

History 606:502:91

War and the World: An Environmental History of Warfare

Spring 2013
M 6:00 – 8:40 PM (Hybrid)
Location: Rutgers at Joint Base
McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst – 3829/Room 206

Instructor: Martin G. Clemis
E-Mail: mclemis@gmail.com
Phone (215) 380-0075

Course Description: This course examines the relationship between war and the environment. It explores the ways in which armed conflict and collective violence have shaped both the physical and the ideational world we inhabit. Warfare has not only had a profound impact on the physical landscape, including adverse ecological consequences and the creation of militarized spaces, it has fashioned the world's political, economic, religious, cultural, and ideological character as well by creating, destroying, or altering political geographies such as territories, borders, states, empires, and so on. This course will use theoretical approaches and historical case studies to historicize the critical linkage between war and the environment and underscore that the natural world is more than just a setting for war; it is an active agent that is harnessed to serve material and symbolic purposes.

Course Requirements / Assignments:

In order to receive a satisfactory grade in this course, students must complete the following assignments:

1. **Attendance / Course Engagement** - This is a collaborative learning course. What this means is that the student is the primary focus of instruction, not the instructor. As a result, the course is not lecture-based but is founded on class discussion and dialogue among students and the instructor. Peer instruction, therefore, is a fundamental component of this course. Critique, debate, and discussion of assigned readings and additional outside material are vital to a healthy pedagogical environment. Moreover, they are an important part of your grade. Good attendance is also mandatory (you cannot participate in discussion or collaborate with your peers if you aren't here). Attendance is required and will be regularly taken. I am well aware that missing a class may happen occasionally, but regular absence will be noted and affect your class participation grade. As this class meets only one day per week, any student missing more than two classes will be in danger of failing.
2. **Reading / Writing Assignments** – Students are required to read, discuss, and submit a one-page, single-spaced summary of the assigned readings. Summaries for readings must be submitted via drop box through

Sakai. Summaries for readings that are assigned for days we meet in class must be submitted on Monday. Summaries for readings that are assigned online must be submitted on Friday. Students are also required to research, read, and summarize one news article per week. The topic must be related to environmental / military issues. The newspaper articles will be discussed in class each week. No written summary is required but bring the article and be prepared to talk about it each Monday.

3. **Discussion** – Students should be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for Mondays and their outside news article in class. Students will also be required to submit two blog entries on the readings that are assigned online. At the beginning of each week I will present a set of questions / observations on the readings that students will use as the basis for their blog entries.
4. **Research Paper** – Students are required to create and submit an 8- to 10-page research paper for their final assignment. The paper must **identify and discuss an issue pertinent to war and the environment**. Students are permitted / encouraged to use either historical case studies or current events for their topic. They are also encouraged to include graphs, charts, photographs, and other visual material within the final report. The paper must include at least **five scholarly sources**. A status report must be given in-class each week.

Paper topics must be submitted by **Monday, November 10** and a paper prospectus (that includes topic and potential sources) submitted by **Monday, November 17**. In-class presentations on papers will take place on **Monday, December 8**. A final copy of the white paper must be submitted in pdf format no later than **Monday, December 15**.

Grading – Grades will be based on the following percentages:

Course Engagement: 20%
Weekly Reading Writing Assignments: 30%
Final Paper: 50%

Required Texts:

- Charles E. Closmann, ed. *War and the Environment: Military Destruction in the Modern Age* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009).
- Donovan Webster, *Aftermath: The Remnants of War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).
- **All additional readings on your syllabus are also required.** These will be available in pdf format on Sakai.

Course Schedule: The dates listed below are tentative and may change as the semester progresses.

Week One: Military Footprints / Harnessing Nature for War

IN CLASS (10/27): Introduction

ONLINE: Readings:

- Closmann, Introduction, Chs. 1 & 2

Week Two: Weaponizing the Environment / Wartime Ecological Destruction

IN CLASS (11/3): Readings:

- Closmann, Ch. 3 & 4

ONLINE: Readings:

- Reichberg, "Protecting the Environment in Wartime"

Week Three: Chemical Warfare – World War I & Vietnam / Destruction & Reconstruction of Civilian Environments

IN CLASS (11/10): Readings:

- Webster, Ch. 4
- Fitzgerald, "Chemical Warfare and Medical Response during World War I"

ONLINE: Readings:

- Closmann, Ch. 9; Lachmund, "Exploring the City of Rubble: Botanical Fieldwork in Bombed Cities in Germany after World War II"

Week Four: Ecological Impact of Atomic Testing / Militarized Spaces – Military Geographies & Hallowed Ground

IN CLASS (11/17): Readings

- Webster, Ch. 3
- Jenks, "Model City USA: The Environmental Cost of Victory in World War II and the Cold War"

ONLINE: Readings:

- Closmann, Ch. 8
- Ebel, "Overseas Military Cemeteries as American Sacred Space"

Week Five: Geography of War: Mapping Ideational Spaces / Insect & Disease Control

IN CLASS (11/24): Readings

- Denis Wood, "Maps Work by Serving Interests"
- Mamadouh, "Geography and War, Geographers and Peace"

ONLINE: Readings:

- Closmann, Ch. 6
- Edmund Russell, "Speaking of Annihilation"

Week Six: Resource Wars and Territorial Conflicts / Aftermath: The Material Legacies and Ghosts of War

IN CLASS (12/1): Readings

- Le Billon, "The Geopolitical Economy of Resource Wars"
- Howard, "Peak Oil and Strategic Resource Wars"
- McDowell and Shirlow, "Geographies of Conflict and Post-Conflict in Northern Ireland"

ONLINE:

- Webster, Chs. 1 & 2

Week Seven: Wrap-Up / Conclusion

IN CLASS (12/8): Paper Presentations

***NOTE: Final Drafts of Research Papers Are Due by Midnight Monday, December 15**