of a classroom, as do mid-class exits and re-entries. The only good reason for leaving the classroom in the middle of a class period is sudden illness, so expect to remain for the full 75 minutes. For obvious reasons, turn off cellular phones before coming to class. The success of this class depends upon open discussions. Feel free to speak your mind, but also be prepared to listen and respect the opinions of others. **Turn off laptops.** If you bring a laptop, please do not turn it on or use it during class time. Notetaking with pen or pencil is a wonderful exercise of the mind and hand. (I may make exceptions for viewing course readings on laptops, i-pads, etc.) **Late papers.** Papers are due on the dates designated. A paper that is not turned in on time is late, regardless of the reason. Having work due in other classes is not an acceptable excuse. Unless the paper is late due to illness or an emergency, it will be downgraded. **Documentation and plagiarism.** I will assume that all written work is your own and that you understand the basic rules for acknowledging sources. If you don't, please ask; I'd be more than happy to assist you.

Here is the official Gallatin School statement on academic integrity. Suspected cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with Gallatin's student discipline rules.

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html] for a full description of the academic integrity policy.
SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

T Sept. 6  Introductions. Why environmental history? The "real" lessons of Easter Island

R Sept. 8  Resources then and now: tuna, fertile land, people, and corn
Kolbert, The Scales Fall, 2010 & Franklin, Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, 1751 (handouts); Crosby, Democracy, Maize, ... (Blackboard)

T Sept. 13  What can the world's oldest written story tell us about humans and nature?
Mitchell, Gilgamesh (entire text, pp. 69-199; it reads very quickly)

R Sept. 15  Interpreting Gilgamesh
Mitchell, Gilgamesh, introduction, pp. 1-64
Elizabeth Kolbert, The Climate of Man-II: The Curse of Akkad (Blackboard)

T Sept. 20  Theories of agricultural origins; reflections on "changes in the land" East & West
Jack Harlan, excerpts from The Living Fields (Blackboard)
Rethinking Environmental History, chaps. 1 & 2 (selections by Hughts & Marks)

R Sept. 22  Occident vs. Orient: classic environmental determinist theories

T Sept. 27  The "rise of the West" revisited
Marks, Origins of the Modern World, Introduction and chap. 1
Alfred Crosby, Ecological Imperialism, 1986 (Blackboard)

R Sept. 29  Starting with China & deforestation before and after Columbus
Marks, Origins, chap. 2
Rethinking Environmental History, chap. 5 (Williams)

T Oct. 4  The "New World" and the global economy
Marks, Origins, chap. 3
Rethinking Environmental History, chap. 7 (Moore)

R Oct. 6  Consequences of 1492  FIRST ESSAY DUE
Crosby, excerpts from Germs, Seeds, & Animals (Blackboard)
Rethinking Environmental History, chap. 10 (McNeill)

T Oct. 11  NO CLASS  (Columbus Day extended)

R Oct. 13  Europeans and Native Americans in the Northeast
Cronon, Changes in the Land, chaps. 1-3

T Oct. 18  Creating "New England"
Cronon, Changes, chaps. 4 & 5

R Oct. 20  Forests, fields, and fences: the commodification of North America
Cronon, Changes, chaps. 6 & 7
T Oct 25  The business of whaling: an unromantic view
Nichols, *Oil and Ice (Final Voyage)*, Prologue-chap. 4

R Oct. 27  Transformations: Nantucket & New Bedford at the center of the world
Nichols, *Oil and Ice*, chaps. 5-9
*Rethinking Environmental History*, chap. 9 (Wilk)

T Nov. 1  From asceticism to affluence to decline
Nichols, *Oil and Ice*, chaps. 10-14

R Nov. 3  Peak (whale) oil: lessons from the decline of an industry
Nichols, *Oil and Ice*, chap. 15-Epilogue 2

T Nov. 8  Interlude: environmental history of New York City SECOND ESSAY DUE

R Nov. 10  The ecology of *Zea mays*, and its consequences
McCann, *Maize and Grace*, preface-chap. 3

T Nov. 15  New world crop in the old world, north and south
McCann, *Maize*, chaps. 4 & 5 + selections in 6 & 7

R Nov. 17  Maize and malaria
McCann, *Maize*, chaps. 8 & 9

T Nov. 22  The industrial revolution revisited
Marks, *Origins*, chap. 4
*Rethinking Environmental History*, chap. 13 (Hornborg)

R Nov. 24  THANKSGIVING

T Nov. 29  *The rise of the West* rewritten
Marks, *Origins*, chap. 5
*Rethinking Environmental History*, chaps. 11 & 12 (Martinez-Alier & Bjunker)

R Dec 1  The gap widens
Marks, *Origins*, chap. 6
*Rethinking Environmental History*, chap. 16 (Muradian & Giljum)

T Dec 6  Oil in Africa
Michael Watts, "Blood Oil" (Blackboard)
Begin reading Habila, *Oil on Water*

R Dec. 8  Oil, postcolonialism, and social disintegration
Habila, *Oil on Water*, all of Part One (through p. 145)

T Dec. 13  Ambiguous message? the morality (or amorality?) of resource allocation
Habila, *Oil on Water*, entire

R Dec. 15  Final thoughts* Marks, *Origins*, conclusion; *Rethinking Env. Hist.*, chap. 20