History 50:516:380:01
War and the World: An Environmental History of Warfare

Fall 2014
TH 5:15 – 7:55 PM
Location: Rutgers at Camden
County College / Connector Bldg. Room 358

Instructor: Martin G. Clemis
E-Mail: martin.clemis@rutgers.edu
Phone (215) 380-0075

Course Description: This course examines the relationship between war and the environment. It explores the ways in which armed conflict and collective violence have shaped both the physical and the ideational world we inhabit. Warfare has not only had a profound impact on the physical landscape, including adverse ecological consequences and the creation of militarized spaces, it has fashioned the world’s political, economic, religious, cultural, and ideological character as well by creating, destroying, or altering political geographies such as territories, borders, states, empires, and so on. This course will use theoretical approaches and historical case studies to historicize the critical linkage between war and the environment and underscore that the natural world is more than just a setting for war; it is an active agent that is harnessed to serve material and symbolic purposes.

Course Requirements / Assignments:
In order to receive a satisfactory grade in this course, students must complete the following assignments:

1. Attendance / Course Engagement - This is a collaborative learning course. What this means is that the student is the primary focus of instruction, not the instructor. As a result, the course is not lecture-based but is founded on class discussion and dialogue among students and the instructor. Group work and peer instruction, therefore, are a fundamental component of this course. Critique, debate, and discussion of assigned readings and additional outside material are vital to a healthy pedagogical environment. Moreover, they are an important part of your grade. Good attendance is also mandatory (you cannot participate in discussion or collaborate with your peers if you aren't here). Attendance is required and will be regularly taken. I am well aware that missing a class may happen occasionally, but regular absence will be noted and affect your class participation grade. As this class meets only one day per week, any student missing more than two classes will be in danger of failing.

2. Weekly Reading / Writing Assignments – Individually, students are required to read, discuss, and submit a one-page, single-spaced summary of the assigned weekly readings. They are also required to research, read, and summarize one news article per week. The topic must be related to environmental / military issues.
3. **White Paper** – In groups, students are required to create and submit an 8- to 10-page national security “white paper” for their final assignment. A white paper is an information brief presented to policymakers. It is intended to help a target audience understand a particular issue so that they can develop possible courses of action to address it. The white paper must be geared towards a particular hypothetical policymaking group, which will vary according to situation: e.g. the President and his/her National Security Council; the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Congress; etc. In addition, they must fulfill two primary tasks: 1) identify and discuss an issue pertinent to war and the environment; 2) offer policy options to address this issue. Students are permitted / encouraged to use either historical case studies or current events for their topic. Graphs, charts, photographs, and other visual material must be included within the final report. I will provide list of the specific components for the paper the first week of class. I will also include examples to give students an idea of what to include.

Students will be divided into groups in order to fulfill this assignment. Its completion will require both collaborative and independent efforts. Collaboratively, students will brainstorm, choose a topic, assign specific group tasks, discuss / develop their research findings, provide weekly progress reports to the class, and present the final product in class at the end of the semester. Individually, students will conduct research and collect information for input into the report. Each member of the group must contribute 2-3 sources (primary, secondary, or both) to be included in the final report. Once research is completed, each student is responsible for providing a research summary on his/her sources for inclusion in the final paper.

Because this is a collaborative effort, teams must divide the labor and assign specific tasks related to the project. I would suggest choosing roles based on individual strengths – e.g. composition skills, organizational skills, leadership skills, etc. Each member of the group should agree to perform a specific task for completing the white paper. These tasks will be collectively negotiated by the group. Each group will contain the following roles:

1. **Team Leader** – Manages all aspects of project; monitors progress; motivates all team members to participate and stay on task. The team leader is also the sole liaison between the group and the instructor outside of class concerning white paper matters. Any questions, concerns, etc. will be directed to the instructor via the team leader. The team leader is also responsible for coordinating / scheduling all out-of-class meetings, discussions, etc.
2. **Writer** – Compiles research summaries from each team member and drafts final written portion of the paper
3. **Graphics Organizer** – locates/ creates and submits photographs, charts, graphs, etc. for inclusion in the final project.
4. **Editor** – Edits / synthesizes all components into final white paper and produces / submits it to the instructor in pdf format.
5. **Briefer** – presents the final white paper in class at the end of the semester via an “intelligence briefing.” I strongly suggest using Power Point presentation.
Classes will be divided roughly into halves. The first half of each class will cover the assigned readings and other issues related to war and the environment. The second will be dedicated to group discussion on the development / progress of the white paper. After students have had time for in-class discussion with their group, one team member from each group will be randomly selected by the instructor to deliver a 5 minute status report on the group’s progress / findings. These briefings will be followed by a class discussion to elicit feedback / suggestions from other groups.

In order to facilitate collaboration, I strongly suggest group members exchange contact information, especially e-mail addresses, on the first day of class. As we meet only once per week it is vital that students communicate with one other between classes.

White paper topics must be submitted for approval no later than Thursday, September 25. In-class presentations on white papers will take place on Tuesday, November 25 and Thursday, December 4. A final copy of the white paper must be e-mailed in pdf format by midnight on the last day of class.

**Grading** – Grades will be based on the following percentages:

- Course Engagement: 20%
- Weekly Reading Writing Assignments: 30%
- Final Paper: 50%

**Peer-Evaluation** – Because much of this course is collaborative, each student will be assessed not only by the instructor but by their peers. At the end of the semester, I will submit a brief questionnaire that will require each student to anonymously evaluate their team members. Questions will be primarily related to issues of individual participation / collaboration.

**Required Texts:**

- All additional readings on your syllabus are also required. These will be available in pdf format on Sakai.

**Course Schedule:** The dates listed below are tentative and may change as the semester progresses.

**Week One:** (9/4): Introduction

**Week Two:** (9/11): Military Footprints / Harnessing Nature for War

- Readings – Closmann, Introduction, Chs. 1 & 2
Week Three: (9/18): Scorched Earth – Weaponizing the Environment

Readings – Closmann, Ch. 3; Reichberg, “Protecting the Environment in Wartime”

Week Four: (9/25): Environments of Death – Wartime Ecological Destruction

Readings – Webster, Ch. 2; Closmann, Ch. 4

Week Five: (10/2): The Destruction & Reconstruction of Civilian Environments

Readings – Closmann, Ch. 9; Lachmund, “Exploring the City of Rubble: Botanical Fieldwork in Bombed Cities in Germany after World War II”

Week Six: (10/9): Chemical Warfare – World War I & Vietnam

Readings – Webster, Ch. 4; Fitzgerald, “Chemical Warfare and Medical Response during World War I”

Week Seven: (10/16): The Ecological Impact of Atomic Testing

Readings – Webster, Ch. 3; Jenks, “Model City USA: The Environmental Cost of Victory in World War II and the Cold War”

Week Eight: (10/23): Resource Wars and Territorial Conflicts


Week Nine: (10/30): The Geography of War: Mapping Ideational Spaces


Week Ten: (11/6): Insect / Disease Control

Readings – Closmann, Ch. 6 / Edmund Russell, “Speaking of Annihilation”

Week Eleven: (11/13): Militarized Spaces – Military Geographies & Hallowed Ground

Readings – Closmann, Ch. 8; Ebel, “Overseas Military Cemeteries as American Sacred Space”

Week Twelve: (11/20): Aftermath: The Material Legacies and Ghosts of War

Readings – Webster, Chs. 1 & 5

Academic Integrity Statement: Academic integrity is essential to the success of the educational enterprise and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the academic community. Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating others’ violations of academic integrity. The instructor assumes students will familiarize themselves with the policies and information posted by Rutgers at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/ at the earliest opportunity.

Disability Services Statement: Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 of the Disabilities Act of 1998, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008. These mandate that reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact the instructor early in the semester so that he can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The Rutgers-Camden Office of Disability Services can be contacted by phone at 856-225-6442 or on the web at http://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services . The instructor looks forward to talking with you soon to learn how he may be helpful in enhancing your academic success in this course.