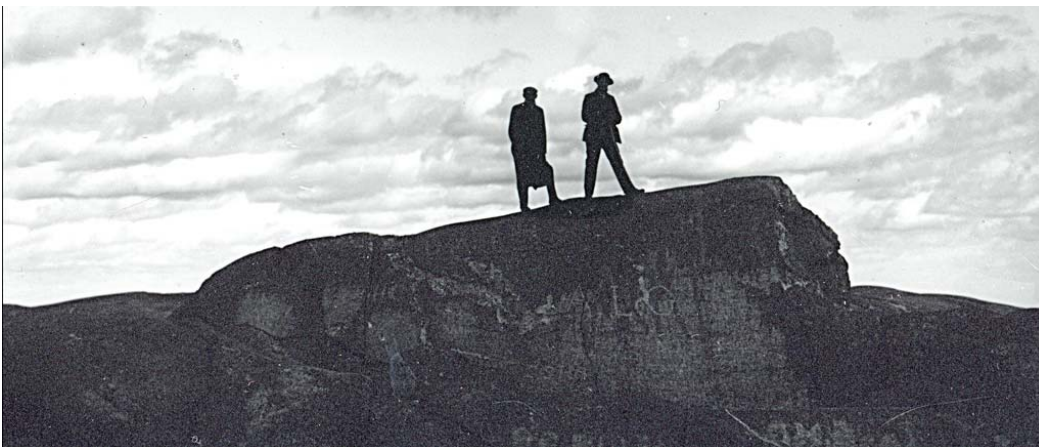


ENVI/HIST 234-02

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

MACALESTER COLLEGE
FALL 2014

MWF 1:10-2:10
Olin-Rice 301



Prof. Chris Wells

Olin-Rice 249c (office)

651-696-6803

wells@macalester.edu

Office hours: Wed 2:20-3:20, Fri 10:50-11:35, and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

People have always had to contend with the natural world, but only recently have historians begun to explore the changing relationships between people and their environments over time. In this course, we will examine the variety of ways that people in North America have shaped the

environment, as well as how they have used, labored in, abused, conserved, protected, rearranged, polluted, cleaned, and thought about it. In addition, we will explore how various characteristics of the natural world have affected the broad patterns of human society, sometimes harming or

hindering life and other times enabling rapid development and expansion. By bringing nature into the study of human history, and the human past into the study of nature, we will begin to see the connections and interdependencies between the two that traditional history often overlooks.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Writing assignments are a serious component of this course, and should represent your best efforts to think through the issues involved in polished, carefully edited, thoughtfully considered prose. *The First Two Papers* (5-7 pages each) ask you to synthesize and extend your understanding of key ideas, themes, and developments from class readings, lectures, and discussions. I will distribute the prompt for each paper through the course Moodle site two weeks before it is due. *The Final Paper* asks you to integrate your own historical research with what you have learned about the themes and questions of environmental history. Drawing on course materials and themes, you will select a place in the U.S. that you know well (or can research easily) and write an 8-10 page interpretive essay on it and its environmental history.

Late Work Policy: you will be assessed a late penalty of one-third of a letter grade per day for the first two papers, and one full letter grade per day for the final paper, so please plan ahead! If extenuating circumstances arise, you may discuss with me ahead of time the possibility of an extension with a reduced penalty.



GRADING

Your grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

Two papers (5-7 pages)	20% each
Final paper (8-10 pages)	30%
Participation	30%

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following books are available for purchase at the college book store and at the library reserve desk:

Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth*

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land*

Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl*

Paul Sabin, *The Bet*

MOODLE

Our Moodle site (moodle.macalester.edu) is a crucial resource for this class. In addition to duplicating the information in this syllabus, it houses our up-to-date daily reading schedule, with links to PDFs of all readings that are not from required texts. It is also where I will post prompts for the first two papers two weeks before they are due, and is where you will submit your papers.

EMAIL & OFFICE HOURS

You can always reach me by email. I will usually get back to you quickly, and always within 24 hours. My regular office hours are Wed 2:20-3:20, Fri 10:50-11:35, and by appointment. Office hours are first come, first served. You can swing by my office to see if I'm available, but you can also reserve a slot to talk to me at bit.ly/1AOzawe. If you cannot make my open office hours, make an appointment by giving me a handful of times that will work for you that I can check against my schedule. Talking to students is one of my favorite things about being a professor. No question is too small, and no pretext to talk is too flimsy: if you want to talk, we can talk.



PARTICIPATION

Participation in class discussions is vital to the success of this class. Our project in class meetings will be to explore connections between events, to answer questions, to clear up any confusion, to discuss the major themes of the course, and above all to engage with assigned readings. Please remember that we are all in this together, and we are all responsible for the success of the course. As eager as I am to share with you what I know, I expect that you will learn at least as much from one another as you will from me. We will discuss in class the mutual rights and responsibilities that you would like to see govern our classroom, but at minimum it is important that we all respect one another's time, space, values, and ideas by coming to class on time and prepared to engage in respectful, intellectually challenging discussions.

RESOURCES AND POLICIES

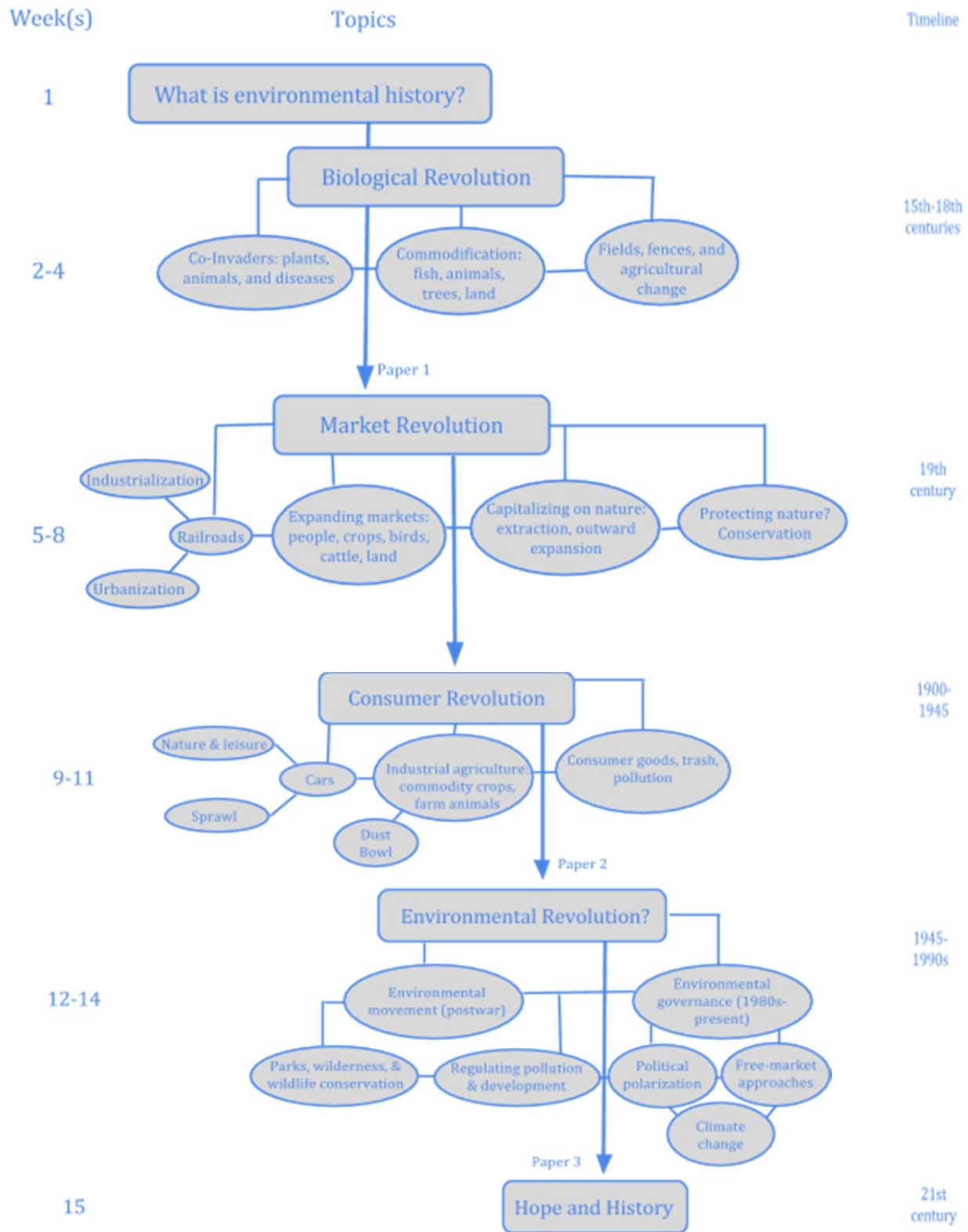
Many wonderful resources exist that will help you with this class. The *MAX Center*, located in Kagin, has peer tutors available to help students in all stages of writing. You may drop in or call x6121 (day) or x6193 (evening) for an appointment. Find them at www.macalester.edu/max/, and see their writing resources at www.macalester.edu/max/writing/. Please also spend some time perusing Prof. Zachary Schrag's helpful advice for doing well at historyprofessor.org/

Academic dishonesty erodes the basic foundations of higher education: exchange, debate, and the thoughtful consideration of what we know, how we know it, and why it matters. It has

no place in this course. For Macalester's policies on academic integrity, see bit.ly/1mKrAKF. For help on avoiding plagiarism, see bit.ly/1mJTGG4. For the Quick Guide to the Chicago Manual of Style, the citation system used by historians, see bit.ly/1lsPe3j (requires login).

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Meet with the Associate Dean of Students, Lisa Landreman, at the start of the term to ensure your accommodations are approved and in place. Reach her in the Office of Student Affairs, 119 Weyerhaeuser, at 651-696-6220, or by email llandrem@macalester.edu.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS



REMINDER: The daily reading schedule is posted on the course [Moodle site](#)