



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo

MEDVL 491, Winter 2022

Environmental and Climate History, Preindustrial

Wednesdays 2:30PM – 4:20PM, SJ1 2017

(During in-person restrictions, class will be held on Zoom)

[https://uwaterloo.zoom.us/j/96192928038?pwd=MStqcGdUZ0VoaXB0QzhJREND
SzFwQT09](https://uwaterloo.zoom.us/j/96192928038?pwd=MStqcGdUZ0VoaXB0QzhJREND
SzFwQT09)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Moore
Office: SJ1 2018
Office Hours: Thursdays 1:00PM – 2:30PM, or by appointment
Email: a5moore@uwaterloo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces upper-year students to the major authors, works, and themes of preindustrial environmental and climate history. It demonstrates how interdisciplinary studies frame the historical interaction of culture and nature, and how they can help us to understand more fully the ecological history of our planet. Historians and medievalists seek increasingly to integrate established concepts and traditions with cutting-edge scientific methods, including genetics, pollen studies, dendrochronology, climate studies, and more.

This course will challenge many preconceptions about medieval society and the ways that pre-modern peoples interacted with their environments. Contrary to popular belief, many pre-industrial societies adapted effectively to climatic changes, actively managed their landscapes, and often carried a significant ecological footprint. Medieval people, however, perceived of “nature” and their role in the world in fundamentally different ways than we do today. They had their own ideas about concepts like the order of the universe, nutrition, disease, and abundance. This course will survey many aspects of society in the Middle Ages to understand better how environments shaped people, and how people shaped their environments.

The *locus* of study is Western Europe, for the period between the end of Antiquity and the start of the Industrial Revolution. Each week, students will read assigned texts and discuss them in a seminar format. Each student will adopt a leadership role in two discussions and write a précis essay on the assigned topic for each of the two weeks. Ultimately, each student must write a final historiographical or research essay.

REQUIRED READINGS

Available through Course Reserves and / or Library OMNI Catalogue.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

A. Participation (every week)	30%
B. Seminar leadership (twice in the term)	10%
C. Précis essays (x2, each due by class of leadership week)	20%
D. Final Essay Proposal and Bibliography (due March 16)	10%
E. Final Essay (due April 14)	30%

- A. Participation marks derive from attending seminars, reading course material, and participating actively in discussions.
- B. Students will select (or, if necessary, be assigned to) two weeks in the term, for which they will take a leadership role in the discussion. This will include articulating summaries of the readings, analyzing the significance of topics and readings, making connections between course material, and asking questions of their peers.
- C. Each student will submit a précis essay one week after each discussion in which they took a leadership role. These **2 essays** should each be **1 page, single-spaced**. Each should include a clear thesis, analyze effectively the relevant reading(s), and use accurate academic citations.
- D. Each student will submit a proposal and preliminary bibliography for their final essay topic. Each proposal should include relevant details, such as a description of the topic, a preliminary thesis statement, an outline of major points, and a brief discussion of sources. There is no exact length or format requirement for the proposal, though it likely need not exceed **3 double-spaced pages**. The preliminary bibliography should contain **at least 8 relevant sources**, formatted correctly using the Chicago Manual of Style.
- E. Each student will submit a final essay, which can either be historiographical or based on primary-source research. The essay must be well researched, utilizing scholarly sources and citations, and effectively argued with a strong thesis. The essay should be **double-spaced** and **15 – 20 pages** in length.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (January 5): Introduction

Week 2 (January 12): Methodology

Campbell, Bruce M.S. "Nature as Historical Protagonist: Environment and Society in Preindustrial England." *Economic History Review* 63 (2010): 281-314.

McNeill, J.R. "Observations on the Nature and Culture of Environmental History." *History and Theory* 42 (2003): 5-43.

Week 3 (January 19): Climate

Either

Behringer, Wolfgang. *A Cultural History of Climate*, trans. Patrick Camiller. Cambridge: Polity, 2010.

Or

Parker, Geoffrey. "Crisis and Catastrophe: The Global Crisis of the Seventeenth Century Reconsidered." *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 4 (October 2008): 1053-1079.

Mann, Michael E., et al. "Global Signatures and Dynamical Origins of the Little Ice Age and Medieval Climatic Anomaly." *Science* 326, no. 5957 (November 2009): 1256-1260.

Week 4 (January 26): Crises

Newson, Linda A. "A Historical-Ecological Perspective on Epidemic Disease." In *Advances in Historical Ecology*, edited by William Balée, 42-63. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Oliver-Smith, Anthony. "'What is a Disaster?': Anthropological Perspectives on a Persistent Question." In *The Angry Earth: Disaster in Anthropological Perspective*, edited by Anthony Oliver-Smith and Susanna M. Hoffmann, 18-34. New York and London: Routledge, 1999.

Week 5 (February 2): Religion

Arnold, Ellen F. *Negotiating the Landscape: Environment and Monastic Identity in the Medieval Ardennes*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Week 6 (February 9): Water

Hoffmann, R. "Economic Development and Aquatic Ecosystems in Medieval Europe." *The American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 631-669.

Schenk, Gerrit J. "'... prima ci fu la cagione de la mala provedenza de' Fiorentini...': Disaster and 'Life World' Reactions in the Commune of Florence to the Flood of November 1333." *Medieval History Journal* 10 (2007): 355-386.

Week 7 (February 16): Food

Pearson, K. "Nutrition and the Early-Medieval Diet." *Speculum* 72 (1997): 1-32.

Jordan, William Chester. *The Great Famine: Northern Europe in the Early Fourteenth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. Focus on Part I (pp. 3-42).

Reading Week (February 23)

Week 8 (March 2): Animals

Allsen, Thomas T. *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. Focus on chapters 1-2.

Salisbury, J. *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Week 9 (March 9): Forests & Deforestation

Birrell, J. "Common Rights in the Medieval Forest." *Past & Present* 117 (1987): 22-49.

Williams, Michael. *Deforesting the Earth: From Prehistory to Global Crisis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002. Focus on premodern chapters only.

Week 10 (March 16): Energy

Thesis Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography Due

Landers, John. *The Field and the Forge: Population, Production and Power in the Pre-Industrial West*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Week 11 (March 23): Cities

Jørgensen, Dolly. "Cooperative Sanitation: Managing Streets and Gutters in Late Medieval England and Scandinavia." *Technology and Culture* 49 (2008): 547-567.

Hoffmann, Richard C. "Footprint Metaphor and Metabolic Realities: Environmental Impacts of Medieval European Cities." In *Natures Past: The Environment and Human History*, edited by Paolo Squatriti, 288-325. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.

Week 12 (March 30): Europe Expands

Crosby, Alfred W. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

April 14: Final Essay Due

POLICY ON LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, AND MAKE-UP TESTS

Late assignments will be deducted **5% per day**. Students are encouraged to communicate any expected delays or extenuating circumstances to the instructor as soon as possible, so that suitable accommodation may be arranged.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Consistent attendance is essential to success in this course. Missing classes will have a negative effect on a student's participation mark in the course.

CORRESPONDENCE

The instructor can be contacted via email (a5moore@uwaterloo.ca) and will endeavour to respond within 48 hours. Depending on university COVID restrictions, the instructor may also be reached in person during office hours. When in-person contact is restricted, the instructor will be available virtually on Zoom.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Petitions and Grievances](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on

Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.