

Spring 2021 HUMA 2597: Global Environmental History**Mondays 15:00-16:20 Fridays 10:30-11:50****Dr. Jenny Leigh Smith Room 2378 hmsmith@ust.hk****Office hours: Thursdays 11-1 and by appointment****TA: TBD**

Course description: This course provides students with an introduction to the field of environmental history focusing on the past one hundred years of environmental change around the globe. The course will explore different themes in environmental history, including the environmental impact of humans, the history of sustainable development, environmental justice movements and national programs of nature conservation. Students are expected to read approximately 40-50 pages of text materials each week that will be made available online and to watch five feature-length films.

Learning Outcomes: Students will evaluate eight central topics in environmental history: conservation, sustainable development, ecology, environmental justice, pollution, climate change, natural disasters and environmental politics. They will analyze and critique intellectual arguments using primary and secondary sources, and they will present clear and well-argued reasoning to defend or refute historical arguments about topics in environmental history both in writing and in oral presentation

Assessments:

- **Quizzes:** there will be three untimed take-home quizzes during the term (10% each)
- **Homework:** students will have two group homework assignments (20%) These are mini-presentations students will present during class. (20%)
- **Participation:** students are expected to periodically answer a question of the day (10%)
- **Book Review:** students will read and review a book in environmental history (20%)
- **Timeline Project:** students will work alone or with one other student to complete a final timeline project. This exercise will replace a final exam (20%)

Module One: Fresh Water (Feb 1, 5, 8, 19)

Course Introduction and standalone anecdote

Local Topic: Hong Kong Water Supply

Regional Topic: The Mekong River

Global Topic: Fresh water scarcity

Film: *Blue Gold*

Module Two: Global Climate Change (Feb 22, 26 March 1, 5)

Local Topic: History of Flooding and landslips in Hong Kong

Regional Topic: Asian Cities: sinking and stifling

Global Topic: Climate-influenced famines and wars

Film: *Anthropocene, the human epoch*

Quiz #1 (take home March 5, due March 8)**Module Three: Sustainability (March 8, 12, 15, 19)**

Local Topic: land reclamation in Hong Kong

Regional Topic: recycling in Asia

Global Topic: Carbon credits: the history of an ecological idea

Film: *Trashed*

Module Four: Pollution (March 22, 26, 29 April 9)

Local Topic: plastics on Hong Kong shorelines

Regional topic: History of air pollution in Asia

Global topic: light pollution

Film: TBD

Field Trip & Show and Tell collect trash samples from local beaches

Quiz #2 (Take home April 9, due April 12)**Module Five: Agro-ecology (April 12, 16, 19, 23)**

Local Topic: Hong Kong farms

Regional Topic: History of rice paddies and their ecosystems

Global Topic: Farms as polluters

Film: *Our Daily Bread*

April 16: Book Review is Due**Module Six: Conservation (April 26, 30, May 3, 8)**

Local Topic: Hiking trails and Country Parks in Hong Kong

Regional Topic: Conserving Tigers and Elephants in Asia
Global Topic: The rise of environmental NGOs
No Film

Quiz #3 (Take home May 3, turn in May 8)

Final Timeline Presentation Due May 14