

# HIST 204

## Modern Global Environmental History

Time:  
Online & Meets Th 2:00-3:15 (CCC 321)

Dr. Jerry Jessee

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 -11:00 am (These will be in-person but you must email me to schedule an appointment.)

CCC 467

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### **Course Description:**

We live in a globalized era of profound environmental and social crisis.

Mass migrations of peoples fleeing poverty, economic exploitation, war, and ecological collapse; the warming of our planet from the burning of fossil fuels; a global population of 7.6 billion people, many of whom don't have access to a basic standard of living; toxic water and air; disease; vulnerable food systems; loss of ecological biodiversity and the onset of the Earth's sixth great extinction event; disease; rampant consumerism resulting in the overexploitation of

natural resources; rising economic inequality within and between nations; the specter of racial nationalism, ideological fundamentalism, and fascism: these are but a smattering of the challenges facing our world today. How are we to make sense of a world in the midst of such profound social and environmental change? And, more importantly, how are we going to build a future world that is environmentally resilient and, at the same time, equitable and just for everyone who lives here?

Human society has always faced environmental dilemmas, sometimes successfully and other times with disastrous consequence. What can we learn from this history? This course takes a historical perspective on the relationship between society and the environment on a global scale that asks:

*What can the past teach us about how to build a more environmentally sustainable and socially just world in the future?*

Everything we do in this class is designed to enable you to answer this essential question. To foster your engagement with this inquiry, this course is organized into four units, each of which contains specific learning objectives/questions and weekly topics organized as “modules.” Each weekly module has two components: online self-directed online learning (on Canvas) and a live, in-person course meeting (on Thursdays at 2). The modules run from Friday to Thursday (our meeting time). Each module will contain an introductory video by me introducing you to the objectives and activities for the module. Included also is a to do list, which I call “Week X At a Glance” and outlines everything you need to accomplish. You must proceed stepwise through these activities. All module assignments and readings must be completed by our Thursday meeting. Thursday meetings are designed as a culminating experience for that week’s module. During these times, we will engage in reading discussions, debates, and lecture—all of which are designed to further your engagement with the essential question for this course.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

**Essential Question:** What can the past teach us about how to build a more environmentally sustainable and socially just world in the future?

**Enduring Understanding:** Individual human action is not enough to ensure environmental sustainability; only by collectively reorganizing our global society, politics, economy, and beliefs can we create a more environmentally sustainable and socially just world.

#### **Course Objectives:**

This course fulfills the Historical Perspectives (HP) and Environmental Responsibility (ER) categories of UWSP’s General Education Program. The learning outcomes below address these categories and are designed to give you the necessary historical skills and content to answer the essential question for this course.

Any engaged student who works assiduously in this course will be able to:

- 1) *Analyze* institutional and cultural changes in various human societies and their effect on the environment through time.
- 2) *Analyze* the historical factors that influence environmental sustainability and uneven access to natural resources and wealth.
- 3) *Describe* differences among interpretations about the relationship between society and the environment in the past.
- 4) *Analyze* primary sources to answer questions about the changing relationship between society and the environment in the past.
- 5) *Evaluate* competing motivations and claims that inform environmental debates.

**Required Reading:**

*Texts:*

Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, Harper Collins, 2015. Available for text rental at the UWSP Bookstore.

Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of a Fish that Changed the World*, Penguin Books, 1997. Available for text rental at the UWSP Bookstore.

JR McNeill and Peter Engelke, *The Great Acceleration: An Environmental History of the Anthropocene since 1945*, Belknap Press, 2014. Available for text rental at the UWSP Bookstore.

*Articles on Canvas:* In addition to the books above, you will also be required read articles, which will be available in Canvas.

**Schedule Overview:**

<p><b>Unit 1: Deep Views</b>  <b>100,000 to 8,000 (Before Present)</b>          Essential Questions:          What makes us human?          Have humans ever lived in “balance” with the environment?</p>
Week 1 Course Introduction
Week 2 Humans and the Environment
Week 3 Subsistence Societies
Week 4 Agricultural Revolution
<p><b>Unit 2: The Origins of Modernity</b>  <b>1500 to 1800 Common Era</b>          Essential Questions:          What does it mean to be “modern”?          How has modernity shaped the relationship between human societies and the environment?</p>

Week 5 Empire-building and the Columbian Exchange
Week 6 Market Commodities, Science, and Capitalism
Week 7 Factory Production and Industrialism
Week 8 Cod Fishing and Environmental Sustainability
<b>Unit 3: Environmentalism(s)</b> <b>1850 to Present</b> Essential Questions: What prompts people to become concerned about the environment? How have people dealt with environmental change?
Week 9 Environmentalism of the Rich: Conservation and Preservation
Week 10 Environmentalism of the Poor: Environmental Justice
Week 11 Africa and Environmental Justice
<b>Unit 4: The Great Acceleration</b> <b>1945 to Present</b> Essential Questions: Why is global environmental change accelerating? What does history have to tell us about how to move forward?
Week 12 The Great Acceleration and the Cold War
Week 13 Overpopulation
Week 14 Climate Change
Week 15 Moving Forward by Thinking about the Past
<b>Final: Wednesday, December 15, 10:15-12:15</b>

### Assignments:

*Quizzes:* Weekly modules will frequently contain reading quizzes. The quizzes will require you to submit a short answer to the prompt I have provided. Details on the quizzes will be given when you take the quiz using the quiz tool in Canvas.

*Assignments:* Weekly modules will frequently contain various written assignments and collaborative group work. Additionally, writing may be assigned (individual and group) during our class meetings. These assignments are designed to get you to engage with the learning objectives and questions for the module and/or unit.

*Midterm Exam:* There will be a midterm exam in week 9. The exam will likely include multiple choice, short answer and an essay prompt.

*Final Exam:* Same format as the midterm.

### Grades (weighted):

Quizzes: 25%  
Assignments: 25%  
Midterm Exam: 25%  
Final Exam: 25%  
Total: 100%

**Grading Scale (percentage):**

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	60-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	F	59 and below
B	83-86	C-	70-72		

**Other Stuff:**

**Mask Mandate: Students must wear a mask in this class at all times.** The mask must cover both mouth and nose. This is an order from the chancellor as of August 9<sup>th</sup>: “All students, employees and visitors to any UW-Stevens Point campus or facility will be required to wear face coverings when inside campus buildings and enclosed spaces with others outside of your household (e.g., in a UWSP vehicle). This policy is in effect until further notice.”

**Attendance:** I will record attendance. Students who miss 3 classes will be docked a 1/3 of a grade from their final grade. Students who miss 4-5, 2/3rds of a grade, 6+ a full grade (and so on). For example, if you were to earn a B in this class, but missed 2 classes, your final grade would be a B-. I do not provide alternative options (online or otherwise) for students who miss classes for illness or other reasons to make up missed classwork. It is up to you to get up to speed on what you missed during your absence. I suggest that you grab notes from one of your peers and come see me during my office hours to discuss what you missed. If you miss an assignment for a class, you must make every effort to make up any missed assignments within a reasonable amount of time (a week sounds good). I will not accept missed assignments for excused absences weeks after their due date.

There is a seating chart for this course which you must adhere to.

**Absences and Missed Assignments:** Stuff happens. Sometimes life takes priority over school work. If something comes up and you need to miss a class or cannot turn in an assignment let me know immediately. I do not always grant extensions on assignments, but I do try to be flexible. It is imperative, therefore, that when incidents arise you do your diligent best to keep me informed. Students who miss a significant number of classes and come to me after the fact requesting accommodations will be denied. In other words, if you come to me in week 12 asking to make up assignments/classes/etc. for work missed in weeks 5-7, you will not be accommodated.

Related to absences: I find it incredibly rude for students to leave in the middle of class. If, for some legitimate reason, you need to leave class early, I would appreciate the common courtesy of letting me know before class begins. Students who leave class without permission will be docked attendance for that class.

**Electronics: All electronics must be turned off during class unless instructed to use them by me.** These include cell phones, laptops, and tablets. In some cases, laptop use may be

permitted if the student has an accommodation approved by the Disability Services Office (see below). **Please do not be surprised to hear me shout “turn off your cell phone” if I catch you peeking at it in class. Notes should be taken by hand on paper.**

*Late Work:* Stuff happens. Sometimes life takes priority over schoolwork. If something comes up and you need to miss a class or cannot turn in an assignment let me know immediately. I do not always grant extensions on assignments, but I do try to be flexible. It is imperative, therefore, that when incidents arise you do your diligent best to keep me informed. I cannot, in fairness to the class, accommodate a student for missed work and/or absences when I am notified toward the end of the semester.

*Early Finals/Midterms:* I do not allow students to take early/late exams except in extremely rare occasions (like you are going to have brain surgery on the scheduled exam day).

*Plagiarism:* For information on plagiarism, consult <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights>. See Chapter 14, ***Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures***. I will vigorously pursue all incidents of plagiarism. Also I use turnitin.com for the essays.

*Equal Educational Opportunities:* If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability and Assistive Technology Center (6<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Learning Resources Center) with your documentation as early as possible in the semester. They will then notify me, in a confidential memo, of the accommodations that will facilitate your success in the course. Voice: (715) 346-3365, TTY: (715) 346-3362, <http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm>.

*Writing/Reading Help:* This is a reading and writing intensive course. If you need help you can visit the Tutoring and Learning Center in the basement of the Library. They are there to help you with papers etc. This is totally free! Their webpage is <http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/Pages/writingReadingTutorials.aspx>. You can also call them to make an appointment at (715) 346-3568.

*Notice on Copyright of Course Material:* As the instructor, I retain all copyright on lectures, slides, assignments, and other course materials. I do not allow anybody to photograph, film, or otherwise record lectures without my express permission. I do not allow anybody to distribute course materials or otherwise send audio or visual recordings of lectures to people not currently enrolled in this class without my express permission. Posting course material that I have created onto course-sharing websites directly violates my copyright on my academic materials.

## **Online Stuff:**

### **Technology**

#### ***Protecting your Data and Privacy***

UW-System approved tools meet security, privacy, and data protection standards. For a list of approved tools, visit this website. <https://www.wisconsin.edu/dle/external-application-integration-requests/>

Tools not listed on the website linked above may not meet security, privacy, and data protection standards. If you have questions about tools, contact the UWSP IT Service Desk at 715-346-4357.

Here are steps you can take to protect your data and privacy.

- Use different usernames and passwords for each service you use
- Do not use your UWSP username and password for any other services
- Use secure versions of websites whenever possible (HTTPS instead of HTTP)
- Have updated antivirus software installed on your devices

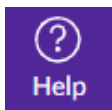
### ***Course Technology Requirements***

- View this website to see [minimum recommended computer and internet configurations for Canvas](#).
- You will also need access to the following tools to participate in this course.
  - webcam
  - microphone
  - printer
  - a stable internet connection (don't rely on cellular)

### ***UWSP Technology Support***

- Visit with a [Student Technology Tutor](#)
- Seek assistance from the [IT Service Desk](#) (Formerly HELP Desk)
  - IT Service Desk Phone: 715-346-4357 (HELP)
  - IT Service Desk Email: [techhelp@uwsp.edu](mailto:techhelp@uwsp.edu)

### ***Canvas Support***



Click on the  button in the global (left) navigation menu and note the

options that appear:

Support Options	Explanations
<a href="#">Ask Your Instructor a Question</a> Submit a question to your instructor	Use <b>Ask Your Instructor a Question</b> sparingly; technical questions are best reserved for Canvas personnel and help as detailed below.

<p><b>Chat with Canvas Support (Student)</b> Live Chat with Canvas Support 24x7!</p>	<p><b>Chatting with Canvas Support (Student)</b> will initiate a <i>text chat</i> with Canvas support. Response can be qualified with severity level.</p>
<p><b>Contact Canvas Support via email</b> Canvas support will email a response</p>	<p><b>Contacting Canvas Support via email</b> will allow you to explain in detail or even upload a screenshot to show your particular difficulty.</p>
<p><b>Contact Canvas Support via phone</b> Find the phone number for your institution</p>	<p>Calling the Canvas number will let Canvas know that you're from UWSP; phone option is available 24/7.</p>
<p><b>Search the Canvas Guides</b> Find answers to common questions</p>	<p><b>Searching the <a href="#">Canvas guides</a></b> connects you to documents that are searchable by issue. You may also opt for <a href="#">Canvas video guides</a>.</p>
<p><b>Submit a Feature Idea</b> Have an idea to improve Canvas?</p>	<p>If you have an idea for Canvas that might make instructions or navigation easier, feel free to offer your thoughts through this <b>Submit a Feature Idea</b> avenue.</p>

*All options are available 24/7; however, if you opt to email your instructor, s/he may not be available immediately.*

Self-train on Canvas through the [Self-enrolling/paced Canvas training course](#)

**\*Note: I reserve the right to alter this syllabus for any reason.**



