UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON -- NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Electronically submit this completed form with PDF attachments to the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee.

COLLEGE (check one): Arts and Sciences X Business Education

Proposal Submitted By: Jason Sellers Date Prepared: 18 August 2013

Course Title: US Environmental History

Department/discipline and course number*: HIST 322

*This course number must be approved by the Office of the Registrar before the proposal is submitted.

Number of credits proposed: 3 Prerequisites: none

Will this be a new, repeatable "special topics" course? (Do you want students to be able to take this new course more than once if the topic changes?) NO X YES

Date of first offering of this new course: FALL SEMESTER, 2014

Proposed frequency of offering of the course: Every other year

List the faculty who will likely teach the course: Jason Sellers

Are ANY new resources required? NO X YES Document in attached impact statement

This new course will be (check all that apply):

Required in the major General Elective

Elective in the major X General Education**

**AFTER the new course is approved, a separate proposal must be sent to the General Education Committee.

Catalog Description: This course considers interactions between human populations and their physical environments from early arrivals in North America through the 20th century, addressing the impacts of this exchange on both culture and nature.

COURSE HISTORY

Was this course taught previously as a topics or experimental course? YES X NO

Course Number and Title of Previous Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number and Title of Previous Course</th>
<th>Semester Offered</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIST 300A: Top: Am Environmental History</td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 300A: Top: Am Environmental History</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
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X CHECK HERE if the proposed course is to be equated with the earlier topics or experimental offerings. This means that students who took the earlier "topics" course will only be able to take the new course if they made a C- grade or lower in the earlier course.

NOTE: If the proposed course has not been previously offered as a topics or experimental course, explain in the attached rationale statement why the course should be adopted even though it has not been tried out.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:
1. Rationale Statement (Why is this course needed? What purposes will it serve?)
2. Impact Statement (Provide details about the Library, space, budget, and technology impacts created by adding this new course. Include supporting statements from the Library, IT Department, etc. as needed.)
3. Sample Syllabus

Department Chair Approval: Date: 8/20/13

CCC Chair Approval: Date:

UCC Chair Approval: Date:

New Course Proposal Cover Sheet (July 2012)
New Course Proposal Attachments: US Environmental History

Rationale statement:
A relatively new field, Environmental History considers how the human experience has proceeded in dialogue with dynamic natural environments, offering models for thinking about relations between humans, their institutions, and their physical surroundings. It allows students to explore the constraints placed on human actions by natural environments, as well as the consequences of human actions for those environments. This is a field that continues to evolve in response to contemporary environmental concerns, and thus is relevant for students interested in business, policy, and the sciences, in addition to history. As a field still in the process of defining itself, Environmental History also provides students with an opportunity to consider why and how new fields of study emerge.

Impact statement:
The UMW library already contains seminal texts from this field, as well as more recent scholarship, including books assigned this year and several under consideration for future iterations of this course. Existing subscriptions to key journals—such as Environmental History and Environmental History Review—provide students access to additional readings and research materials. As it develops this course will make more use of technology already available on campus, but should not have additional needs.

Syllabus:
**HIST 300DD: US ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY**
Dr. Jason Sellers
Email: Jseller4@umw.edu
*please allow adequate response time
Office: 218 Monroe Hall
Class times/locations: TR 9:30-10:45, Monroe 112
Office Hours: MWF 2-3, TR 1-2

**Course description:**
Environmental history assumes that human experience develops in dialogue with dynamic natural environments; natural constraints shape the limits of human action, and human activity impacts natural surroundings. This class, then, will consider how human populations have interacted with their environments from their early arrivals in North America through the 20th century, and address the results of this exchange for both culture and nature. We will examine the interplay of humans and environments in the context of colonization and settlement, economic development, social and political formation, and changing ideas about the natural world.

**Course objectives and outcomes:**
Students in this course will acquire/develop:
- Understanding and appreciation of the discipline’s diverse methods and processes.
- Ability to locate, read critically, and analyze primary sources and modern scholarship.
- Ability to synthesize research findings.
- Comprehension of historical process.
• Ability to make discipline-specific oral presentations to groups.
• Ability to write with clarity about the past, and to communicate in a group setting.

This course counts towards the History major.

Readings:
Required texts:

*Additional required readings (academic articles and primary sources) listed on the schedule below will be accessible through the library website or posted on Canvas.*

**Presentation/book review titles are available through the library; ask me if you need help with using interlibrary loan.**

Grading and Participation:
Participation*: 20%
Presentation and book review: 20% (10% each)
Primary source evaluation: 15%
Paper: 25%
Final exam: 20%

*Attendance will be taken regularly, and you are expected to attend having completed the assigned reading for that day so that you can contribute to discussions. After the second absence, additional absences will result in the loss of 1/10 of your participation points. Although I will sometimes lecture briefly, the majority of the class will be discussion, and so effective participation will be an important and substantial part of your overall grade. If it becomes clear from discussions that students are not completing the readings, I reserve the right to substitute reading quizzes (graded P/F) in place of simple attendance. To avoid quizzes, please actively contribute to conversations with your questions and ideas. I realize some students tend to be quieter in class, and I encourage those of you who are to meet with me early in the term to discuss how we can facilitate your participation.*

This class will not have additional extra credit assignments. However, you may revise one written assignment for a higher grade and turn it in within one week of the original assignment’s return. If you elect to do so, you will need to submit the new assignment and a short (1/2 page) description of how you revised your work, and include the original assignment with my
feedback. It may be helpful to meet with me to make sure you understand what needs to be addressed. This option is not available if the original submission was late.

Students who have missed more than 5 classes, and/or who have not submitted any passing work by Week 8, will be reported as unsatisfactory on mid-semester reports.

Assignments:
*More detailed descriptions and grading breakdowns will be posted on Canvas.


2. Primary source evaluation: In a short paper (3-4 pages) due the day we discuss the primary source you select, you will summarize your source and its origins; consider how its production reflects the concerns of an individual, group, or institution with which it is connected; consider what arguments about environmental history it makes explicitly, or might support with careful reading; consider what further evidence would supplement this source; and address any other relevant elements.

3. Paper: In a more substantial paper (6-8 pages) you will use multiple sources to address one of the larger topics/questions that will run throughout our course.

4. Final exam: This will be based in part on an activity we do during our first day of class, and will require you to draw on multiple readings from throughout the semester as well as your own background/personal history. We will spend some time preparing for this in our final class meeting.

If you think you may need an extension, you must request it in advance; I will not grant extensions after assignments are due. If you are having printer problems, or for some reason are unable to attend class, email the electronic file to me as a Word document before class time, and bring a paper copy when you are able. If the assignment is not in my possession in some form at the time it is due, it will be considered late. Late assignments will receive an automatic deduction of one-third of a letter grade, and an additional deduction every day thereafter; I will not accept assignments that are more than one week late.

While I am willing to discuss assignment grades with students, you will need to wait at least 24 hours and have carefully reviewed my comments on your work. You have one week after the return of graded assignments to speak with me; after one week, grades are final.

Requirements for written assignments:
All assignments should adhere to the department’s standard style: 1” margins; 12 pt. Times New Roman font; a title page including the paper title the author’s name (centered, all caps), course number and title, instructor, and date; pages numbered consecutively through all materials, excluding title page; and a bibliography conforming to the Chicago Manual of Style. For more information on proper bibliographic format for your sources, consult Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers, or an equivalent abridgement of the Chicago Manual of Style. [Note the most recent versions of the Chicago Manual of Style (16th) and Turabian (7th) include updated information for electronic citations. Be sure to use the newest editions.] A helpful UMW library
Students with Disabilities:
The Office of Disability Resources has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through the Office of Disability Resources and require accommodations for this class, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not contacted the Office of Disability Resources and need accommodations, I will be happy to help you contact it. The office will require appropriate documentation of disability. The office is located in 401 Lee Hall, and can be reached by phone at 540.654.1266 and email at ods@umw.edu.

Honor System:
Please write and sign the University of Mary Washington honor pledge (“I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work”) on every written assignment. More information about the Honor System is available at http://students.umw.edu/fredericksburghonorcouncil/ You are welcome to discuss your work on assignments with classmates and work together to refine your writing, but your ideas and language must be your own.

Class and Reading Schedule:
* While I will sometimes lecture briefly, most of our time in class will consist of discussions, which depend on your ability to engage with the readings. To facilitate that engagement, please bring the readings (or at least your meticulous notes) to class so that you may refer to them as we discuss—it is fine to load them on your laptop, e-reader, tablet, etc.

Week 1: Environmental history
T 8/27: Introductions, syllabus, and environmental biographies
Th 8/29: Considering the field
Lecture: More approaches to environmental history

Week 2: Systems of thought
T 9/3: Ecology and History, and Native North America
Lecture: Pleistocene die-offs and Indian burning
Primary sources: Colonists’ impressions of New England (Canvas), Crying Indian http://www.aef.com/exhibits/social_responsibility/ad_council/2278

Th 9/5: Colonial revolution
Merchant, Ecological Revolutions, 29-145
Lecture: Counterpoint: The South Atlantic
Week 3: Systems of thought
T 9/10: Capitalist revolution
Merchant, Ecological Revolutions, 149-279
Primaries: Southern agriculture (Canvas)
Th 9/12: No class
Online discussion: Colonial conservation measures and primary source analysis

Week 4: Regional approaches
T 9/17: Rivers
Lecture: Marine zones and river valleys, sedentism, and complex societies
Th 9/19: Adapting to a wet valley
Morris, Big Muddy, chs. 1-5

Week 5: Regional approaches
T 9/24: Drying the valley
Morris, Big Muddy, chs. 6-10
Th 9/26: Other rivers/regions
Morris, Big Muddy, ch. 11
Lecture: The Upper Mississippi

Week 6: Studying species
T 10/1: Grasslands and Indians
Lecture: Pacific whales: habitats, systems, and regions
Th 10/3: Conquest
Isenberg, Destruction of the Bison, chs. 4-5
Primary: Plenty Coup on the buffalo (Canvas)

Week 7: Studying species; Human and natural systems
T 10/8: Preservation
Isenberg, Destruction of the Bison, ch. 6
Lecture: California’s redwoods, American expansion, and eugenics [from Stern, Eugenic Nation]
Th 10/10: Building the irrigated landscape
Lecture: The Hohokam and southwestern irrigation
Primaries: John Wesley Powell on reclamation, western boosters and boom towns (Canvas)

**Week 8: Human and natural systems**
T 10/15: Fall Break, no class
Th 10/17: Human systems
Fiege, *Irrigated Eden*, chs. 3-5

**Week 9: Great Plains**
T 10/22: Telling stories
Fiege, *Irrigated Eden*, ch. 6-Conclusion
Th 10/24: Dust Bowl
Films: *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936), excerpts from *The Grapes of Wrath* (1938)

**Week 10: Urban developments**
T 10/29: Suburbs and cities
Primaries: Jane Addams on Chicago’s garbage, Upton Sinclair on the Chicago stockyards
Th 10/31: Suburbs and cities

**Week 11: Conservation and its social implications**
T 11/5: Forest/Adirondacks
Th 11/7: Mountains/Yellowstone (Jacoby 4-6)
Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, chs. 4-6

**Week 12: Conservation and its social impacts**
T 11/12: Desert/Grand Canyon
Week 13: Bodies and environments
T 11/19: Bodies and environments
Primary: Bodies and environments in the colonial era (Canvas)
Th 11/21: Disease and landscape
Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies*, chs. 2-3
Lecture: The Los Angeles River and geographies of disorder and disease

Week 14: Bodies and environments
T 11/26: Fighting disease
Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies*, chs. 4-5
Th 11/28: Thanksgiving, no class

Week 15: Environmentalism and the future of Environmental History
T 12/3: Environmentalism
Th 12/5: The future of Environmental History
Discussion: Final exam, environmental biographies, and closing thoughts

Final Exam
Thursday, Dec. 12, 8:30-11am