

COMMON POOL OF GENERIC ELECTIVES (GE) COURSES

GENERIC ELECTIVES (GE-1): Politics of Nature

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
		Lecture	Tutorial	Practical/Practice		
Politics of Nature	4	3	1	0	XII Pass	NIL

Learning Objectives

This introductory course familiarizes students with major themes in the history of human inter-action with nature. It studies the long-term transformations made by humans on their surrounding environment and the reciprocal effects of nature on societies. The themes include the inter-actions between humans and other living species, link between imperialism and environmental transformations, profligate use of resources, population growth, increasing urbanisation, carbon emission, and climate crisis. By focusing on the planetary scale of ecological interconnectedness, the course enables students to understand the social, political, and cultural roots of the current environmental crisis. The course will also elaborate how the interdisciplinary approach enabled the environmental historians to arrive at new methodology in critically understanding the past. It integrates concepts and insights from Anthropology, Historical-Geography, Climate Science, Political Ecology, and Economics. The paper explains the politics of nature in terms of an increasing inequality in access to natural resources and the social responses to the unequal distribution of the effects of environmental degradation. Discussions on the politics of nature on a planetary scale will encourage students to innovate and suggest policy changes at the national and international level.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course the student shall be able to:

- Discuss environmental issues within a social and political framework.

- Examine the role of social inequality. How does unequal distribution of and unequal access to environmental resources help understand the environmental crisis of the world - from the global to the local.
- Critique an understanding of environmental concerns based on a narrow scientific/technological perspective.
- Analyse the historical agency of animals.
- Understand how ideas about the environment have evolved in various socio-ecological contexts.
- Examine the complexities of resource distribution and inequalities of resource use, locating these within specific social contexts, with reference to case studies regarding the urban-environmental problems, industrial hazards and the environmental impacts of the mega-infrastructure projects.
- Locate solutions to the contemporary environmental problems within a framework of greater democratisation of resource use.

SYLLABUS OF GE-1

Unit I: Doing Environmental History

1. The themes of Environmental History.
2. Interdisciplinarity; Historical-Geography, Anthropology, Archaeology, and Political Ecology

Unit II: Societies and Natural Resources in the Pre-Modern World

1. Human-animal interactions
2. Pre-Industrial Prime Movers and Fuels

Unit III: Ecology and Imperial Power in the Early Modern World

1. The Columbian Exchange; Diseases
2. Colonialism and Natural Resources; Ecological Imperialism

Unit IV: The Worlds of Fossil Energy

1. Industrial Agriculture Steam Ships and Hydraulic Engineering
2. Cities and Environment; Delhi and Bombay

Unit V: The Great Acceleration and the Future

1. Carbon Emission and Environmental Justice; Climate Change
2. The Anthropocene Debate

Essential Readings

Unit I. This unit provides an overview of the major themes of environmental history and elaborates the interdisciplinary approaches developed by the environmental historians to study the past. **(Teaching time: 9 Hours approx)**

- Hughes, Donald (2006), *What is Environmental History?*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Chapter 1, pp. 1-17 ["Defining Environmental History"]
- McNeil, J. R. and Mauldin, E. S. (2012). *A Companion to Global Environmental History*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, Introduction pp. xvi-xxiv.
- Conrad, Sebastian (2016), *What is Global History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-17 ["Introduction"].

- Bayly, C. A, et al., "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 111, No. 5, pp. 1440-64.

Unit II. This unit examines human interactions with the environment in pre-modern societies. The two rubrics are aimed to explore how human interaction with animals and the development of energy harnessing technologies transformed social relationships, practices, and ideas. **(Teaching time: 9 Hours approx.)**

- Richard Bulliet. *Hunters, Herders and Hamburgers: The Past and Future of Human- Animal Relationships*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. 205 -224.
- Edmund Burke III. "The Big Story: Human History, Energy Regime and the Environment" in Edmund Burke III and Kenneth Pomeranz, eds., *The Environment and World History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. pp. 33-53.
- Smil, Vaclav (1994), *Energy in World History*. Colorado: Westview, 1994 [Chapter 2 "Energy in Prehistory, pp. 15-27; Chapter 3 "Traditional Agriculture," pp. 28-91; Chapter 4 "Pre-Industrial Prime Movers and Fuel, 92-156].
- Deloche, John (1993), *Transport and Communication in India: Prior to Steam Locomotion*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 227-254.

Unit III. : This unit explores how Empires of the New World transferred flora and fauna across continents, affected the demography of local societies and completely transformed landscapes. The second rubric explains how colonialism generated new patterns of consumption by appropriating global resources and fossil fuels for industry, to produce an interconnected but unequal world. **(Teaching time: 9 Hours approx.)**

- Crosby, Alfred W. (1967). "Conquistadory Pestilencia: The First New World Pandemic and the Fall of the Great Indian Empires," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol.47(No.3), pp. 321-337.
- Crosby, Alfred W. (1988), "Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon," In Donald Worster, ed., *The Ends of the Earth*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 104-105.
- Cronon, William (1983), *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang, pp.3-18.
- McNeill, J.R. (2012). "Biological Exchange in Global Environmental History," In J. R. McNeill & E. S. Maudlin, eds., *Companion to Global Environmental History*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 433-452.

Unit IV. This unit studies the new energy regimes of the modern world, with a special focus on the histories of landscape transformations. It offers a historical perspective on the increasing inequality of access to natural resources, especially in the context of industrialisation of agricultural production, hydraulic engineering, and the urbanization of natural resources. **(Teaching time: 9 Hours approx.)**

- McKittrick, Meredith (2012), "Industrial Agriculture," In J. R. McNeill & E. S. Maudlin, eds., *Companion to Global Environmental History*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 411-432.

- Carse, Ashley (2014), *Beyond the Big Ditch: Politics, Ecology, and Infrastructure at the Panama Canal*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, [Chapter 3: “Making the Panama Canal Watershed”, pp. 37-58; Chapter 6: “Canal Construction and the Politics of Water”, pp. 93- 120; Chapter 13: “A Demanding Environment,” pp. 129-222].
- Awadhendra B. Sharan. *In the City, Out of Place: Nuisance, Pollution, and Dwelling in Delhi, c. 1850-2000*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014 [Introduction; Chapter 4: Pollution-page numbers to be added]
- Riding, Tim (2018), “‘Making of Bombay Island’: Land Reclamation and Geographical Conception of Bombay, 1661-1728,” *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol. 59, pp. 27-39.
- Klein, Ira (1986), “Urban Development and Death: Bombay City, 1870-1914”, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.20, No.4, pp.725-754.

Unit V. This unit introduces the concept of Anthropocene to discuss emergent concerns regarding the influence of humans on the planet’s history. This provides a long-term historical perspective on contemporary environmental issues including global warming and the need for innovation and policy change at the national and international levels. **(Teaching time: 9 Hours approx)**

- Carruthers, Jane, (2011), “Recapturing Justice and Passion in Environmental History: A Future Path”, *RCC Perspectives*, No. 3, pp. 57-59.
- White, Sam. (2012). “Climate Change in Global Environmental History,” In J. R. McNeill and E. S. Maudlin, eds., *Companion to Environmental History*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 394-410.
- Lewis, Simon L. and Maslin, Mark A. (2015). “Defining the Anthropocene,” *Nature*, Vol. 519, pp. 171-80.
- Moore Jason W. ed., (2016), *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. London: Verso, pp. 169-192 [“Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: On the Nature and Origins of Our Ecological Crisis,”].

Suggestive readings

- Agarwal, Ravi (2010), “Fight for a Forest,” In Seminar, No. 613, pp. 48-52 (On Delhi Ridge)
- Bauer Jordan and Melosi, Martin V. (2012). “Cities and the Environment,” In J. R. McNeill and E. S. Maudlin, eds., *Companion to Environmental History*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 360-376.
- Brooke, John L. (2014), *Climate Change and the Course of Global History: A Rough Journey*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 370-383 [“The Little Ice Age and the Black Death”].
- Bulliet, Richard. (2005), *Hunters, Herders and Hamburgers: The Past and Future of Human-Animal Relationships*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 205 -224.
- Byrne, John, Leigh Glover and Cecilia Martinez, eds. (2002), *Environmental Justice: Discourses in International Political Economy*. London: Routledge, pp. 261-291 [“The Production of Unequal Nature”]
- Corona, Gabriella (2008), “What is Global Environmental History?” *Global Environment*, No. 2, pp. 228-249.

- Culver, Lawrence. (2014). "Confluence of Nature and Culture: Cities in Environmental History," In A. C. Isenberg (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History*. New York: OUP, pp. 553-572.
- Fitzgerald, Amy J. (2015). *Animals as Food Reconnecting Production, Processing and Impacts*. Michigan: Michigan State University Press, pp 9-34.
- Grove, Richard H. (1995), *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 16-72 ["Edens, Islands and Early Empires"].
- Lewis, Simon L. and Maslin, Mark A. (2015). "Defining the Anthropocene", *Nature*, Vol.519(12March), 171-80.
- Malm, Andreas. (2016). *The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming*. London: Verso. pp.389-394
- McKenney Jason. (2002). *Artificial Fertility: "The Environmental Costs of Industrial Age Fertilisers"* In Andrew Kimbrell (ed.), *The Fatal Harvest Reader: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture*. London: Island Press, pp.121-129
- Mitchell, Timothy. (2011), *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*. London: Verso, "Conclusion: No More Counting on Oil," pp. 231-254.
- Moore Jason W. (ed.) (2016) *Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Oakland: PM Press. pp. 173-195
- Moore, Jason W (2015), *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. London: Verso, pp. 241-306 ["The Long Green Revolution: The Life and Times of Cheap Food in the Long Twentieth Century", and "Conclusion: The End of Cheap Nature?"]
- Moore, Jason W. (2014), "The Value of Everything? Work, Capital, and Historical Nature in the Capitalist Ecology," *Review (Fernand Braudel Centre)*, Vol. 37, No. 3-4, pp. 245- 292.
- Morrison, Kathleen D. (2015), "Provincializing the Anthropocene", *Seminar*, No. 673, 75- 80.
- Moss, Jeremy (2015), *Climate Change and Justice*: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 1-16 [Introduction: Climate Justice].
- Nunn, Nathan and Qian, Nancy. "The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 24, No.2 (2010), 163–188.
- Steffen, Will, Crutzen, Paul J and McNeill J. R. (2008). "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature," *Ambio*, Vol. 36, (No.8), 614-21.
- Sutter, Paul S. (2007), "Nature's Agents or Agents of Empire? Entomological Workers and Environmental Change during the Construction of the Panama Canal," *Isis*, Vol. 98, No. 4, pp. 724-753.
- White Jr, Lynn (1974), *Medieval Technology and Social Change*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. q-38.
- सुर्मित गुहा, (2010) "अठारहवीं शताब्दियी के महाराष्र में घास और चारे पर नईंत्रण: एक ऐतिहासिक अध्ययन", महाश भारत में पर्यावरण के मिलिं, पर्यावरण, सुलिली.

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