Topics in European Environmental History:
Imperial Ecology

FALL 2019 / HIS 196F / MERRILL 002

Instructor: Prof. Benjamin Breen (bebreen@ucsc.edu)
Schedule: Monday, 4-7 pm
Office hours: Tuesday, 3:30-4:30 pm, or by appointment (Stevenson 279)

Course description
This is a class about ecology and empires, specifically, the colonial empires of early modern Europe – the French, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, and British – and how the dislocations, violence, and exchanges of imperialism reshaped ecosystems not only in Europe itself, but in zones of European colonization such as Virginia, Brazil, West Africa, and India.

Course requirements
1) Weekly discussion posts:
For each of the eight weeks in which reading is required (excepting the first), students will write one long paragraph (roughly 300 to 500 words) discussing the assigned reading and post it to Canvas. To get full points
for this assignment, please take care to end your post by posing at least one question prompted by the reading which you think would be useful to discuss in class.

2) Book review
At the beginning of Week 5, you will submit a 2-page review of an academic book (either one of the books on the “further reading” list or one of your choosing). In class during Week 6, you will give a brief overview of your review. You should summarize the basics of the book (i.e. the topic, the author’s main arguments, the methodological approach, and the use of sources). Your review should be modeled on the reviews in scholarly history journals like the American Historical Review.

3) Research Paper:
At the end of the quarter, you will produce a research-based historical essay on a topic of your choosing that will be roughly 15 to 20 pages in length (footnoted, with citations in Chicago style, using at least three primary sources). I am very willing to be flexible about the topic to accommodate your personal research interests, but will also be providing a number of prompts for those who have difficulty selecting a topic. A 3-page outline including a one-paragraph description of your research question and a plan for structuring and sourcing the paper will be due at the beginning of Week 9.

Grades
Book review: 20%
Reading responses: 20%
3 page outline of final paper: 10%
Final: 40%
In-class participation (including final paper presentation): 10%

All assignments will be marked down by one letter grade (10%) for each day they are late. I am happy to offer extensions for a legitimate reason but only with at least 48 hour notice.

Students are expected to spend 15 hours per week on the course, with 4.25
hours spent in class, approximately 8 hours for reading and the remainder spent on preparation for the final paper and other assignments.

**Plagiarism and academic ethics**
Doing good history - and being an ethical person! – requires you to **properly attribute other’s work.** Claiming the words or ideas of others as your own is plagiarism. Any student plagiarizes will receive an F in the course in addition to referral to the university administration for academic misconduct. **Please don’t do it!**

**Disability-related accommodations**
If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me by the **first week of the quarter.** Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu for more information.

**NOTE:**
Charles Mann’s *1493* is the only book you will need to buy for the class. It is available to buy at the Bay Tree bookstore or online. **All other readings are available as pdfs on canvas.**

**WEEK 1, SEPTEMBER 30: INTRODUCTION**
Reading: Timothy Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat*, excerpt.

**WEEK 2, OCTOBER 7: THE WORLD OF 1500**
Reading: Charles Mann, *1493*, Prologue, Chapter 1: “Two Monuments,” and Chapter Two, “The Tobacco Coast”
+ **Primary source:** Excerpts from *Jahangirnama* and the “Peregrinations” of Fernão Mendes Pinto

**WEEK 3, OCTOBER 14: THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE**
Reading: Charles Mann, *1493*, Ch. 3, “Evil Air”
+ **Primary source:** *Counterblaste to Tobacco.*
WEEK 4, OCTOBER 21: ECOLOGY AND SLAVERY

Reading:
Londa Schiebinger, *Secret Cures of Slaves*, excerpt, and Mann, 1493, Ch. 8 “Crazy Soup”
+ Primary source: Inquisition file on Canvas.

WEEK 5, OCTOBER 28: NATURAL HISTORIES

Reading:
Excerpt from Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2014) + Mann, 1493, Ch. 5, “Lovesick Grass, Foreign Tubers, and Jade Rice”

*** Book reviews due by beginning of class. ***

WEEK 6, NOVEMBER 4: NON-WESTERN EPISTEMOLOGIES OF NATURE

Reading:
“A Pirate Surgeon in Panama” and excerpt from *Hall of Mirrors*
+ Primary source: Lionel Wafer’s account of Darien.

WEEK 7, NOVEMBER 11: EARLY MODERN GLOBALIZATION

Reading:
Mann, 1493, Ch. 6, “The Agro-Industrial Complex, “and Ch. 7, “Black Gold”
+ Primary source: TBD

WEEK 8, NOVEMBER 18: DRUGS AND HEALING

Reading:
Marcy Norton,
• Primary source special assignment: locate a relevant source that you think may be useful for your final paper. Be prepared to briefly discuss in class.
**WEEK 9, NOVEMBER 25: REASSESSING THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE**

Reading:  
Charles Mann, 1493, Ch. 10, “In Bulalacao.”

*** 3-page paper outline due by beginning of class. ***

**WEEK 10, DECEMBER 2: IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS**

No reading; work on final papers.

(Be prepared to briefly present your final paper topic in class on this day).

**WEEK 11, DECEMBER 9: OPTIONAL WRITING TUTORIAL**

Research paper (15 pages minimum) due on 5 pm, Monday, Dec. 16.