

HOS/HIS 599A

Fall 2022

Special Topics in the History of Science, Technology, & Medicine

Collecting Natures

Professor Erika Lorraine Milam

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seminar: Thurs, 9:00am-noon in **Dickinson 230**

office hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00 pm



Log on the Towpath, encrusted with lichen and moss.

This seminar explores the changing intellectual grounds on which ideas about natural environments were forged, from the 18th century to the present day. The readings interweave accounts of how some places were deemed “natural” and came to be objects of scientific study and political concern together with attention to landscapes as places of refuge and a basis for social transformation. Throughout the course we will explore the objects of our analysis as dynamic processes unfolding in historical time—after all, the meanings cultures invest in ideas like nature, global, or landscape are far from stable or singular. The aim of the seminar, then, is to introduce a series of conceptual tools for analyzing these meanings, across a range of times and places.

ASSIGNMENTS

Over the course of the semester, you will be assessed in three ways:

- (a) **Midterm:** an essay review of 3 books (~3,000 words), due *before* Fall Break – 20%
- (b) **Final Paper:** on a topic of your choosing, a research paper or historiographic essay (~10,000 to 12,000 words), due on Dean’s Date – 50%
- (c) **Participation:** Attendance and engaged participation in our seminar discussions; and, at the end of the semester, a ten-minute presentation of your paper/essay for a mini-symposium with other members of the seminar – 30%

COURSE READINGS

When reading, prioritize the **starred book for the week. For the second book, I encourage you to skim / read a selection of chapters that sound interesting / otherwise get a handle on the argument, evidence, and structure without diving in too deeply. *Further Readings* are books that continue the conversation of the week in case you want to follow up for an essay review or as part of a historiographic paper.

Week 1 – Nostalgia – September 8

Laura **Martin, *Wild by Design: The Rise of Ecological Restoration* (Harvard University Press, 2022). **Davis Center: September 9**

Elizabeth Hennessy, *On the Backs of Tortoises: Darwin, the Galapagos, and the Fate of an Evolutionary Eden* (Yale University Press, 2019).

Further Reading

Mark Barrow, *Nature's Ghosts: Confronting Extinction from the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Ecology* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

Dolly Jørgensen, *Recovering Lost Species in the Modern Age: Histories of Longing and Belonging* (MIT Press, 2019).

Thom van Dooren, *Flight Ways* (Columbia University Press, 2014).

Nicole Seymour, *Bad Environmentalism: Irony and Irreverence in the Ecological Age* (University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

Rebeca Woods, *The Herds Shot Round the World: Native Breeds and the British Empire, 1800-1900* (UNC Press, 2017).

Week 2 – Experience – September 15

Lydia **Barnett, *After the Flood: Imagining the Global Environment in Early Modern Europe* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019). **Davis Center: March 10**

Greta LaFleur, *The Natural History of Sexuality in Early America* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).

Further reading

Joyce **Chaplin**, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science at the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676* (Harvard University Press, 2003). **Davis Center: February 17**

Pablo Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (UNC Press, 2017).

Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (UBC Press, 2010).

Mark Stoll, *Inherit the Holy Mountain: Religion and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Week 3 – Museum – September 22

**James Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum* (Harvard University Press, 2017).

Bénédicte Savoy, *Africa's Struggle for Its Art: History of a Postcolonial Defeat* (Princeton University Press, 2022).

Further Reading

Alice Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950* (Cornell University Press, 2013).

Steven Lubar, *Inside the Lost Museum: Curating, Past and Present* (Harvard University Press, 2017).

H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (UNC Press, 2002).

Samuel Redman, *Prophets and Ghosts: The Story of Salvage Anthropology* (Harvard University Press, 2021).

Week 4 – Archive – September 29

**Pratik Chakrabarti, *Inscriptions of Nature: Geology and the Naturalization of Antiquity* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).

Gregg **Mitman**, *Empire of Rubber: Firestone's Scramble for Land and Power in Liberia* (New Press, 2021). **Stone Lectures: April 18, 19, & 20**

Further Reading

Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment* (University of Chicago Press, 2012).

Lorraine Daston, ed. *Science in the Archives: Pasts, Presents, Futures* (University of Chicago Press, 2017).

Cathy Gere, *Knossos and the Prophets of Modernism* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Alicia Puglionesi, *In Whose Ruins: Power, Possession, and the Landscapes of American Empire* (Scribner, 2022).

Week 5 – TechnoPolitics – October 6

Gabrielle **Hecht, *Being Nuclear: Africans & the Global Uranium Trade* (MIT Press, 2014). **Davis Center: October 7**

Noémi Tousignant, *Edges of Exposure: Toxicology and the Problem of Capacity in Postcolonial Senegal* (Duke University Press, 2018).

Further Reading

Kate Brown, *Plutopia* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism* (Duke University Press, 2021).

Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

Brett Walker, *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan* (University of Washington Press, 2010).

Dorceta Taylor, *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility* (NYU Press, 2014).

Week 6 – Biodiversity – October 13

**Megan Raby, *American Tropics: The Caribbean Roots of Biodiversity Science* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

Nancy **Jacobs**, *Birders of Africa: History of a Network* (Yale University Press, 2016).

Davis Center: March 3

Further Reading

Helen Curry, *Endangered Maize: Industrial Agriculture and the Crisis of Extinction* (University of California Press, 2022).

David Sepkoski, *Catastrophic Thinking: Extinction and the Value of Diversity from Darwin to the Anthropocene* (University of Chicago Press, 2020).

Jeannie Shinozuka, *Biotic Borders: Transpacific Plant and Insect Migration and the Rise of Anti-Asian Racism in America, 1890-1950* (University of Chicago Press, 2022).

Emily Wanderer, *The Life of a Pest: An Ethnography of Biological Invasion in Mexico* (University of California Press, 2020).

FALL BREAK

Week 7 – Variation – October 27

**Banu Subramaniam, *Ghost Stories for Darwin: The Science of Variation and the Politics of Diversity* (University of Illinois Press, 2014).

Warwick Anderson, *The Collectors of Lost Souls: Turning Kuru Scientists into Whitemen* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

Further Reading

Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nation in the World of Modern Science* (Routledge, 1989).

Sarah Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Harvard University Press, 2007).

Nancy Langston, *Climate Ghosts: Migratory Species in the Anthropocene* (Brandeis University Press, 2021).

Deagan Miller, *This Radical Land: A Natural History of American Dissent* (University of Chicago Press, 2018).

Karin Roseblatt, *The Science and Politics of Race in Mexico and the United States, 1910-1950* (UNC Press, 2018).

Week 8 – Water – November 3 + Alexis Rockman: Shipwrecks (Art@Bainbridge)

- **Stephan Helmreich, *Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas* (University of California Press, 2009).
Bathsheba Demuth, *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait* (Norton, 2019).
Davis Center: February 3

Further Reading

- David Biggs, *Quagmire: Nature and Nation-Building in the Mekong Delta* (University of Washington Press, 2010).
Sarah Stewart Johnson, *Sirens of Mars: Searching for Life on Another World* (Penguin Random House, 2020).
Melody Jue, *Wild Blue Media: Thinking through Seawater* (Duke University Press, 2020).
Sarah Pritchard, *Confluence: The Nature of Technology and the Remaking of the Rhône* (Harvard University Press, 2011).

Week 9 – Exhibition – November 10 + discussion with curator Karl Kusserow about art, ecocriticism, & Alexis Rockman

- **Sadiya Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in 19th century Britain* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).
Rachel Poliquin, *The Breathless Zoo: Taxidermy and the Cultures of Longing* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013).

Further Reading

- Anna Arabindan-Kesson, *Black Bodies, White Gold* (Duke University Press, 2021).
Finis Dunaway, *Natural Visions: The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform* (University of Chicago Press, 2008).
Fabiola López-Durán, *Eugenics in the Garden: Transatlantic Architecture and the Crafts of Modernity* (University of Texas Press, 2018).
Krista Thompson, *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque* (Duke University Press, 2006).

Week 10 – Genetics – November 17

- **Joanna Radin, *Life on Ice: A History of New Uses for Cold Blood* (University of Chicago Press, 2017).
Kim TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

Further Reading

- Jenny Bangham, *Blood Relations: Transfusion and the Making of Human Genetics* (University of Chicago Press, 2020).
Alondra Nelson, *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation After the Genome* (Beacon Press, 2016).

- Theodore Porter, *Genetics in the Madhouse: The Unknown History of Human Heredity* (Princeton University Press, 2018).
- Sarah Richardson, *Sex Itself: The Search for Male and Female in the Human Genome* (University of Chicago Press, 2013).
- Bruno Strasser, *Collecting Experiments: Making Big Data Biology* (University of Chicago Press, 2019).

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 11 – Space – December 1

- **William Rankin, *After the Map: Cartography, Navigation, and the Transformation of Territory in the Twentieth Century* (University of Chicago Press, 2018).
- Lisa Messeri, *Placing Outer Space: An Earthly Ethnography of Other Worlds* (Duke University Press, 2016).

Further Reading

- Deborah Coen, *Climate in Motion: Science, Empire, and the Problem of Scale* (University of Chicago Press, 2018).
- Paul Edwards, *A Vast Machine: Computer Models, Climate Data, and the Politics of Global Warming* (MIT Press, 2010).
- Kären Wigen and Caroline Winterer, eds. *Time in Maps: From the Age of Discovery to Our Digital Era* (Princeton University Press, 2020).
- Rasmus Grønfeldt Winther, *When Maps Become the World* (University of Chicago Press, 2020).

Week 12 – Wonder – December 8

- **Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature: 1150-1750* (Zone Press, 2001).
- Tulasi Srinivas, *The Cow in the Elevator: An Anthropology of Wonder* (Duke University Press, 2018).

Further Reading

- Gregg Mitman, Marco Armiero, and Robert S. Emmett, eds. *Future Remains: A Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene* (University of Chicago Press, 2017).
- Jessica Riskin, *The Restless Clock: A Centuries-Long Argument Over What Makes Living Things Tick* (University of Chicago Press, 2018).
- Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).
- Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (University of California Press, 2000).

Mini-Symposium – Date to be determined