2014

243-01 The History of Outdoor America

Todd Larson
larsont@xavier.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/history_syllabi_fall_2014

Recommended Citation
http://www.exhibit.xavier.edu/history_syllabi_fall_2014/21
The past is everywhere. All around us lie features which, like ourselves and our thoughts, have more or less recognizable antecedents. Relics, histories, memories suffuse human experience. Each particular trace of the past ultimately perishes, but collectively they are immortal. Whether it is celebrated or rejected, attended or ignored, the past is omnipresent.

-- David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country

Why study history? This question has plagued philosophers, poets, and, yes, even students, since time immemorial. History is the culmination of human knowledge; it is the bridge to the past. It helps us to understand who we are and why we are in our present situations even if it has proven a poor prognosticator for the future. But these explanations by themselves do not help us answer the question. You will discover in this class, if you have not already, that history is much more than rote memorization of names, dates, and places. It is ideas, beliefs, institutions, and much more. Beyond this, even, it is a way of thinking. To think historically requires critical reasoning, a skill we will be using over the course of this semester in our analysis of the primary source readings.

This is a different kind of history course. It is a history of both a physical entity and an idea, of a commodity and a resource, of both sports and leisure. It is the history of the American outdoors, the people who frequent them, the companies that catered to them, the impact both have had, and above all else, the cultivation, development, abuse, and reclamation of the wild by generations of Americans. Among the many subjects we will cover are the history of fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, environmentalism, sports and leisure, gender, and class. We will look at how the development of leisure impacted American history, the many forms of outdoor sport and hobby, and the impact these have on nature. We will talk about how these subjects intersect mainstream America—in the form of literature like Hemingway’s Old Man and the Sea and the gun control debate.

Books: There are a number of required books for this course. They include Ernest Hemingway’s Hemingway on Fishing and The Old Man & the Sea; Hunter & Shettleworth’s Fly Rod Crosby: The Woman Who Marketed Maine; Darwin’s Bass: The Evolutionary Psychology of Fishing Man by Paul Quinnett; American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation, 3rd Ed. by John F. Reiger; Petersen’s Heartblood: Hunting, Spirituality, and Wildness in America; and Hunting and Fishing in the New South: Black Labor and White Leisure after the Civil War by Scott E. Giltner. Additionally, there will be handouts of a number of articles.

Office Hours: Office hours are designed to help you. If you are confused by the material, don’t understand or need help in any way on the assignments, or are encountering any problems dealing with this class, please stop by and see me or set up an appointment. I check e-mail regularly and will be using it as a primary means of communicating with you. However, I will not discuss any issues of grading over e-mail. My office hours are as follows:

Tuesday: 3:00-4:00 p.m.

By Appointment

Attendance: Ten percent of your grade is based directly on participation in classroom. This means that you will be graded on how well prepared you come to class and how much you contribute to the ongoing dialogue. However, the truth of the matter is that 100% of your grade is indirectly based on the discussions
as all the material on the exams will be covered in class. Attendance will be checked, but merely coming to
every class without contributing to class discussion will be rewarded with a failing grade for participation. If
you skip without prior explanation you DO SO AT YOUR OWN PERIL.

Grading: There are no late assignments without PRIOR explanation. Period. Since this class is designed to
teach you how to a) think critically, and b) write, you will be graded on both criteria. Which means that yes,
spelling and grammar both count! Much more on the specifics of writing papers will be covered in later
classes. The grading system breaks down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Project</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Grade</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, you can't possibly hope to do well—or even pass this class—without doing moderately well
in all four areas. And as mentioned before, the key to doing well is showing up for class prepared.

Assignments: There is one major paper and weekly discussions questions on the primary readings due
over the course of the semester.

Essay: You will be required to write one major paper for this course of 15 pages in length. Much more
information will be provided on this subject in the coming weeks. Proper documentation, good grammar,
clear and effective writing, and persuasive argumentation will be stressed. Additional information on each
essay will be handed out in a timely manner.

Environmental Project: You are required to design, implement, or participate in one project that will benefit
the environment in a positive way. This can be as complex as designing your own project to as simple as
participating in a clean-up activity of a local waterway. You are required to write up a three-page summary of
your activities.

Discussion Questions: Starting with the second week of class, all students will be required to bring
discussion questions to class.

Quizzes: In the EXTREMELY unlikely case that students repeatedly come to class unprepared, I reserve
the right to assign in-class quizzes at any time, which will be factored into the final grade.

Schedule: A comprehensive class schedule will be handed out in the second week of class. This will
include all the readings required for each week. In addition to your texts, I will be handing out (either
photocopies or over the internet) a series of primary source readings to supplement our materials.

Midterm Exam and the Final: There will be a midterm and a final exam. Make note of this and DO NOT
MISS THESE EXAMS. In the highly unlikely case that you have a conflict, it is up to you to bring this to my
attention well in advance of the exam date.

A SHORT NOTE ON INTERNET PLAGIARISM: Don't do it. I will catch you and will prosecute you to the
fullest extent as outlined in the Student Handbook.

I reserve the right to make and changes, deletions, or alterations to this syllabus at any time throughout the
semester. You will be informed of any changes made. © 2014 Dr. Todd E.A. Larson.