

## Discipline Specific Elective (DSE): Environmental History of the World

### Credit distribution, Eligibility and Pre-requisites of the Course

Course title & Code	Credits	Credit distribution of the course			Eligibility criteria	Pre-requisite of the course (if any)
		Lecture	Tutorial	Practical/Practice		
Environmental History of the World	4	3	1	0		

### Learning Objectives

This course introduces key themes in world environmental history. Students will learn about pre-modern ideas about nature, economic and urban development, the effects of epidemics and environmental changes, and the impact of industrialization. It will critically analyse how colonialism and imperialism have shaped human-environment relationships around the world. This course will also help students develop a historical perspective on today's environmental challenges such as global warming and climate change.

### Learning outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to -

- Understand the historical relationship between non-human environment and human societies.
- Examine case studies from around the world to illustrate the impact of environmental changes on human civilizations and vice versa.
- Explain how colonialism, capitalism, and ecological imperialism have shaped environmental and ecological changes.
- Explore historical case studies of climate change and environmental crises.
- Critically engage with the concept of environmentalism.
- Connect historical environmental changes to contemporary global issues.

### **Syllabus**

#### **Unit 1: Living with Nature**

1. Methods and Sources in Environmental History
2. Human-Nature Interactions in Pre-Modern Societies; Beginning of Agriculture
3. Urban Societies and Idea of States- Case study of Maya
4. Imperial Cities- Case study of Athens and Constantinople

#### **Unit 2: Divorce with Nature: Colonialism and Ecological Imperialism**

1. The Concept of Ecological Imperialism; Syphilis
2. Plantation Economies and Environmental Degradation; Deforestation, Tea plantation
3. Resource Extraction and Colonialism, Green Imperialism

#### **Unit 3: Human Societies in the Face of Climate Change**

1. Climate and Civilization: A Historical Overview
2. The Little Ice Age and the General Crisis of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century
3. Industrialization and Carbon Economies; London as a case study
4. Global Warming and Climate Change; The Great Acceleration

#### **Unit 4: Science, Conservation and Environmentalism**

1. Aswan dam, Bali's Green Revolution- Case study of Any one
2. Socialism and Environmentalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; Soviet Russia
3. Environmentalism in Global North and South; IPCC

#### **Practical component (if any) - NIL**

#### **Essential / Recommended Readings**

**Unit 1:** This module examines the evolution of human societies from early agricultural settlements to the rise of urban centers and imperial cities. (Teaching time: 9 hrs. approx.)

- J. Donald Hughes, *What is Environmental History?* (2016), Ch. 1
- J. Donald Hughes, “An Ecological Paradigm of the Ancient City,” in Richard J. Borden, ed., *Human Ecology: A Gathering of Perspectives*, Baltimore: The Society for Human Ecology, 1986, 214–20.
- J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization*, Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1954
- J. Donald Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World*, London: Routledge, 2001; Ch. 4. (Imperial Cities)
- Jelena Bogdanović, “The Relational Spiritual Geopolitics of Constantinople, the Capital of the Byzantine Empire.” In *Political Landscapes of Capital Cities*, edited by Jelena Bogdanović, Jessica Joyce Christie, and Eulogio Guzmán, University Press of Colorado, 2016, 97–154.

**Unit 2:** This module explores key themes such as **ecological imperialism, plantation economies and colonial resource extraction**. It examines how colonialism reshaped landscapes, disrupted ecosystems, and transformed human-environment relationships. (Teaching time: 9 hrs. approx.)

- Alfred W. Crosby, “Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as Biological Phenomenon”, in *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*, edited by Donald Worster, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 103–117.
- Alfred Crosby, “The Early History of Syphilis: A Reappraisal”, *American Anthropologist* 71, no. 2 (1969): 218–27.
- Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism* (1995), Introduction, Ch. 3 & 4
- Madhav Gadgil and Ramchandra Guha, *This Fissured Land*, Delhi: OUP, 1992; Ch. 4 & 5. Also available in Hindi [माधव गाडगिल एवं रामचंद्र गुहा, इयाह दरकती ज़मीन, दिल्ली: ऑक्सफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी प्रेस, 2018; अध्याय 4 एवं 5]
- Arnab Dey, *Tea Environments and Plantation Culture: Imperial Disarray in Eastern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

**Unit 3:** This module explores historical climate change and its impact on human societies, examining how civilizations were shaped by environmental shifts. (Teaching time: 9 hrs. approx.)

- Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change, and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013, Ch. 1
- John L. Brooke, *Climate change and the course of Global History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 444–466.

- Peter Brimblecombe, *The Big Smoke: A History of Air Pollution in London Since Medieval Times*, London: Methuen, 1987.
- John McNeill & Peter Engelke, *The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene since 1945*, Harvard: Belknap Press, 2016, Ch.1

**Unit 4: This module** explores how scientific knowledge, conservation efforts, and political ideologies shape environmental policies and practices. (Teaching time: 9 hrs. approx.)

- Hussein M.Fahim, *Dams, People and Development: The Aswan High Dam Case*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1981.
- J.Stephen Lansing, *Priests and Programmers: Technologies of Power in the Engineered Landscape of Bali*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Stephen Brain, *Song of the Forest: Russian Forestry and Stalinist Environmentalism*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011, 140-167. Ch.6.
- “The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Challenges and Opportunities” by Diana Liverman and Ronald L. Mitchell, *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*.
- Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History*, Delhi: Allen lane, 2014, Ch. 7 and 8.

**Additional Readings:**

- Brian M. Fagan, *People of the Earth*, Delhi: Pearson, 2014.
- Donald Worster ed., *Ends of the Earth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism, A Global History*, OUP, 2000.
- John McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun*, Penguin, Allen Lane, 2000.
- J.Donald Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World*, London: Routledge, 2001.
- Michael E. Mann, *The Madhouse Effect: How Climate Change Denial Threatening Our Planet*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.
- माधव गाडगिल एवं रामचंद्र गुहा, इयाह दरकती जमीन, दिल्ली: ऑक्सफोर्ड यूनिवर्सिटी प्रेस, 2018.
- वि. सिंह, पर्यावरण पर मानव पदचिह्न, दिल्ली: ट्रिनिटी प्रेस, 2015.
- Madhav Gadgil and Ramchandra Guha, *This Fissured Land*, Delhi: OUP, 1992.

**Note:** Examination scheme and mode shall be as prescribed by the Examination Branch, from time to time.