Environmentalism: A Global History
FIRST-UG78
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
New York University
Fall 2011
Monday and Wednesday, 9:30-10:45
1 Washington pl. room 501

Instructor: Prof. Peder Anker
E-mail: peder.anker@nyu.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 2-4
Office: 1 Washington pl., room 425
Phone: 212 998 7389

Course description:
We think of environmentalism as a new political movement, but in fact it has a long history—one that has always been engaged as well with questions about the relationship between different parts of the globe. This course traces the history of environmentalism, ecology, and public health back to natural history collecting and bioprospecting in the 18th century. The global history of ecological concern stays at the center of this course, which discusses this in the Swedish, British, German, Russian, South African, South American, and North American contexts in subsequent centuries. We will ask: How did scholars and activists around the world conceptualize “the global”? Whose knowledge and which rationality came to frame our environmental thinking? This seminar will try to untangle the social and intellectual dynamics between natural sciences and environmentally concerned citizens. Readings will include Carolus Linnaeus, Henry David Thoreau, Jan Chr. Smuts, and Garret Hardin.

Papers and assignments
A weekly reading journal to be handed in every Tuesday. There will also be a 5-8 page midterm paper due October 11, and a 10-12 page final paper due December 14. Late papers are not accepted.

Statement on Academic Integrity
“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 in accordance with the Student Discipline Rules of the Gallatin School of Individualized Study.”

Grading and attendance
Mandatory attendance.
40% Course participation/ weekly journal
20% Midterm paper
40 % Final paper

Green course
This is a zero-footprint “green” course. All papers must be submitted electronically.

Books to borrow or buy:


Online: [http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/walden/toc.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/walden/toc.html)

Course outline:

5 Sept: Introduction

No readings

10 Sept: Green Imperialism


12 Sept: Linnaeus


17 Sept: No class

19 Sept: No class

24 Sept: Plants and Empire


26 Sept: British Imperial Ecology


**Evening guest lecture: Gregg Mitman**

Time, place and title to be determined

**1 Oct: Holism and “The Spirit of the Mountain”**


Background:


**3 Oct: Holistic Ecology and Racism**


**8 Oct. Open/Midterm paper review**

No readings

**10 Oct: Writing about British imperialism**

    Midterm papers due!


**6 Oct: Fall break**

No readings

**17 Oct: How Green Were the Nazis? Background**

22 Oct: How Green Were the Nazis? Primary Source

Albert Ebner, German Forests: Treasures of a Nation (New York: German Library Information, 1940), entire.

24 Oct: Soviet Environmentalism

Guha, Environmentalism, chapter 7.


29 Oct: Tropical Modernism in Brazil


31 Oct: Constructing the North American Wild


5 Nov: Conservation Refugees


7 Nov: Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau, Walden, entire, any edition.

12 Nov: Oak Ridge

Guha, Environmentalism, chapter 5.


Evening FILM

**14 Nov: Rachel Carson**


**19 Nov: Capturing Rachel Carson**


**22 Nov: Thanksgiving**

No readings

**26 Nov: Spaceship Ecology**


**28 Nov: The Whole Earth**

Stewart Brand (ed.), *Whole Earth Catalog, 1968 edition*.

**3 Dec. Only One Earth**


**5 Dec. Environmental Ethics for the Whole World**


**10 Dec. Open/ Essay review**

No readings
12 Dec. Final day of class

Final papers due!