NYU GALLATIN SCHOOL OF INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY
Global Environmental History
ELEC-GG 2624:
Fall 2013
Tuesdays, 6:20-9:00
194 Mercer str. room 303

Instructor: Prof. Peder Anker
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Office hours: Tuesdays 2-4.

Course Description
How do we conceptualize the world as a whole? The history of the Earth and how we came to “think globally” are the central themes of this course. We will discuss in some detail different attempts to write global environmental history. The initial focus will be the history of deforestation of the Earth, which is also a history of an emerging environmental concern for the world as a whole. The colonial legacy of natural sciences and population management will further illustrate how scholars structured the world. The course will discuss the imperial ecology of the British Empire and how its structures of knowledge survived during the Cold War. Whose knowledge and which rationality came to frame environmental thinking in recent global debates? The course will try to untangle the relationship between the “space age” and ecologists’ modeling of the world in terms of a “spaceship”. World gaming and global simulation research, such as in the Limits to Growth report from 1972 will illustrate an emerging environmental ethic of global stewardship that is of relevance to understanding current global warming debates. Readings will include Joachim Radkau, Michael Williams, Thomas Malthus, Carolus Linnaeus, Spencer R. Weart, and Garret Hardin.

Course Objectives
The chief objective is to learn to how to write environmental history, but also the entangled history of deforestation, global environmental concerns, the colonial legacy of natural sciences and population management. By the end of the semester the student should be able to understand some of the relationships between science and society.

Required Texts/Games/Lectures:


MAXIS, *SIM Earth: The Living Planet*, (Redwood City, CA: Electronic Arts, 1995), or later versions.


Michael Williams, *Deforesting the Earth: From Prehistory to Global Crisis*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006).

**Required Assignments**
A substantial research paper is due Dec 12, 2013. A first draft of the final paper is due Tuesday Oct 17. Late papers are not accepted.

**Other Course Requirements**
This is a zero-footprint “green” course. All papers must be submitted electronically.

**Grading**
Mandatory attendance
25% Course participation
75% Final paper

**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, 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.”

**Session by Session Details:**

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Week 1: Sept 3. What is Global Environmental History?

Introduction
No readings

Week 2: Sept 10. Origins/Ancient Environments
Williams, *Deforesting the Earth*, Part 1, Chapter 1-5.

Week 3: Sept 17. The Colonial Legacy
Williams, *Deforesting the Earth*, Chapter 6-8.

Week 4: Sept 24. Forests and the Modern Order
Michael Williams, *Deforesting the Earth*, Chapter 9-11.

Week 5: Oct 1. Global Population Politics

Week 6: Oct. 8. Imperial Ecologies
Week 7: Oct 15. Fall break
Wednesday Oct 16: *Drafts due!*

Week 8: Oct 22 Global Ecology
Williams, *Deforesting the Earth*, Chapter 13-14, epilogue.
Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, chapter 4-6, Conclusion

Week 9: Oct 29. Spaceship Earth/World Gaming
MAXIS, *SIM Earth: The Living Planet*, (Redwood City, CA: Electronic Arts, 1995), or later versions.

Week: 10: Nov. 5. Whole Earth Lifestyle and Politics
Stewart Brand (ed.), *Whole Earth Catalog, 1968 edition*.

Week 11: Nov 12. Environmental Ethics for the Whole World


**Week 12: Nov 19. History and Politics of Global Warming**


**Week 13 Nov 26. Film**


**Week 14 Dec 3. Open/Student presentations**

**Week 15 Dec 10. Open/Student presentations**

Last day of class

*Essays due!*