

Brunk
Hist 5309/6309
Studies in Latin American History
Fall 2024

Office Hours: T 12-1:00, R 12:00-2:00, and by appointment
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STUDIES IN LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY: ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICA

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES: The primary aim of this course is to introduce students to some of the basic works and issues of the environmental history of Latin America. This is still a relatively new and underdeveloped field, but prompted by growing environmental awareness in contemporary societies, scholars are increasingly finding that a better understanding of history's environmental dimension sheds new light on their political, economic, social, and cultural concerns. Topics will include the Columbian Exchange, the impact of livestock on American ecosystems, deforestation, disease, science and biodiversity, urban space, the impact of commodity production, and the creation of national parks, among others.

GRADING: Final grades will be based on five written assignments and class participation. The first four written assignments will be essays on weekly readings. Each week I will distribute a question about the following week's readings. Students may choose whether or not to answer that question for any given week, but must answer a total of four questions during the semester in essays of at least 2000 words. Each of these weekly papers will focus on that particular week's readings, but they will also ask you to incorporate relevant material from earlier readings and class discussions.

These papers are designed to benefit all students by developing skills of critical analysis and clear, logical writing in ways that simply writing book reviews do not. Students may, however, choose to make **one** of these four papers a book review, of at least 1500 words, instead of answering that week's question (but this option is not available on books by Dean, McNeill, or Freitas, which we are splitting over two class periods). If you would like, instead, to develop a lesson plan for one week's readings, that is also a possibility—please let me know if you are interested and we will discuss. Regardless of paper type, these weekly papers are due, emailed to me as attachments, **before the start of class** on the day for which the corresponding readings are assigned. Plan ahead and start your written work early on weeks you intend to write to make sure you get it done on time.

The last written assignment will be a final paper of about 3000 words in which you will answer a question or questions that will require you to synthesize the material covered during the

semester. This makes it crucial for you to participate fully in weekly discussions and take careful notes.

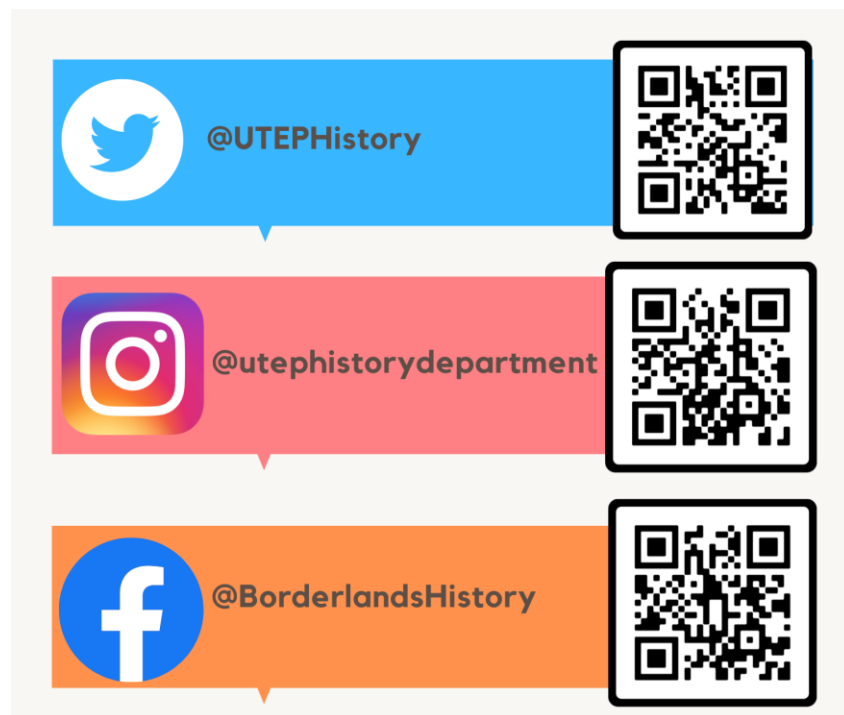
Expectations for class participation will include leading one class discussion sometime during the course of the semester.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Weekly papers	60% (15% each)
Final paper	20%
Participation	20%

COMMUNICATION: You may email me at any time at my UTEP email address, sbrunk@utep.edu, which I check frequently (though not late at night). Be sure to use your UTEP email account when you do so. I will generally reply quickly, but if you do not receive a reply in 24 hours please email me again in case I somehow didn't receive the first one. I will sometimes communicate with the class through the Announcement tool on Blackboard, so you should check there frequently for updates and reminders, though those announcements will also come to your UTEP email address.

You may also want to follow the History Department via the following social media:



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES: You are expected to attend class (and to be there on time). This is especially essential in graduate courses, and class participation grades are naturally tied, in part, to attendance. Students who miss a class period for any reason will be required to write an additional paper of at least 1500 words, due the following week, summarizing the main points

of the missed week's reading (**this will be in addition to the four weekly papers described above, and you may not turn in one of those four papers for a week in which you do not attend class**). It is your responsibility to speak to me about that additional assignment and any handouts or general instructions you might have missed. Students are also responsible for turning in assignments on time.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Plagiarism is the use of the ideas, information, or words of another author without giving proper credit to your source. You are responsible for citing your sources and, in cases where you directly quote from a source, for enclosing those words that are not your own in quotation marks. Failing to give proper credit to your sources in these ways is academic dishonesty. I will refer all suspected incidences of academic dishonesty to the office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for investigation. Students found guilty of such actions will be punished. See UTEP policy on this issue at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>. For some tips on avoiding plagiarism, see: https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/_Files/docs/Avoiding-Plagiarism.pdf

You may not use Artificial Intelligence in this class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship for the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. If you believe you need such accommodations, contact the CASS at 915-747-5148, cass@utep.edu, or through their web page, <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>. Only CASS can evaluate the accommodations you might need.

READINGS: The readings for this course are listed below. Most of the books are on reserve for this course in the library (ask at the front desk), and all of them are available at the bookstore or, less expensively, at online sellers such as Amazon. Many of them are also available as ebooks through the UTEP library website, so you may want to check on those possibilities before you purchase. Please recognize that online books may not be available to multiple readers at once, so if you rely on library ebooks you should plan to work ahead.

The articles listed are all available free online through the library. The links provided for them should work; if they don't, find the online version of the article by searching for the journal title in the library catalogue. It would be a good idea to download these articles now so I can help you, before the last minute, if you're having trouble getting one.

Shawn Miller, *An Environmental History of Latin America* (2007)

Elinor Melville, *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico*

- (1997)
- Warren Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand: Destruction of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest* (1997)
- John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States* (2006)
- J.R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (2010).
- Megan Raby, *American Tropics: The Caribbean Roots of Biodiversity Science* (2017)
- Matthew Vitz, *A City on a Lake: Urban Political Ecology and the Growth of Mexico City* (2018)
- Oscar de la Torre, *The People of the River: Nature and Identity in Black Amazonia, 1835–1945* (2018)
- Shawn Miller, *The Street Is Ours: Community, the Car, and the Nature of Public Space in Rio de Janeiro* (2019)
- Frederico Freitas, *Nationalizing Nature: Iguazu Falls and National Parks at the Brazil-Argentina Border* (2021)
- Germán Vergara, *Fueling Mexico: Energy and Environment, 1850–1950* (2021)
- Mark Carey, “Latin American Environmental History: Current Trends, Interdisciplinary Insights, and Future Directions,” *Environmental History* 14:2 (2009), pp. 221-252
<https://www-journals-uchicago-edu.utep.idm.oclc.org/toc/eh/2009/14/2>
- Georgina H. Endfield and Sarah L. O'Hara, “Degradation, Drought, and Dissent: An Environmental History of Colonial Michoacán, West Central Mexico,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 89 (1999), pp. 402-419
https://www-jstor-org.utep.idm.oclc.org/stable/2564490?refreqid=excelsior%3A9d7495f423725b46749f5b50b9b564a3&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Christian Brannstrom, “Rethinking the ‘Atlantic Forest’ of Brazil: New Evidence for Land Cover and Land Value in Western Sao Paulo, 1900-1930” *Journal of Historical Geography*, 28:3 (2002), pp. 420-439
<https://www-sciencedirect-com.utep.idm.oclc.org/journal/journal-of-historical-geography/vol/28/issue/3>
- Vera Candiani, “The Desagüe Reconsidered: Environmental Dimensions of Class Conflict in Colonial Mexico,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92 (2012), pp. 5-39
<https://read-dukeupress-edu.utep.idm.oclc.org/hahr/article/92/1/5/10622/The-Desague-Reconsidered-Environmental-Dimensions>
- Judith Carney, “African Traditional Plant Knowledge in the Circum-Caribbean Region,” *Journal of Ethnobiology*, 23, no.2 (2003): 167-185.
<https://geog.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/users/carney/426.pdf>
- José Drummond, “The Garden in the Machine: An Environmental History of Brazil's Tijuca Forest,” *Environmental History*, 1, no. 1 (1996): 83-104
<https://www-journals-uchicago-edu.utep.idm.oclc.org/toc/eh/1996/1/1>
- Emily Wakild, “Border Chasm: International Boundary Parks and Mexican Conservation, 1935-1945,” *Environmental History* 14, no. 3 (2009): 453-475
<https://www-journals-uchicago-edu.utep.idm.oclc.org/toc/eh/2009/14/3>

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Aug 26 Introductory Remarks and Course Organization
- Sept 2 Surveying the Field
READING: Miller, *An Environmental History*; Carey, "Latin American Environmental History"
- Sept 9 A Conquest Environment
READING: Melville, *A Plague of Sheep*; Endfield and O'Hara, "Degradation"
- Sept 16 Brazil's Atlantic Forest
READING: Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand*, to p. 190
- Sept 23 Atlantic Forest continued
READING: Dean, *With Broadax and Firebrand*, p. 191 to end; Brannstrom, "Rethinking the 'Atlantic Forest'"
- Sept 30 Commodity and Environment
READING: Soluri, *Banana Cultures*
- Oct 7 Empire, Disease, and Landscape
READING: McNeill, *Mosquito Empires* to p. 136; Candiani, "The Desagüe Reconsidered"
- Oct 14 Empire, Disease, and Landscape cont.
READING: McNeill, *Mosquito Empires* p. 137 to end; Carney, "African Traditional Plant Knowledge"
- Oct 21 Science and Biodiversity
READING: Raby, *American Tropics*
- Oct 28 Urban Ecology
READING: Vitz, *A City on a Lake*
- Nov 5 Environment, Resistance, and Identity
READING: De la Torre, *The People of the River*
- Nov 12 Mobility and Urban Public Space
READING: Miller, *The Street Is Ours*
- Nov 19 Parks and Borders
READING: Freitas, *Nationalizing Nature*, pp. x-144; Drummond, "The Garden in the Machine"

Nov 26 Parks and Borders continued

READING: Freitas, *Nationalizing Nature*, pp. 145 to end; Wakild, "Border Chasm"

Dec 3 Energy and Environment

READING: Vergara, *Fueling Mexico*

Dec 10, 5:00 p.m., **Final Paper Due**