Subject Description

A historical overview of the interactions between people and their environments. Focusing primarily on the experience of Europeans in the period after Columbus, the subject explores the influence of nature (climate, topography, plants, animals, and microorganisms) on human history and the reciprocal influence of people on nature. Topics include the biological consequences of the European encounter with the Americas, the environmental impact of technology, and the roots of the current environmental crisis.

CI CREDO
Communication intensive subjects in the humanities, arts, and social sciences should require at least 20 pages of writing divided among 3-5 assignments. Of these 3-5 assignments, at least one should be revised and resubmitted. HASS CI subjects should further offer students substantial opportunity for oral expression, through presentations, student-led discussion, or class participation.

Readings

The following books can be purchased at the MIT Bookstore or through various online booksellers. They are also available at the Reserve Library.

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*
Written Assignments

There will be three papers, of at least 5, 5, and 10 pages, due in class on February 24, March 17, and May 12 respectively. Specific assignment sheets will be handed out later in the term. The last assignment will also include an oral presentation. Either assignment 1 or assignment 2 (your choice) must be revised and resubmitted for a new grade. If you like, you can revise and resubmit both assignment 1 and assignment 2.

In addition, a single sheet of informal reflections on each reading will be due in class on the day it is scheduled for discussion (normally the second class of each unit).

Schedule of Classes

February 1-3:  Introduction

February 8-10:  The Disease Environment
                Reading:  Herlihy, Black Death
                          Daniel Defoe, Journal of the Plague Year, 5-51

February 15-17: The Columbian Exchange
                Reading:  Melville, Plague of Sheep, 1-77, 151-166

February 22  NO CLASS: Monday Schedule on Tuesday

February 24  PAPER 1 DUE IN CLASS FEBRUARY 24
FIELD TRIP TO BURNDY LIBRARY

March 1       FIELD TRIP TO LIBRARY COMPUTER LAB, 14N-132

March 3-10    Wilderness and Garden
               Reading: Cronon, Changes in the Land
### Reading Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 15-17</td>
<td>Science and Nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 22-24</td>
<td>NO CLASS: Spring Vacation</td>
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<td>March 29-31</td>
<td>Landscape and Agriculture</td>
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<td>April 5-7</td>
<td>Industry and Demography</td>
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<td>April 12-14</td>
<td>Conservation and Preservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>NO CLASS: Patriot’s Day</td>
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<td>April 22</td>
<td>NO CLASS: Individual Conferences on Paper 3</td>
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<td>April 26-28</td>
<td>Poisoning and Environmentalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 3-5</td>
<td>Current Events</td>
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<td>May 10-12</td>
<td>Oral presentation of final projects</td>
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### Things to remember

- Written assignments should represent original and individual work.
- Assignments are to be handed in on time. If an extension becomes
necessary it should be requested ahead of the due date. Otherwise, lateness will be penalized.

Attendance is important. Not all the material to be covered in class is included in the readings. Be sure to bring your copy of the readings to discussion classes.

Grading will be based on the three written assignments, the oral presentation, and class participation (including informal reflections), weighted as follows: paper 1--1/6; paper 2--1/6; paper 3--1/3; final oral presentation--1/6; class participation (including response papers)--1/6.
21H.421 Introduction to Environmental History
Spring 2011

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