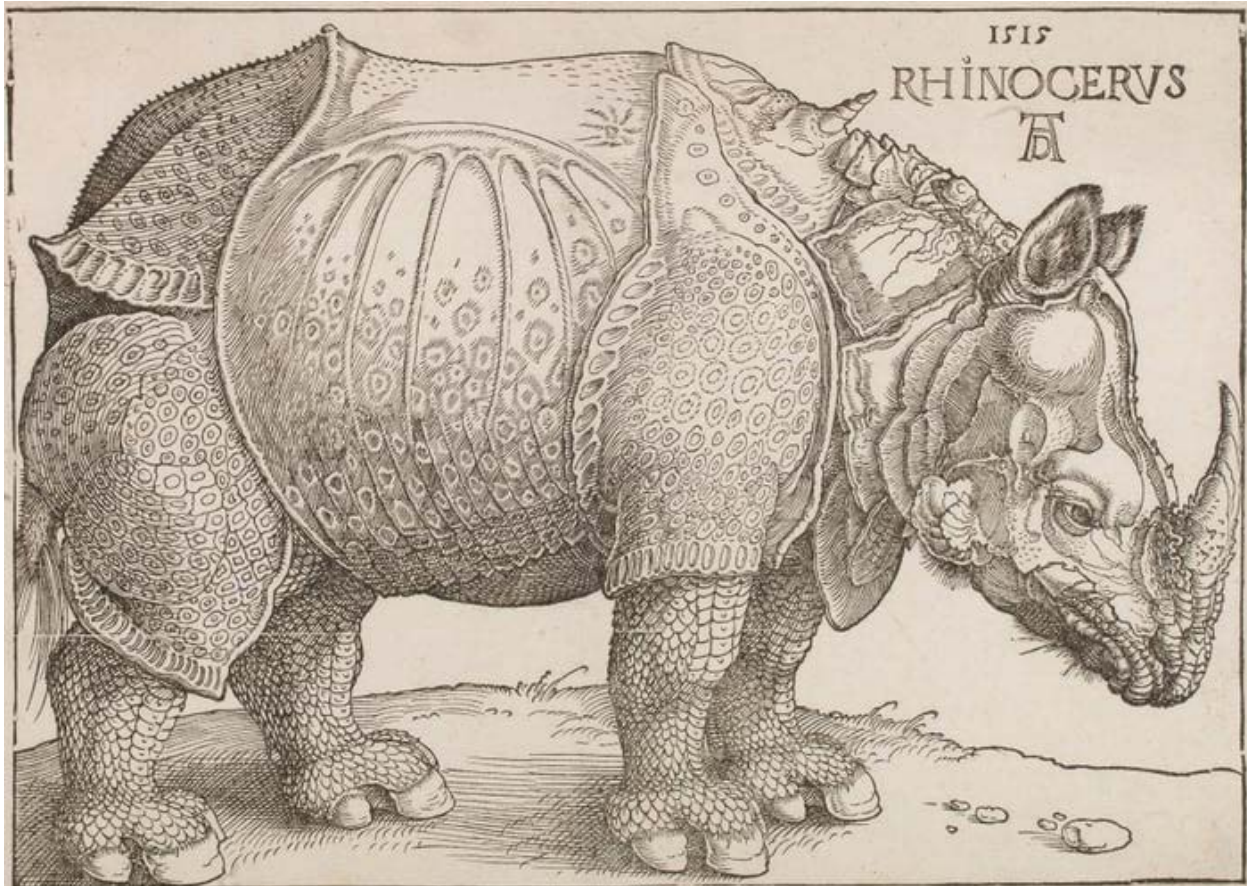


# HISTORY 207: GLOBAL NATURAL HISTORIES

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Location/Time  
Monday & Wednesday  
3:30-4:45  
CCC 303



*Albrecht Durer's Rhinoceros (1515)*

## **Course Description:**

Today, we tend to associate natural science and scientists with laboratories, sophisticated instruments, and lab coats. But before there was “science,” the primary means by which people created a formalized knowledge of the natural world was through “natural history”—the observational study of natural objects like animals, plants, and minerals situated within their environmental milieu. This course explores the ways in which the enterprise of natural history from the Ancient times to today has critically shaped the human history of the world. By putting natural history in its historical context in this way, you will gain a firmer

understanding of science as a cultural activity and appreciate how it has molded the ways in which societies have come to think about the natural world, their place in it, and their obligation to protect it.

Our method for investigating the interplay between natural and human history will be through in-depth whole-class discussions, reading and analytical workshops, and lecture discussions.

### Learning Objectives:

**Enduring Understanding:** Natural history and human history are intricately interconnected cultural endeavors.

#### Course Learning Outcomes:

Students who diligently complete this course in good faith will be able to:

- 1) *Analyze* through primary and secondary sources how the practices and ideas of *natural* history have shaped the *human* history of the world.
- 2) *Analyze* different interpretations of natural history and its role in understanding the past.
- 3) *Analyze* how natural history has informed holistic environmental thinking and political movements to protect the natural world.
- 4) *Analyze* how historical perspective on science provides a broader understanding of science in contemporary society.

### Required Reading:

#### Books

Paul Farber, *Finding Order in Nature: The Naturalist Tradition from Linnaeus to E.O. Wilson*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Available for text rental at the UWSP Bookstore.

Patricia Fara, *Sex, Botany, and Empire: The Story of Carl Linnaeus and Joseph Banks*, Columbia University Press, 2003. Available for text rental at the UWSP Bookstore.

Juan Pimentel, *The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium: An Essay in Natural History*, Harvard University Press, 2017. Available for text rental at the UWSP Bookstore.

Andrea Wulf, *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World*, Vintage, Reprint Edition, 2016. Available for purchase at the UWSP Bookstore or online.

#### Optional Books



Peter Matthiessen, *The Snow Leopard*, Penguin Books, 1978. I will be offering this book as an extra credit assignment. Available for purchase at the UWSP Bookstore or online.

*Articles on Desire2Learn (D2L):* In addition to the books above, you will also be required read articles and bring them to class to discuss. These will be available on D2L. They are noted in the schedule below with an asterisk (\*).

**You must read and bring these readings to class on the days we discuss them.** Students who regularly fail to bring their readings to class for discussion will be docked attendance.

A really important note about the reading materials in this course: You have one of two choices for accessing the readings in this course: You can 1) print out the articles in hard copy and physically purchase the books, or 2) obtain and read electronic versions of the articles and books. If you choose option number 2 there are caveats. First, the only electronic devices permissible for the readings are laptops or ipad-type readers. No cell phones! I am strict of this. Second, you must bring your device with you on the day that we discuss those readings. This is the price you pay for going electronic. Understand? Good.



Abraham Ortelius's Iceland Map (1591)

## Assignments:

*Midterm Exam:* There will be a midterm exam. I will provide a study guide.

*Final Exam:* The final will be in the same format as the midterm and will be cumulative.

*Quizzes:* There will be a series of quizzes on lecture and readings throughout the semester. The format will be short-answer. There will be a quiz for each day we discuss a book. Questions for the book quizzes will be drawn from the reading guides that I hand out for each book. **You cannot make up quizzes unless your absence has been excused.** I will enable D2L to drop your lowest quiz grade in case you have to miss a class in which a quiz is given. Because this is a large class, I will not be returning your quizzes back to you. For the first couple quizzes I will provide feedback on how the class is performing, expectations on answers, etc. If you would like more substantial and individual feedback on your personal performance, you are encouraged to see me during my office hours or make an appointment with me.

*In-Class Activities and Assignments:* We will be engaging in various writing and group exercises throughout the semester. I will be collecting the products of these exercises and giving you credit for them on D2L. They will not be heavily graded or returned to you. Instead, I will be evaluating them on the + √ - system. These marks will be recorded in D2L as 3-2-1 respectively. If you complete the work and put forth good effort, you will receive a +. Varying degrees of completeness or effort will result in either a √ or a -. You will be in serious danger of **not** passing this class if you do not complete these assignments. See scale below.

*Making History through Natural Objects Project:* You will select an object of natural history (e.g. taxidermized animal, plant, map, scientific instrument, drawing, book, etc.) and write a 3-4 page history describing how your object contributes to an understanding of human history. The project has three different components, each with its own due date during the semester: 1) an object proposal; 2) an annotated bibliography of sources revealing the historical context and significance of the object; 3) the final essay, which will include an image(s) of your object and an analysis of its historical significance. We will have a workshop on the project on week 6.

\* Late assignments will be docked a third of a grade for every day late.

\*\* Attendance policy: See below.

## Grades (Weighted)

Midterm: 20 %

Final Exam: 20 %

Quizzes: 20%



In-Class Activities and Assignments: 20%  
Making History through Natural History Project: 20%  
Total: 100%



*Charles Darwin and Monkey with Mirror, The London Sketchbook (1874)*

paper.

**Other Stuff:**

*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 3 classes, your final grade would be a B-. Absences will be unexcused except in extraordinary circumstances, which will require a note from an authority explaining the absence. If you miss an assignment for a class in which you have an excused absence, you must make every effort to make up any missed assignments within a reasonable amount of time.

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



*Breadfruit Scientific Drawing.*

*Late Work:* 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.

*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 materials.

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

**Schedule:**

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments/Notes
1	Course Introduction		
<b>Unit 1: Recognizing Nature: Natural Philosophy</b>			
2	What is natural history and does the science of natural history have a human history?	Farber, <i>Finding Order in Nature</i> , Introduction.  * Schiebinger, "Gender and Natural History."  * Browne, "Natural History" from <i>The Oxford Companion to The History of Modern Science</i> .	
	Aristotle's Natural Philosophy and Ptolemaic Cartography	* Primary Source: Plato, 'Allegory of the Cave' from <i>The Republic</i> .	
3	Pliny's <i>Natural History</i> to the Medieval World		
	<b>Unit 2: Ordering Nature: The Birth of Natural History</b>		
	Renaissance Natural History: The Rhino	Pimentel, <i>The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium</i> , "Prologue" & chs. 1-2.	
4	Exploration, Cabinets of Curiosity, Printing	Pimentel, <i>The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium</i> , ch. 3	
	Linnaeus and His "Natural" System	Fara, <i>Sex, Botany, &amp; Empire</i> , chs. 1-2.  Optional: Farber, <i>Finding Order in Nature</i> , ch. 1.	
5	Cook Voyages: Exploration and Mapping	Fara, <i>Sex, Botany, &amp; Empire</i> , ch. 4.	

	Botany and Empire: Joseph Banks	Fara, <i>Sex, Botany, &amp; Empire</i> , chs. 3 & 6.	
6	Comparative Anatomy	Pimentel, <i>The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium</i> , chs. 4 & 5.  Optional: Farber, <i>Finding Order in Nature</i> , chapter 3. (This is really good background history to help you understand the debates about the Megatherium).	
	Workshop: Making History through the Objects of Natural History	* "Introduction" and "Natural History" from Ulrich, et al., <i>Tangible Things</i> .  * re-read section on Albrecht Durer's Rhino print from Pimentel, <i>The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium</i> .	
<b>Unit 3: Interconnecting Nature: Humboldtian Science</b>			
7	Humboldt, Chimborazo, and the Geography of Plants	Wulf, <i>The Invention of Nature</i> , "Prologue," & chs. 1; 3-7; 10 (skim chs. 8-9).	
	Humboldt's Iso-Maps, Global Knowledge, and Environmental Control	Wulf, <i>The Invention of Nature</i> , chs. 13-14; 16 (skim chs 11-12; 15).	
8	Humboldt's Cosmos	Wulf, <i>The Invention of Nature</i> , ch. 18.	
	UWSP Natural History Museum Tour	* Ashby, "Four Ways Natural History Museums Skew Reality." * Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing" from <i>Exhibiting Cultures</i> .	We are going to meet at the UWSP Natural History Museum, first floor of the University Library.  <b>Making History through Objects of Natural History proposal due.</b>



9	Workshop: Interpreting the History of Natural History	Bring all of the readings we've discussed so far. You are going to be using them extensively.	
	<b>Midterm</b>		
<b>Unit 4: Evolving Nature: The Darwinian Revolution and Modern Biology</b>			
10	Darwin and the Voyage of the Beagle	Pimentel, <i>The Rhinoceros and the Megatherium</i> , ch. 6.  Optional: Farber, <i>Finding Order in Nature</i> , chapter 4.  Optional: Wulf, <i>The Invention of Nature</i> , ch. 17.	
	The Origin of Species	Farber, <i>Finding Order in Nature</i> , chapter 5.  * Optional: Primary Source: Darwin, "Recapitulation and Conclusion" from <i>On the Origin of Species</i> .	
11	Evolution and the Natural History of Humanity	* Primary source: Selections from Darwin's <i>The Decent of Man</i> and Huxley's <i>Man's Place in Nature</i> & "Evolution and Ethics."	
	Natural History of "Race:" Antiquities, Archeology, and the Hierarchies of Human Societies	* Primary source: Spencer, "The Principle of Society."	<b>Making History through Objects of Natural History annotated bibliography due.</b>
12	The Experimental Method and the History of Ecology	Farber, <i>Finding Order in Nature</i> , chapter 6 & 8.  Optional: Wulf, <i>The Invention of Nature</i> , ch. 22.	

	Radioecology	* Odum, "Ecology and the Atomic Age."	
<b>Unit 5: Saving Nature: Natural History and Nature Protection</b>			
13	Conservation Movement	<p>* Dowie, "Conservation Refugees."</p> <p>* Optional: Beinart and Hughes, "National Parks and the Growth of Tourism." (This is good background reading on the topic.)</p> <p>Optional: Wulf, <i>The Invention of Nature</i>, ch. 23.</p>	
	Natural History in Person and Film	<p>Farber, <i>Finding Order in Nature</i>, ch. 7.</p> <p>* Primary Source: Osborne, "The Opening of the African Plains."</p> <p>*Read the article from "Wild Things: The Blog of the Wildlife Conservation Society Archives." URL Link: <a href="http://www.wcsarchivesblog.org/the-african-plains-a-new-vista-to-the-wonders-of-nature/">http://www.wcsarchivesblog.org/the-african-plains-a-new-vista-to-the-wonders-of-nature/</a></p>	
14	Film: Grizzly Man		
	Discussion: Grizzly Man		
15	EO Wilson, Biodiversity, and The Sixth Extinction	<p>Farber, <i>Finding Order in Nature</i>, chapter 9.</p> <p>* Quammen, "Planet of Weeds."</p>	
	Workshop: Human History as Natural History in the Anthropocene		<b>Making History through Objects of Natural History final essay due</b>
<b>Final: Tuesday, December 18, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.</b>			