

HIS 365
Environmental History of North America

Satisfies: ESI, STAS

Thematic Categories: Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Health, Science & Environmental Change

M/W 11:00 am - 12:20 pm

Professor Chris Sellers

This course delves into the history of interactions between humans and their natural environment on this continent. We will look at how people have viewed and valued the nonhuman world as well as how they have used and altered it in building a modern urban society, extending to our latter-day impacts on the world's climate. Beginning with the Indians and the early colonists, we will trace the numerous transformations--cultural, intellectual, economic, political, and technological--that contributed roots and rationales for the environmental and climate critiques of American society from the mid-20th century into the early 21st. We'll survey the historic changes on a variety of landscapes: from forests and parks to cities and factories. Events in our own Northeastern U.S. will provide geographic focus for this history, but we'll also keep an eye to related happenings elsewhere, on the North American continent and beyond. Finally, we will look at the growing array of twentieth-century movements that have identified themselves as "environmentalist," at the "greenness" of modern culture, and at the environmental dimensions of a globalizing era, in particular the rise of concerns and movements about human impacts on our climate.