Professor Gregg Mitman  
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Office: 7125 Social Science Building  
Office Hours: 11:00-12:00 p.m. Tues., 2:30-3:30 p.m. Wed., or by appointment

**Course Description:** To some, ecology represents a scientific discipline that studies the interactions between and among organisms and their environments. To others, it is synonymous with the environmental movement of the sixties, Earth First, and green politics. This course explores the historical development of ecology as a professional science, with due attention paid to the political ramifications of particular ecological ideas and how they have been incorporated into environmental discussions surrounding wilderness preservation, the Dust Bowl, population control, the DDT controversy, and wildlife conservation in the Third World. Throughout the course, we will situate the history of ecological ideas and concepts within their cultural, political, and social environments, exploring the interrelated histories of nature’s economy and political economy, from colonialism to global capitalism, from laissez-faire individualism to the welfare state. We shall also highlight the places of study in which the science of ecology developed, from tropical islands to midwestern prairies, from pastoral landscapes to pristine wilderness, in our investigation of ecological attitudes toward the human place in nature. A background knowledge of ecology or environmental issues is helpful, but not required.

**Course Requirements:** Because this course is based on a lecture/discussion format, class participation is essential. The reading material is an integral part of this course and provides the basis for weekly discussions. I will assign thought questions each week to help direct your reading and stimulate discussion. Short written answers to these questions constitute a major portion of your discussion grade. Two take-home exams will also be assigned.

**Undergraduates:**
- 1st Take-Home Exam (Due, October 21) 30%
- 2nd Take-Home Exam (Due, Dec. 18) 35%
- Discussion 35%

**Graduate Students:** See last page of syllabus

If any problems arise, either academic or personal, that might jeopardize your performance in the course, you must try to inform me of the problem at the next available office hour, or by leaving a message with the Department of the History of Science (262-1406).

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.
Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the UW policies on plagiarism and to assume responsibility for honesty in all course work.

**Required Readings:**


A course packet of readings (CP) is also required. It is available for purchase through the Department of the History of Science, 7143 Social Science Bldg.

**Topics and Readings**

9/2 Introduction

**The Balance of Nature**

*Reading:* Worster, 26-55, 115-187

9/4 Linnaeus and the Economy of Nature

*Discussion Readings:*


9/9 Ecologies of Empire

9/11 *Discussion Readings:*


9/16 Darwin's Entangled Bank
9/18  Discussion Readings:


Humans as Modifiers
Reading: Worster, 258-290

9/23  Preservation, Conservation & Progressive Reform

9/25  Discussion Readings:


9/30  Natural History and the State

10/2  Discussion Readings:


10/7  Managing Nature for Recreation
  Film Showing: The Jackson Hole Wildlife Park

10/9  Discussion Readings:


10/14 Fascism and Forestry

10/16 *Discussion Readings:*


**Establishing the Discipline of Ecology**

*Reading:* Worster, 191-253, 291-339, 359-387

10/21 Ecology on the Plains, Ecology on the Dunes

*Film Showing: The Plow that Broke the Plains*

**Mid-Term Exam Due**

10/23 *Discussion Readings:*


10/28 Adding an Animal Dimension

10/30 *Discussion Readings:*


11/4 The Politics of Holism and Mechanism
11/6 Discussion Readings:


11/11 The Rise of Ecosystem Ecology

11/13 Discussion Readings:


Ecology and Its Publics
Reading: Worster, 342-359; Mitman, Reel Nature, 109-131

11/18 Ecology as a Household Word

11/20 Film Showing: Rachel Carson's Silent Spring

11/25 Discussion Readings:


12/2 The Politics of Population Control
Discussion Readings:

176-213. **CP: 545-572.**

12/4 Film Showing: *High Over the Borders, Wild Gold*

12/9 Coercive Conservation?

12/11 *Discussion Readings:*


Graduate Student Requirements

Graduate students in this course will be responsible for all undergraduate readings and assignments. In addition, graduate students are required to attend a bi-weekly meeting outside of the 9:30-10:45 TR schedule to discuss the course readings in greater depth and the following books, which represent a variety of approaches and subjects in the area of the history of ecology and environmentalism. You are required to write a 750-word review for three out of the five books, summarizing the major themes and historiographic approach, which you should bring to our discussion. These will substitute for the discussion portion of the undergraduate class grade.


You also have the option of substituting a 15-20 page research paper in place of the take-home exams. The topic must be chosen in consultation with me. If you choose this option, you must abide by the following schedule:
   October 2: Approval of paper topic.
   October 23: Discussion of paper sources and preliminary findings.
   November 25: Rough draft (typed) due.
   December 11: Final paper due in class