

## History 380: U.S. Environmental Politics Since 1900

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Course Meetings: T R 11:00am-12:15pm 224 CCC  
Office Hours: MTWR 1:00-2:00pm 473 CCC

UWSP – History Department  
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**What has environmentalism been and what can it be?** This question will drive our semester long inquiry into the history of twentieth-century environmental politics in the United States. We will witness a wide breadth of political opinions, ecological concerns, and social experiences in this study of the past. As we turn this question over in case study after case study, you will begin to think deeply about the nature of conflict. Cultural assumptions, the use of science, property rights, and much else will come under our magnifying glass. By the end of the semester, you'll be able to look at an environmental conflict, sort out the arguments, and evaluate what's at stake. No matter where you fall on the political spectrum, this is an important skill.

### Enduring Understandings:

Conflicts over nature have cultural, political, economic, and ecological causes.

Environmentalism has had a varied membership and an assortment of goals in American history.

**Learning Outcomes:** After taking this course, students will be able to:

- describe the history of the environmental movement, including its major events and classic texts.
- evaluate arguments in an environmental conflict.
- explain how environmental conflicts happen.
- identify the ways the past shapes a current environmental conflict.

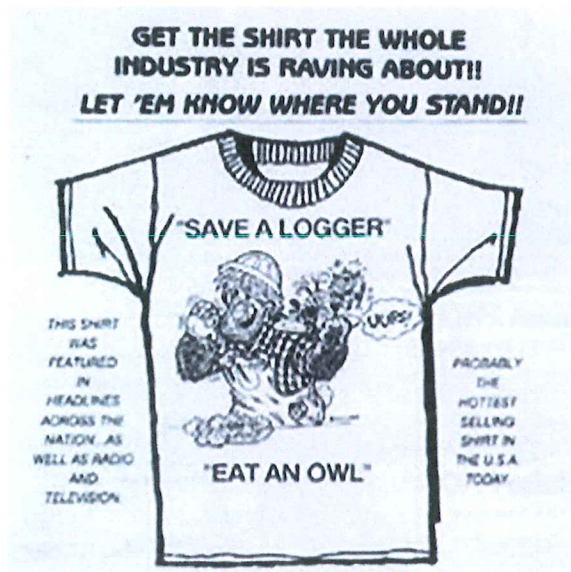
**History as Laboratory:** You might reasonably wonder why we should use history to understand the nature of conflict. After all, there seems to be plenty of conflict happening today that we could study. (In fact, we'll end the course with a present-day debate: mining Wisconsin sand to use in hydraulic fracturing.) There are at least three good reasons.

First, we tend to have less at stake in past events, which makes a critical distance more possible, at least in some occasions.

Second, since historical events are referenced routinely by people engaged in environmental affairs today, understanding key conflicts from the past will help you speak the language today.

Third, the actual outcomes of historical events created the political, legal, cultural, and ecological terrain we live in today, so studying them will let you know why present-day debates have the shape they have.





**Office Hours:** You are welcome to visit me in my office. I set aside office hours so that I have the chance to talk with students one-on-one. During that time (TR 12-2pm 473 CCC), I do not have any other commitments. My only commitment is to speak with my students.

To visit me during office hours you *do not need an appointment*. We can chat about anything going on in the course, from content to class dynamics. They are an especially good time to check in if you missed class. (Office hours are not in any way, shape, or form akin to a visit to the principal's office in high school!) If you have class or work during my office hours, I am happy to make an appointment so that we can still speak. Just email me.

Students will form groups: one for *Crabgrass Crucible* and the other for *Bulldozer in the Countryside*

**Readings:** There are four books to read for the course:

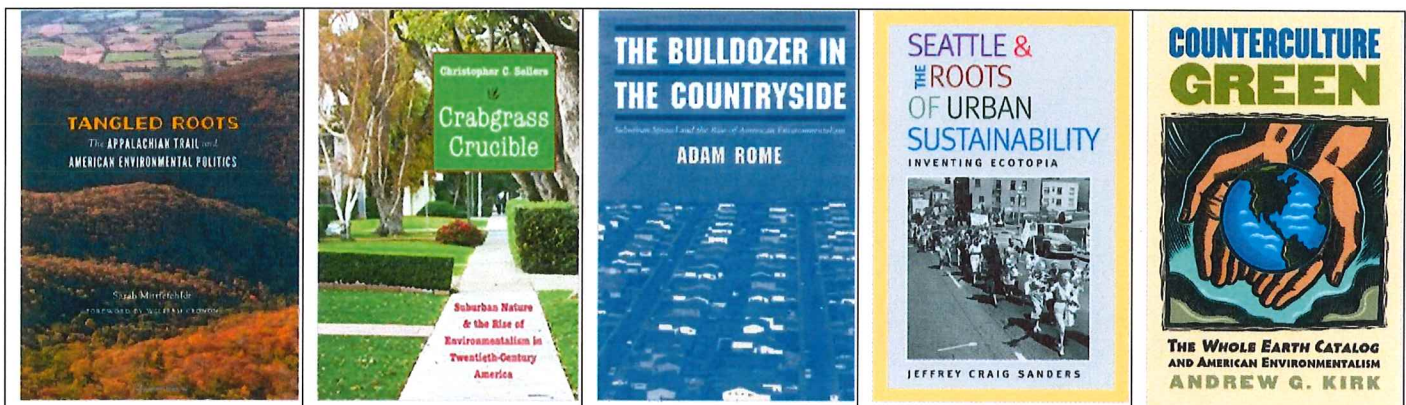
Sarah Mittlefehldt, *Tangled Roots: The Appalachian Trail and American Environmental Politics* (University of Washington Press, 2013).

Christopher Sellers, *Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature and the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

Adam Rome, *Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Jeffrey Sanders, *Seattle and the Roots of Urban Sustainability: Inventing Ecotopia* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

Andrew Kirk, *Counterculture Green: The Whole Earth Catalog and American Environmentalism* (University Press of Kansas, 2007).



**Note:** The syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced in class may be necessary.



**Grading:** 80 points for **Papers** (4@20 points each) + 60 points for **Standard Reading and Writing Assignments** (20@3 points each) + 60 points for **Final Paper** = 200 points for the semester.

Letter grades for the semester follow the typical pattern:

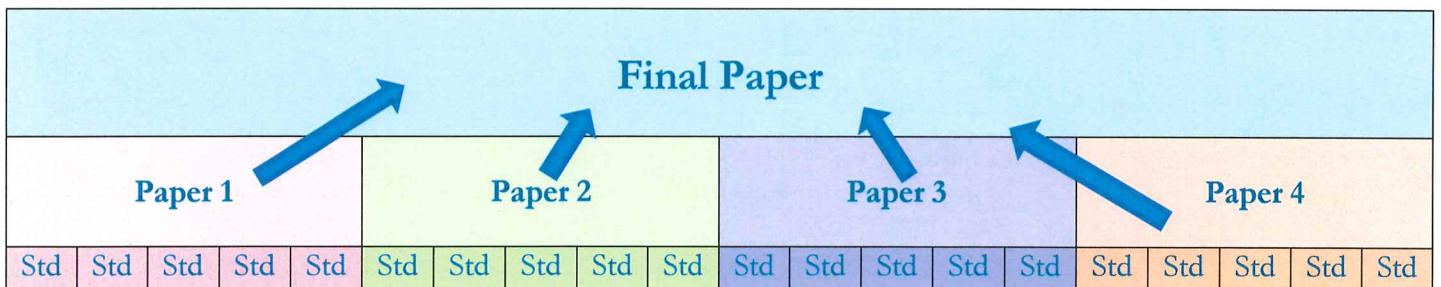
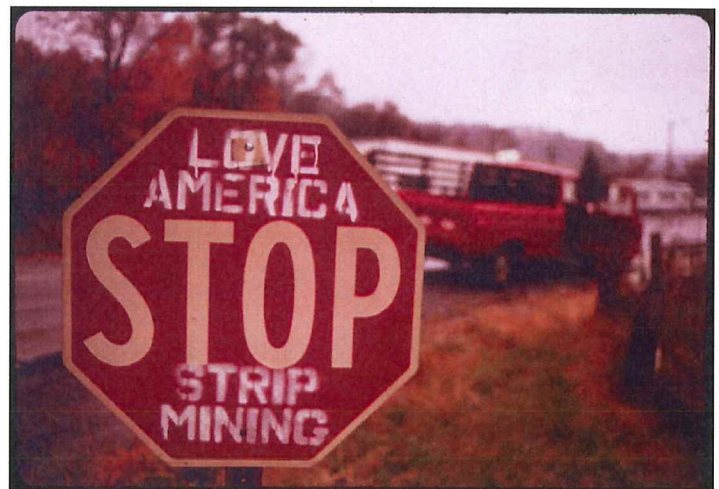
A 93-100	B+ 87-89.99	C+ 77-79.99	D+ 67-69.99	F 59.99 and below
A- 90-92.99	B 83-86.99	C 73-76.99	D 60-66.99	
	B- 80-82.99	C- 70-72.99		

**Course Structure:** Our end goal is to answer the course question as thoroughly, thoughtfully, and clearly as we can. You get that chance when you write the final paper—itsself simply a response to that question—and every class meeting throughout the semester will help you write that paper well.

Our class meetings will mostly be discussions of readings (the four books) that tell us something important about environmentalism. The Standard Reading and Writing Assignment will help you prepare for these discussions.

Each book anchors a unit, as shown on the schedule. At the end of the unit, students will write a short paper explaining how the book advances our understanding of environmentalism.

The final paper asks students to compile their previous paper (with revisions) and add a touch of new research. By May, students will be able to answer the question “**What has environmentalism been and what can it be?**” quite well.



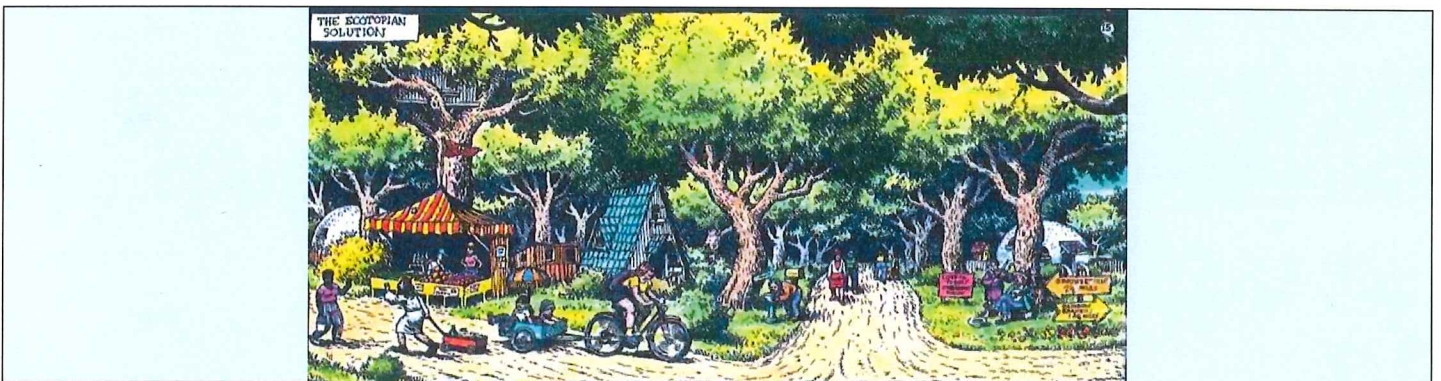
**Course Policies:** During the class, cell phones and other electronic devices are prohibited. If you are a parent or are otherwise obligated to be available to your family via cell phone, then please discuss that situation with me, so I know that you have a good reason for keeping your phone turned on. The prohibition of electronics also extends to laptop computers (unless approved by the Disability Services Office). While laptops are great aides in studying, the focus in class is on class, not the computer screen. Further, the ability to take notes longhand is actually an important skill to develop, one that will be useful in any career you choose. If you do prefer to have your notes in a computer file, you will find that typing them from your handwritten notes will aid you greatly in digesting the material.

For information on plagiarism, consult <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights>. See Chapter 14, *Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures*, pages 5 -10, for the disciplinary possibilities if you are caught cheating. As an instructor deeply concerned with fairness in the classroom, I pursue each and every case of plagiarism and cheating. Please note that turnitin.com is used for the essay assignments.



**Life Happens:** I understand you have a life outside this class. I understand that life might make it difficult to complete some assignments, attend class, or simply to do well. I do my best to be flexible because I know those circumstances are out of your control and my control. I'm on your team. I also know that some real learning has to take place in this class. You will have more opportunity in life if you understand history, read critically, and write well. This class has to be one of your priorities. I do my best to be flexible, but I have to adhere to some standards. If something comes up, let's talk.

**Equity of Educational Access:** If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester. They will then notify me, in a confidential memo, of the accommodations that will facilitate your success in the course. Disability Services Office, 103 Student Services Center, Voice: (715) 346-3365, TTY: (715) 346-3362, <http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm>.



<b>Introduction: The Many Origins of Environmentalism in America</b>		
<b>Week 1</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Introduction	<u>Thursday</u> American Experience <i>Earth Days</i> Documentary
<b>Conserving Rural America</b>		
<b>Week 2</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Foreword, Intro, Ch. 1, <i>Tangled Roots</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Ch. 2 and 3, <i>Tangled Roots</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 3</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Ch. 4, 5, and 6, <i>Tangled Roots</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Conclusion, <i>Tangled Roots</i> <b>Paper One Due</b>
<b>Suburban Environmentalists</b> (note: the class will be split in two groups, one for each book)		
<b>Week 4</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Introduction and Ch.1, <i>Bulldozer</i> Prologue, Introduction, Ch. 1 and 2 <i>Crabgrass</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Ch. 2 and 3, <i>Bulldozer</i> Ch. 3 and 4, <i>Crabgrass</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Ch.4 and 5, <i>Bulldozer</i> Ch. 5 and 6, <i>Crabgrass</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Ch. 6, <i>Bulldozer</i> Ch. 7, <i>Crabgrass</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Ch. 7, <i>Bulldozer</i> Ch. 8, <i>Crabgrass</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Conclusion, <i>Crabgrass</i> Conclusion, <i>Bulldozer</i> <b>Paper Two Due</b>
<b>Environmentalism in the City</b>		
<b>Week 7</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Prologue, <i>Seattle and the Roots</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Ch. 1, <i>Seattle and the Roots</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Ch. 2 and 3, <i>Seattle and the Roots</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Ch. 4, <i>Seattle and the Roots</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Ch. 5, <i>Seattle and the Roots</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Epilogue, <i>Seattle and the Roots</i> <b>Paper Three Due</b>
<b>Back to the Land</b>		
<b>Week 10</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Introduction, <i>Counterculture</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Ch. 1, <i>Counterculture</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 11</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Ch. 2 and 3, <i>Counterculture</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Ch. 4, <i>Counterculture</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Ch. 5 and 6, <i>Counterculture</i> <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Epilogue, <i>Counterculture</i> <b>Paper Four Due</b>
<b>Open Questions – Getting Ready for the Final Paper</b>		
<b>Week 13</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Final Paper Description and Reading Assignments	<u>Thursday</u> Scholarly Article (assigned during previous class meeting) <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 14</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Scholarly Article (found via student research) <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>	<u>Thursday</u> Scholarly Article (found via student research) <b>Standard Reading and Writing Assignment</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	<u>Tuesday</u> Writing Workshop	<u>Thursday</u> Writing Workshop
<b>Final Paper Due Wednesday May 17<sup>th</sup> by 10am</b>		

**Standard Reading and Writing Assignment** Our most common assignment, this one is meant to prepare students for a strong discussion. Complete before class. Bring a hard copy to class and upload a digital copy to D2L. See syllabus schedule for due dates. There are twenty of these assignments and each is worth three points for a total of sixty points across the semester.

Please title your document this way: **Your Last Name - Week Number - Day of the Week**

Student Name:	Week and Day:
Reading for the Day: Author, "Chapter," <i>Book Title</i> <u>or</u> Author, "Article Title," <i>Journal Name</i> Number:Issue (Publication Date): page numbers.	
Summary: one paragraph	
Explanation of How the Chapter Advances the Book's Argument (or How an Article Advances a Conversation about a Topic): a few sentences	
Implications of the Reading for Understanding Environmentalism: a few sentences	
Two Discussion Questions: questions that drive the best discussions often are about why the author made certain choices and why people in the past behaved as they did; in general, avoid questions that merely quiz the class about content	

**Paper Assignments** At the end of each unit, a short paper will be due. The prompt is nearly the same for each paper, since our goal is to examine how each unit's book helps to answer the course question (see below). Keep in mind that the Standard Reading and Writing Assignment are building blocks for the unit paper.

Papers are worth 20 points each. They should be approximately 800 words and use normal Microsoft Word settings. Bring a hard copy to class and submit a digital copy to D2L. Due dates for each are listed on the schedule. Use footnotes according to the rules set forth by the Chicago Manual of Style:

[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

For a rubric, see "Rubric for Papers" on this syllabus.

Paper One: What does *Tangled Roots: The Appalachian Trail and American Environmental Politics* tell us about the history and potential of environmentalism?

Paper Two: What does *Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* or *Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature and the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America* tell us about the history and potential of environmentalism?

Paper Three: What does *Seattle and the Roots of Urban Sustainability: Inventing Ecotopia* tell us about the history and potential of environmentalism?

Paper Four: What does *Counterculture Green: The Whole Earth Catalog and American Environmentalism* tell us about the history and potential of environmentalism?

**Final Paper** In this culminating assignment, answer the course question: **What has environmentalism been and what can it be?**

The paper is worth 60 points. It should be approximately 3000 words and use normal Microsoft Word settings. Submit a digital copy to D2L by Wednesday May 17<sup>th</sup> by 10am. Use footnotes according to the rules set forth by the Chicago Manual of Style: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

Recall that the unit papers are building blocks for the final paper. In other words, you will have plenty of material to write about by May. The main challenge will not be coming up with something to say, but will instead be pulling together material into a coherent and useful comment about environmentalism.

In addition to the four books, your final paper will also need to use three scholarly articles. In late April and May, I will provide a list of recent articles on the history of environmentalism. These will get you started. You will, though, have to find two on your own. I will describe how to do that in class.



**Learning to Write Better Is Worth Your Time** In fact, I cannot think of a more important skill to improve upon in college. Practice certainly helps—and in this class, you'll get plenty. But everyone also needs some guidance. I do provide feedback on papers and am delighted to talk about your writing in office hours. Wise students will take a step further: they will start to make writing improvement their own habit, seeking out books on how to write well, sharing paper drafts with fellow students, and finding good writing to read. Along those lines, here are some resources:

William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*, various editions. You can get this on amazon for a buck. You can also download a free digital copy from D2L. It's the book that will make you realize you can actually become a better writer.

Our campus has a fantastic Writing Lab. Staff will help you improve, not just generally, but on actual paper drafts for class. I wholeheartedly recommend them: <http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/Pages/writingReadingTutorials.aspx>

Even with our high school and college composition basics, I think we all find we have questions about particular words and phrases (what's the difference between flesh out and flush out?). For these concerns, I really like this site: <http://public.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html>

### **Rubric for Papers**

A: This work is excellent in nearly all aspects, keeping the interest of the reader by presenting original ideas clearly. Its style and organization seem natural and easy. It supports claims with solid evidence, using impeccable logic to do so. For evidence, the author uses sources found via the assignment instructions, including relevant course readings. The author demonstrates a deep engagement with the course themes. The paper includes every type of source and three concepts from the course.

B: Work in this category is competent and good, but with lapses here and there. Its thesis is clear, properly limited, and reasonable, and the writing is generally effective without rising to sustained distinction. For evidence, the author uses material found via the assignment instructions, including relevant course readings. The author demonstrates solid understanding of the course themes. The paper may lack one source or only use two concepts from the course.

C: This type of work is competent but not yet good. It is adequately organized, but the thesis tends to be vague or imprudent, though not necessarily implausible. Poor presentation, unclear organization, or significant grammars errors may mar otherwise sound ideas. In some papers, the organization, style, and grammar are fine, but the ideas need development. The author demonstrates familiarity with the course themes. Any paper lacking a total of two sources and/or course concepts will have a maximum grade of "C."

D: This work demonstrates some effort on the author's part, but technical problems or flaws in thinking keep it from being competent. The author shows minimal familiarity with course themes. The paper lacks three sources and/or course concepts.

F: This is a failing grade, usually reserved for work that demonstrates minimal effort on the author's part.