An advanced undergraduate history course, History 3280 examines interactions between humans cultures and natural systems in western civilization from the retreat of the Pleistocene ice cap from Europe up to introduction of a social metabolism based on energy from fossil fuels. It is, therefore, a course in environmental history, an approach which treats the natural world and humans as participating together in the story of the planet.

History 3280 meets twice a week, first for a 2-hour lecture on the week’s theme, then two days later for a 1-hour opportunity to discuss the lecture and assigned readings. After the first week of class students are expected to have studied most of the week’s reading assignment before the Tuesday lecture and to have completed it by the Thursday class session. The course begins with a brief introduction to ecological and historical concepts essential to the field and subsequent topics follow a roughly chronological and thematic sequence. The principal weight of coverage (6 of 12 weeks) is on the period between roughly 900 and 1600, preceded by work on classical antiquity and followed by study of changes toward modernity.

Readings
All readings shown in the syllabus are assigned as required.

Orders for the following items have been placed with the York University Bookstore.


Course Kit History 3280 (2009-2010 winter)

Thirteen (13) items are available on line or as eJournals or Ebooks through York University Libraries.

Weekly assigned readings range from 167 to 58 pages and average 130 pages. Students are also expected each week to go out and find for themselves additional relevant scholarly reading materials of interest (see assignments and evaluation below).
Assignments and Evaluation

20% Book review: An essay of 400-600 words describing and analyzing an entire scholarly book relevant to the subject of the course (but not assigned readings), to be submitted any time between the fifth and ninth week of class (i.e. 4 February through 11 March). [See separate guidelines on book reviews to be distributed]

40% Reading log: A cumulative reading journal comprising a dated paragraph of reaction and assessment on each of ten (10) substantial (≥ 15 pages) items from assigned readings and on each of ten (10) substantial outside items, with at least one entry compiled each week, followed by a page or two of concluding reflection on the entire reading experience. Due after the end of the course (7 April 2010). [See separate guidelines on reading logs to be distributed]

A interim edition of the reading log containing 3 entries only is due in class on Thursday 28 January 2010. This will be marked and graded for a provisional 10% of the course mark. The interim edition may subsequently be revised before it becomes part of the final edition. If the final edition receives a higher mark, that higher mark supersedes the provisional grade.

40% Final examination on topics covered in lectures and assigned readings at a date, time, and place to be set by the Registrar’s office. The examination will consist of each student’s choices from several exam essay questions taken from a set of study questions to be distributed at the final class meeting on 1 April 2010.

Marking Standards and Definition of grades

Grades in History 3280 are those common to undergraduate faculties at York University. Letter grades are official and definitive; percentages serve only to combine and average several graded elements in a single course or assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>exceptional (beyond factors 1-6) 90-100</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>excellent (factors 1-6) 80-89</td>
<td>55-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>very good (factors 1-5) 75-79</td>
<td>50-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>good (factors 1-5) 70-74</td>
<td>40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>competent (factors 1-4) 65-69</td>
<td>&lt;40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>fairly competent (factors 1-4) 60-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>passing (factors 1-3) 55-59</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>barely passing (factors 1-2) 50-54</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>marginally failing</td>
<td>40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>failing</td>
<td>&lt;40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors to be considered in evaluating student performance:

Group I: Criteria to be satisfied for work to be rated C+ (competent)

1) Understanding the assignment
2) Organization of material (exhibiting a sense of the relative importance of data, observations, criticisms, etc., and avoiding irrelevancies)
3) Articulate expression (saying what one means)
4) Presenting a case (making a point rather than just writing descriptively)

Group II: Additional criteria which should be satisfied to warrant a grade of B (good) or higher

5) Superior grasp of concepts essential to the topic or discipline.
6) Superior grasp of the methodology required to think systematically.
ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students in History 3280 are expected to know and observe the standards of Academic Honesty normal to intellectual activity in general and York University in particular. Violations of the York Senate Policy on Academic Honesty will be treated severely. Recent penalties have included failure in the course, suspension from the University, and withholding or rescinding a York degree, diploma, or certificate. Cheating during in-class or take-home examinations, collaborating on written assignments [except with the explicit advance permission of the responsible instructor], failing to use quotation marks and citations when using or paraphrasing the printed or electronically-transmitted work of others, submitting work purchased from or written by someone else, reproducing work submitted in another course, aiding or abetting academic misconduct, and violating any other part of the Policy on Academic Honesty will result in penalties. For further information, see http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm.

Put most simply and personally, take responsibility for your own work and present no one else’s words or ideas as your own.

University Regulations set Important Dates for Students to Observe:
First day of winter term classes: 4 January 2010
The last date you can enroll in this course without the permission of the Course Director is 19 January
enroll in this course with the permission of the Course Director is 3 February
drop a winter term half course without receiving a grade is 8 March 2010
submit term work for grading is 7 April 2010
## WEEKLY CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND READINGS

### Week 1
**Jan 5 / 7 Course Introduction**
- Hughes, *What is Environmental History?*

### Week 2
**Jan 12 / 14 The Holocene**

### Week 3
**Jan 19 / 21 Europe in Classical Mediterranean Civilization**
- Hughes, *Pan's Travail*, chapters 1-4 and 8.

### Week 4
**Jan 26 / 28 The Sustainability of Classical Civilization**
- Hughes, *Pan's Travail*, chapters 5-7 and 9-11.

**Interim edition of reading log is due in class or by 4pm in 2160 Vari Hall for a provisional 10% of the course grade** (see p. 2 above)

### Week 5
**Feb 2 / 4 Barbarian Europe and Environmental Change in Late Antiquity (ca.400-900)**
- Cheyette, Frederic L. “The disappearance of the ancient landscape and the climatic anomaly of the early Middle Ages: a question to be pursued,” *Early Medieval Europe*, 16 (2008), 127-165.

**Feb 4 Book Review assignment may be submitted** for 20% of course grade (see p. 2 above)

### Week 6
**Feb 9 / 11 Humankind and God’s Creation in Medieval Minds**
- White, L. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" pp. 75-94 in his *Dynamo and Virgin*
Week 7  

Feb 23 / 25 Medieval Land Use and the Formation of Traditional European Landscapes

Week 8  

Mar 2 / 4 Medieval Use, Management, and Sustainability of Local Ecosystems, 1: Primary Biological Production Sectors.


Coates, Nature, 46-48 [woods]


EITHER

OR

Week 9 Mar 9 / 11 Medieval Use, Management, and Sustainability of Local Ecosystems, 2: Interactions with the Non-Living Environment


March 11 is the last chance to turn in the Book Review for 20% of the course grade (see p. 2 above)
Week 10  Mar 16 / 18  Nature is a Player: Pathogenic Disease and Changing Climate in Medieval and Early Modern Europe

Week 11  Mar 23 / 25  The Columbian Exchange in context of cultural and material change in Europe
Coates, Nature, chapters 4-6 (pp. 67-119)
Schlesinger, Roger.  In the Wake of Columbus: The Impact of the New World on Europe, 1492-1650, 92-121.  2d ed. rev.  Wheeling, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 2007

Week 12  Mar 30  The Great Transition: Industrialization in Ecological Perspective

April 1  Course Conclusion
Distribution of study questions for final examination

April 7 (Wednesday)  Reading Log due in 2160 Vari Hall by 4pm for 40% of course grade.
NO EXTENSIONS.  (Final deadline for submission of term work in the Faculty.)

TBA  Course final examination [40% of course grade]