

HIST 321

Missionaries and the Environment

Instructor: Garrett Washington garrett.washington@oberlin.edu Tel: 440-775-6879

Class Time: Wed 2:30-4:20

Classroom: Peters 212

My Office: Rice 28

Office Hours: T/Th 2:30-4PM and By Appointment

Course Description:

Examining Western Christian missionary activity since 1500, this course will highlight the frequently ignored environmental elements of the story. From Jesuit *reducciones* in 16th-century New Spain to conservation thinking in 19th-century South Africa, European and U.S. missionaries' footprint on agriculture, natural resource management, and local perceptions of nature are very considerable. We will use scholarly literature and primary sources to study how missionaries viewed, interacted with, and impacted the environment and environmental thinking in the non-West. This writing-intensive class will allow students to think in new and more complex ways about the place of missionaries in global environmental history and to prepare and execute an original research-based history paper on this topic.

Required Texts:

(All Readings will be available electronically via Blackboard, J-Stor, or Oberlin College Library Electronic Resources, or)

Class Topics and Readings:

February 5 Intro to the Course
READING(S) : none
ASSIGNMENT(S) : none

February 12 First Encounters with the Environment of the "Other"
READING(S)
1) Sabine Anagnostou, "Jesuits in Spanish America: Contributions to the Exploration of the American Materia Medica" *Pharmacy in History* Vol. 47, No. 1 (2005): 3-17
2) Jose de Acosta, *Historia Natural y moral de las Indias* p. 77, 81-84, 97-98 (at [Jose de Acosta Electronic Resource](#))
ASSIGNMENT(S):
Summary 1 (of Anagnostou) due

February 19 First Encounters with the Environment of the "Other"
READING(S)
1) Ann Salmond, *Between Worlds: Early Exchanges Between Maori and Europeans 1773-1814*, Auckland: Viking, 1997
2) David Livingstone, *The Last Journals of David Livingstone, in Cental*

Africa, from 1865 to his Death, ed. Horace Walker (London: John Murray, 1874), excerpts.

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Primary Source Analysis due

- February 26 Missionaries and Land-use (Change) in “Discovered” Worlds
READING(S)
1) Rebecca Allen “Alta California Missions and the Pre-1849 Transformation of Coastal Lands *Historical Archaeology*” Vol. 44, No. 3, (2010): 69-80
2) Nicholas P. Cushner, *Jesuit Ranches and the Agrarian Development of Colonial Argentina, 1650-1767* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1982), Excerpts
ASSIGNMENT(S):
Response Paper (on both readings) due
- March 5 Missionaries and Environmental Disaster: Archival Visit
READING(S):
1) Bertrand Taithe “Humanitarianism and Colonialism: Religious Responses to the Algerian Drought and Famine of 1866-1870” in Christof Mauch, Christian Pfister *Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses: Case Studies Toward a Global Environmental History* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 137-164
2) Ellsworth Carlson, *Oberlin in Asia, The First Hundred Years, 1882-1982* (Oberlin, OH: Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association, 1982), 3-41
-OR-
2) Randall E. Stross Chapter 4 “Mission: Christianity and Agricultural Improvement, 1910s—1920s” in Stross, *The Stubborn Earth: American Agriculturalists on Chinese Soil, 1898–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
-OR-
2) Paul Cohen, Chapter 2 “Drought and the Foreign Presence” in Cohen *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
ASSIGNMENTS :
1) **Summary 2** (on the Oberlin-related secondary source of your choice)
2) Browsing the Shansi Digital Collection
- March 12 Missionaries and Environmental Education
READINGS :
1) Gary R. Hess, “American Agricultural Missionaries and Efforts at Economic Improvement in India” *Agricultural History*, Vol. 42, No. 1

(Jan., 1968), 23-34

2) Todd H. Leedy. The World the Students Made: Agriculture and Education at American Missions in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1930-1960 Vol. 47, No. 4, *History of Education Quarterly* (Nov., 2007): 447-469

ASSIGNMENTS : none

March 19 Oberlin Shansi and the Environment

READINGS: None

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Discussion

Shansi Paper due

March 26 **No Class**

April 2 Missionaries and Changing Environmental Thought: Conservation in Southern Africa AND Library Visit

READING(S):

1) Richard Grove, "Scottish missionaries, evangelical discourses and the origins of conservation thinking in Southern Africa 1820-1900" *Journal of southern African Studies* Volume 15, Issue 2 (1989): 163-187

2) Wapulumuka O. Mulwafu The Interface of Christianity and Conservation in Colonial Malawi, c. 1850-1930 *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 34, Fasc. 3 (Aug., 2004), pp. 298-319

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Topic Paragraph due

April 9 Missionaries and Changing Environmental Thought: Conservation in New Zealand

READING(S):

James Beattie, John Stenhouse, "Empire, Environment and Religion: God and the Natural World in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand" *Environment and History* Vol. 13, No. 4 (November 2007): 413-446.

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Proposal and Prelim Bibliography due

April 16 Missionaries and Changes in Environmental Thinking: Climate

READING(S)

1) Georgina H. Endfield, David J. Nash "Happy Is the Bride the Rain Falls on': Climate, Health and 'The Woman Question' in Nineteenth-Century Missionary Documentation" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* Vol. 30, No. 3 (Sep., 2005): 368-386.

2) Georgina H. Endfield and David J. Nash, "Drought, Desiccation and Discourse: Missionary Correspondence and Nineteenth-Century Climate Change in Central Southern Africa" *The Geographical Journal* Vol. 168, No. 1 (Mar., 2002): 33-47.

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Literature Review due

April 23 Missionaries and Changes in Environmental Thinking: Disease
READING(S)

1) Seth Archer, "Remedial Agents: Missionary Physicians and the Depopulation of Hawai'i" *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (November 2010), pp. 513-544

2) Bo Oduntan "Beyond "The Way of God:" Missionaries, Colonialism and Smallpox in Abeokuta" *Lagos Historical Review* Vol. 12 (2012): 1-22

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Summary 3 (of Archer or Oduntan) due

April 30 Presentations

READING(S): none

ASSIGNMENT(S): none

May 7 Wrap Up

READING(S): none

ASSIGNMENT(S):

Rough Draft due by 5/5,

Peer-Review comments due 5/7 (in class)

May 14 **Final Paper** due

Grading Rubric

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE
Final Paper	27.5%
Topic Paragraph	2.5%
Proposal	2.5%
Literature Review	5%
Preliminary Bibliography	2.5%
Peer Review	2.5%
Shansi Paper	20%
Discussion Leadership	5%
Primary Source Analysis	2.5 %
Summaries (x3)	2.5%
Response Paper	2.5
Presentation	5%

Participation	15%
Total	100%

Assignment Explanations:

Final Paper: (2500-3000 words) Write a paper comparing modern missionaries' environmental encounters and interactions in China with those of missionaries in one of the following regions: South Asia, Southeast Asia, North Africa, or Southern Africa

Topic Paragraph: (250 words) Write a paragraph describing the topic that you have chosen for your **Final Paper** and the types of sources (not the names of the sources just yet) you hope to use.

Proposal: (500 words) State your research question and why it is important, and explain how you plan to go about answering your question.

Literature Review (500-words) Summarize the literature that you have read thus far on your topic and situate your research question within that literature.

Preliminary Bibliography: Identify at least 8 peer-reviewed secondary sources (academic journal articles or books) and 4 primary sources (other than those consulted for your **Shansi Paper**) that you intend to use for your **Final Paper**.

Peer Review: A thorough review of your peer's Final Paper Rough Draft with constructive comments and a comments summary at the end.

Shansi Paper: Write a 1000-word Research Essay Using at least 3 secondary sources and 2 different kinds of primary sources to respond to one of the following questions:
1) What "environment" did Oberlin missionaries encounter in China?;
2) How did Oberlin missionaries impact the Chinese environment/local approaches to it?
3) How did environmental disaster in China affect Oberlin missionaries?

Discussion Leadership: On six designated days, one student will be in charge of setting the discussion agenda. This entails a short presentation in which the discussion leader identifies the central themes brought out by the common readings and then proposes a series of questions for the class to consider.

Primary Source Analysis Worksheet: Respond to the questions on this worksheet as they relate to the assigned writings in the journal of David Livingstone.

Summary: (300 words) A concise summarization of a single reading assignment, meant to allow you to practice expressing yourself clearly and concisely within a limited number of words.

Response Paper: (300 words) Write a short essay in which you respond to the assigned reading with an evaluation of the how well the author accomplishes her objectives, some interesting questions that the readings raise for you, and the overall significance of the piece in the context of this class.

Presentation: Give a 12 minute presentation, and lead the subsequent discussion about your **Final Paper**. This presentation aims to enhance your presenting skills, educate your classmates and me, and give you the opportunity to show off your newly found expertise.

Participation: A composite grade comprising attendance (required) and participation in class during discussions and activities.