

Prof. Stuart Hilwig

Autumn 2012

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Class meetings: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45

Location: 312 McDaniel Hall

HIST 379 Seminar in Biological History

Also called Environmental History, this course will explore the role of non-human actors in world history. Plants, animals, and micro-organisms have played a huge and often undocumented role in the course of many major historical events. Along with an analysis of the role of non-human organisms in history, this course will also utilize biological concepts such as micro and macro parasitism to understand human interactions in a new and novel fashion. Some of the topics to be studied in this course are: the spread of the Bubonic Plague, syphilis, the Columbian Exchange, the Old World's biological conquest of the New World and Oceania, and newer developments including the oil crisis of the 1970s and the effects of global warming on various species around the globe.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will recognize the importance of non-human species in selected historical events by reading key works in the field of biological history.
2. Students will improve critical reading and comprehension skills by formulating short written responses to weekly bluebook quizzes based on the course readings.
3. Students will apply this knowledge and have an opportunity to formulate an original thesis on the seminar topic by writing a research paper. The research for this paper will be drawn primarily from secondary sources.

Course Readings:

Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2005).

William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (Anchor Publishing, 1998).

Course Schedule

BBQ="Blue Book Quiz"

Week 1: August 21 & 23

Introductions
What is Biological History?

Week 2: August 28 & 30

How has geography shaped human history?
Reading: Diamond, Prologue and Chapters 1-2. BBQ on Aug. 30

Week 3: September 4 & 6

Why did the Eurasians have so many advantages over the Americans in the 15th century?
Reading: Diamond, Chapters 3-5. BBQ on Sept. 6

Week 4: September 11 & 13

How did the domestication of plants change human history?
Reading: Diamond, Chapters 6-8. BBQ on Sept. 13

Week 5: September 18 & 20

The domestication of mammals, food crops, germs, and writing
Reading: Diamond, Chapters 9-12. BBQ on Sept. 20

Week 6: September 25

The evolution of technology, government, and religion: Australia and New Guinea
Reading: Diamond, Chapters 13-15. BBQ on Sept. 25

Week 7: October 2

Around the world with Jared Diamond
Reading: Diamond, Chapters 16-19 and Epilogue. BBQ on Oct. 2

Week 8: October 9 & 11

Why are there Europeans everywhere?
Reading: Crosby, Chapters 1-3. BBQ on Oct. 11

Week 9: October 16 & 18

How did the Europeans get everywhere?
Reading: Crosby, Chapters 4-6. BBQ on Oct. 18

Week 10: October 23 & 25

The Columbian Exchange: You've got smallpox in my chocolate!
Reading: Crosby, Chapters 7-9. BBQ on Oct. 25

Week 11: October 30

New Zealand: Kiwis and Neo-Europeans

Reading: Crosby, Chapters 10-12. BBQ on Oct. 30

Week 12: November 6 & 8

Man the Hunter becomes the Sickly Farmer

Reading: McNeill, Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1-2. BBQ on Nov. 8

Week 13: November 13 & 15

“Civilized Disease Pools of Eurasia”

Reading: McNeill, Chapter 3. BBQ on Nov. 15

Week 14: November 20

Bubonic Genghis and Poxo Columbus: Imperial Expansion and Disease

Reading: McNeill, Chapters 4-5. BBQ on Nov. 20

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND OUTLINE DUE IN CLASS

Week 15: November 27 & 29

More people and new diseases since 1700

Reading: McNeill, Chapter 6. BBQ on Nov. 29

Week 16: December 4 & 6

Discussion of Term Papers in class

FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11 AT 3:00 PM

Grading Scale:

Blue Book Quizzes (approx.. 14)	65%	A = 100% - 90%
Annotated Bibliography and Outline	5%	B = 89% - 80%
Final Paper	20%	C = 79% -70%
Discussion	10%	D = 69% -60%
		F= 59%-0%
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Total	100%	

Assignments:

Blue Book Quizzes

At the beginning of the semester, the professor will distribute bluebooks to the students in order to take weekly quizzes. The quizzes will test the students' reading comprehension of the assigned course readings for the week. Students will respond to a question posed by the professor covering the week's readings in a short paragraph. The professor will collect the bluebooks for grading and return them to the students the following week. The bluebook course grade will be calculated based upon the average for all of the quizzes taken during the semester while dropping the lowest quiz grade. Missed quizzes will be counted as 0. Since a large portion of the course grade is based on the bluebook quizzes, students should stay abreast of the weekly readings to do well on the quizzes.

Annotated Bibliography and Outline

On November 20, students will submit an annotated bibliography and outline of their proposed final paper for the course. The professor will provide more detailed instructions on the bibliography and outline.

Final Paper

Each student will write a final term paper on some aspect of Biological History in consultation with Professor Hilwig. The Final Paper will be 4-6 pages in length and include material from the course readings and outside books and articles. Students should expect to draw material for their Final Paper from about four different sources.

Make up Policy: NO LATE PAPERS OR ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT A WRITTEN MEDICAL OR EMERGENCY NOTICE. Aside from medical or family emergencies, you must notify me in advance if you can not attend one of the in-class writing assignments or a book discussion so that we can arrange to make up the assignment. All make-ups must be taken at the rescheduled time.

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. Plagiarism can be defined as taking full quotations, phrases, or original ideas or data from another source without citing the author and bibliographic information for the source. This includes books, journal articles, reference works, news media, audio-visual sources, and Internet articles. Any form of citation will be accepted—Chicago Manual of Style, Turabian, MLA, etc... For a fuller definition of plagiarism, please see the Adams State College Student Handbook. Anyone found plagiarizing will be given an F in the course and may be subjected to charges of Academic Misconduct. IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT, PLEASE SEE ME TO AVOID INADVERTENT PLAGIARISM.