

**The Rise of the Modern City:
An Environmental Perspective
T-Th 3-4:15 pm, Bloomberg 275
AS 100.318 – Spring 2020**

Instructor: Constance de Font-Réaulx

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 4:30-6:30 pm, and by appointment, Gilman 346

Course Description

In the height of the Summer, Australia has been battling raging bushfires for weeks when the controversy around Sydney's fireworks hit the headlines of the world major newspapers a few days before New Year's Eve. Some authorities and communities begun to see the fireworks as an unnecessary risk while others refused the mere idea of a cancellation. For the latter, Sydney's fireworks are to Sydney what the Eiffel Tower is for Paris. As the confrontation peaked, the opponents, notably the deputy premier John Barilaro, said that cancelling Sydney's event would be a "very easy decision." Unheard, Barilaro took on the social media and wrote that "The risk is too high and we must respect our exhausted RFS [Rural Fire Service] volunteers. If regional areas have had fireworks banned, then let's not have two classes of citizens." ("Sydney New Year's Eve Fireworks will Go ahead despite Deputy Premier's Call to Cancel the Event," *The Guardian*, 12/30/2019). In a few words, Deputy Barilaro summarized the risks urban environment prey on their environments in the times of global change, the role modern societies play in triggering "natural" catastrophes, and how unequal our societies.

The Sydney's controversy is far from being an isolated event. Such disruptions are becoming part of the globe's daily life because of climate change and global warming, which international organizations, state leaders, and activists are trying to reverse or, at the very minimum, to slow down.

Since the 1970s, historians have also formulated a response to environmental changes in creating new field of research: environmental history. In a pioneer article, the American historian Roderick Nash defined the agenda of environmental history, which "would refer to the past contacts of man with his total habitat [...] This point of view implied a criticism of the practice of restricting 'history' to human events."¹ Although Nash's definition first excluded built environments, like cities, the field of environmental history has since been transformed and historians have merged together urban and environmental history to study the rise of the modern city in the West, mainly in the US and in Europe since 1750s.

¹ Roderick Nash, "American Environmental History: A New Teaching Frontier." *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (August 1972), p. 363.

This discussion-based course adopts an environmental history perspective to understand the challenges of urbanization between 1750 to the 2000s. This approach allows us to analyze how urban dwellers not only construct a built environment and replaced so-called natural environments, but how these transformations create new spaces that generate novel forms of administration, conflicts, habits, representations of nature, and, finally, new environmental disruptions. The aim of this course is to explore the social, cultural, and political relations that urban dwellers maintained with their environment, and how processes such as modernity, the Industrial Revolution and birth of capitalism, post-WWII reconstruction, and globalization shaped these developments.

The course is divided into three sections. The first one will familiarize students with the field of environmental history. We will study its objectives, approaches, and methods. The second section of the class will be devoted to the creation of the modern city. We will study the processes through which early modern cities were modernized and industrialized, and the new environmental disruptions industrialization and modernization created. In the last section of the class, we will analyze the challenges post-industrial cities have faced since the 1960s. We will analyze the response of governments and activists to environmental injustice and privatization of natural resources, such as water.

Throughout the semester, we will read the work of preeminent historians, but also of geographers, historians of art, and political scientists. Class conversations will focus not only on how each reading contributes to our understanding, but also on how to evaluate an author's argument. Students will learn a variety of methods for doing environmental history by examining what primary sources an author draws on and how the author uses these primary sources to construct an argument. We will also use primary sources – novels, paintings, pamphlets, movies – to help us understand how to write an environmental history of modern cities.

Course Learning Objectives

This discussion-based course has five major learning objectives:

- To familiarize students with the emerging field of environmental history and its methodological and historiographical debates
- To assess secondary literature
- To read, analyze, and interpret primary sources with an environmental history perspective
- Archival Research
- To learn that the environment is also a production of political, economic, social, and culture discourses
- To understand that contemporary environmental concerns are not only products of the post-WWII era and the 1970s, but that they are also issues arising from the first metropolises of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century

This syllabus serves as a contract between you and me that explains what I expect of you, and what you may expect of me. By enrolling in this class, you accept the terms laid out below. Please read them carefully. In the unlikely case that I need to make changes to the syllabus, I will provide as much advanced notice as possible. Please allow up to 24 hours for responses to email inquiries during the semester.

*Whenever you have any procedural concerns or questions about rules and formalities, please let me know. **Please declare your preferred name and pronoun.***

Required Texts and Estimated Cost

Assigned readings should be completed by the start of the week for which they were assigned. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to obtain the texts for this class, either from the library (reserve or Borrow Direct), electronic reserves, or Barnes & Noble. Any trouble accessing one or more of the readings should be communicated to me the week prior.

Students are encouraged to purchase the following book and movies:

- William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992. \$15 (paperback); \$11 (Kindle)
- Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner*, 1982.

For historical and reference background, you can consult the following textbooks (available on class reserve or online):

- John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe: From the Renaissance to the Present*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company; 3rd ed., 2009
- Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*. Brief FOURTH Edition. New York: Norton, 2017.
- John Wills, *US Environmental History: Inviting Doomsday*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.
- *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History*, Andrew C. Isenberg ed. 2014

Assignments

Participation: 25%

The class will meet twice a week for a discussion-based class focused on the week's readings.

You are expected to do the readings, come prepared and participate in discussion throughout the course. You shall engage with the assigned material as well as with your fellow students during discussion sessions and group work. Common rules of courtesy apply.

At the beginning of each class, we will recap the main points of our previous session in order to launch the session discussion. If you hesitate to speak out in larger groups feeling unprepared or inadequate this is an excellent opportunity to contribute to the general

discussion. Just revisit your notes from the last meeting before class. Whenever you have questions or need clarification, please speak out.

Attendance is the most basic requirement for a college education. If you miss more than three classes unexcused/ without legitimate reasons (such as conflicting athletic, ROTC, academic obligations) **you will not receive a passing grade.**

Reading Notes: 20%

For 6 sessions, you are expected to submit a short reading note (no more than a page double-spaced) on **one** of the secondary literature assigned to blackboard **by 4 pm** of the day the class meets. Please submit your note as a discussion thread for each week. The reading note is to state **in your own words**

- The topic
- Research question
- Main argument
- A general review comment
- The points you would like to discuss in class

The goal is to summarize and analyze the content of the article, identify the disagreements the author may have with another scholar, his/her method, but not memorize details. Reading notes will help you with the first assignment. You can only read other entries once you have submitted your own.

Your final grade will be calculated on your five best reading notes.

Essay I: 25% (6 pages max.) DUE ON MARCH 14, 2020 BEFORE 11:59 PM

Submit with Turnitin on Blackboard

For the first written assignment, you will be asked to write a Book Review

**** Either:** Michael Rawson, *Eden on the Charles: The Making of Boston*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014. (available online through the library website) **

**** Or:** Leslie Tomory, *The History of the London Water Industry, 1580-1820*. Baltimore: JHU, 2017. (available online through the library website) **

We will discuss in class how to review a book before the assignment is due.

Essay II: 30% (10 pages max.) DUE ON MAY 10, 2020 BEFORE 11:59 PM

Submit with Turnitin on Blackboard

Your second Essay due at the end of the term will be a Research Paper. Your final paper will be an original research paper. A peer-reviewed session will be organized on Week 12.

To help you, your second assignment will be broke down in several instances:

- Research Paper Topic and primary source for your Final Research Paper: **1 page. Due on April 1, 2020 before 11:59 pm**
- Bibliography draft: **2 pages. Due on April 9, 2020 before 11:59 pm**

All Written Assignments - Formal Requirements

- normal margins, 12 pt. font size, font: Times New Roman or similar.
- add a title to any written assignment (give it character)
- submit via turnitin on blackboard
- add page numbers
- list of references/ bibliography on separate page (doesn't count towards page max)
- add your name and basic course information
- file names: ALWAYS add your last name (no spaces in file names)
- check the rules for academic integrity

In addition to the formal requirements, written assignments are graded based on the primary and secondary sources consulted, clarity of argument, style of writing, and organization.

Grading:

- ✓ 25% Participation
- ✓ 20% Reading Notes
- ✓ 25% Essay I (Book Review)
- ✓ 30% Essay II (Research paper)

Grade Scale (JHU standard):

95-100: A,	59 or below: F
90-94: A-	
87-89: B+	
83-86: B	
80-82: B-	
77-79: C+	
73-76: C	
70-72: C-	
67-69: D+	
63-66: D	
60-62: D-	

Course Policies

The course meets twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Papers

Papers should be turned in Turnitin on Blackboard on the due date before 11:59. If you are more than one day late, I will subtract half of a letter grade (e.g.: A- to B+). Extensions may be granted at my discretion, but students must contact me before the assignment is due. Plagiarism is a violation of academic integrity and is not tolerated in this course. For best practices on avoiding plagiarism, see plagiarism.org.

Ethical Requirements

Here I endorse and apply the “Violations of Academic Integrity” section of the KSAS and Whiting Undergraduate Academic Ethics Board: “Undergraduate students enrolled in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences or the Whiting School of Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University assume a duty to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the University’s mission as an institution of higher learning. Students are obliged to refrain from acts which they know, or under circumstances have reason to know, violate the academic integrity of the University. Violations of academic ethics include, but are not limited to: cheating; plagiarism; submitting the same or substantially similar work to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission; submitting as one’s own the same or substantially similar work of another; knowingly furnishing false information to any agent of the University for inclusion in academic records; falsification, forgery, alteration, destruction or misuse of official University documents or seal.”

Homewood Policy on Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services at 410-516-4720 or in-person at 385 Garland Hall. Office of Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720 studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

Office Hours

Office Hours will be held on Tuesdays 4:30-6:30 pm in Gilman Hall 301.

Course Schedule

Week 1: What is Environmental History?

01/28: Welcome!

Students will be handed the syllabus, which we will read together and review.

01/30: Environmental History and Urban History

Donald Worster, "Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 76 (March 1990), pp. 1087-1106 (Available on Blackboard under "Course Content")

Douglas R. Weiner, "A Death-Defying Attempt to Articulate a Coherent Definition of Environmental History." *Environmental History*, Vol. 10 (July 2005): 404-420.

Christine M. Rosen and Joel A. Tarr, "The Importance of an Urban Perspective in Environmental History," *Journal of Urban History* 20 (1994): 299-310

Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud and Peter Thorsheim, "Cities, Environments, and European History" *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 33, Issue 5, pp. 691-701.

Optional: Roderick Nash, "American Environmental History: A New Teaching Frontier." *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 1972, pp. 362-372

Week 2: The Challenges of the Early Modern City

02/04: The Premise of the Early Modern City

David Garrioch, *The Making of Revolutionary Paris*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p.1-45 (Introduction + Chapter 1)

Primary Source Reading:

- Anonymous (B.R.). *A New View, and Observations on the Ancient and Present State of London and Westminster. With an account of the most remarkable accidents as to wars, fires, plagues, and other occurrences*. London: A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, 1730. p. 1-9; p. 99-114: "The Rivers, Wells, Conduits, Ditches, and Bridges, etc."
- Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Panorama of Paris: Selections from Le Tableau de Paris* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999). p. 29-33.

02/06: Reforming Early Modern Urban Environments

Frédéric Graber, "Diverting Rivers for Paris, 1760–1820: Needs, Quality, Resistance." In *Rivers, Cities, and the Production of Space in Europe and North America*, edited by Stéphane Castonguay and Matthew Evenden, 183–200. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012.

Week 3: Urbanization and Industrialization

02/11: Industrialization

The Rise of the Modern City: An Environmental Perspective, Syllabus, de Font-Réaulx

Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*. Chap. 5: “Shared Constraints: Ecological Strain in Western Europe.” p. 211-263

02/13: Intensification of the Urbanization

Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2016. “Chap 4: Cities,” pp. 174-221

Primary Source:

- Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. Chap.: Introduction; The Great Towns.

Week 4: Water and Sewage for the Metropolis

02/18: Water and Sewage

Leslie Tomory, “London’s Water Supply before 1800 and the Roots of the Networked City.” *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (July 2015), pp. 704-737.

Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City: Urban Infrastructure in America from Colonial Times to the Present*. Baltimore: JHU Press, 2000. “Chapter 8: Battles at Both Ends of the Pipe: Sewerage Systems and the New Health Paradigm, 1880-1920.” pp. 149-174

Primary Source:

- “Sewage System Needed: Engineer Latrobe Says That Is The Only Permanent Cure for Harbor Odors.” *The Sun*. Baltimore, MD: 05 August 1898, p. 10.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/535975736/85B2CDE42EF94DB4PQ/8?accountid=11752>
- “Washington Letters: Question of Improved Sewerage for the District European Methods Recommended How the Sewage is Used in Paris, Berlin, and London, etc.” *Correspondence of the Baltimore Sun, The Sun*. Baltimore, MD: 22 August 1890, p. 4.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/535238604/85B2CDE42EF94DB4PQ/16?accountid=11752>

02/20: Visit to the Library Special Collection (3:00-4:30 pm)

Week 5: Building Infrastructure

02/25: Train and Transportation

William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. Chap. 2: “Rails and Water.” p. 55-93.

Primary Source:

- Émile Zola, *The Beast in Man*. Chap. 1.
- [The Lumières Brothers, *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat, 1895*](#)

02/27: Metabolism

Joel Tarr, "The Metabolism of the Industrial City: The Case of Pittsburgh," *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 28 (July 2002), 511-545."

Week 6: Pollution

03/03: From Miasma Era

Thomas Le Roux, "Governing the Toxics and the Pollutants: France, Great Britain, 1750-1850." *Endeavour*, Vol.40, No.2, pp. 70-81.

Primary Source:

- John Arbuthnot, *An Essay Concerning the Effects of Air on Human Bodies*, 1751. p.119-199

03/05: to Germ Theory

David S. Barnes, "Confronting Sensory Crisis in the Great Stink of London and Paris," ed. William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. pp. 103-129.

Peter Thorsheim, *Inventing Pollution: Coal, Smoke, and Culture in Britain since 1800*. "Chapter 3: Pollution Redefined"

- https://www.dhr.history.vt.edu/modules/eu/mod01_nature/images/Punch1Nov1890p206_large.jpg

Week 7: Nature and the City

03/10: Nature in Early America

Michael Rawson, *Eden on the Charles*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010. Chapter 1 "Enclosing the Common", p. 22-74.

03/12: City and their environment in the turn of the 1850s

Caroline Ford, *Natural Interests: The Contest over Environment in Modern France*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016. "Chapter 7: The Greening of Paris," p. 164-189.

Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City*. Abridged Edition. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2008. "Chapter 9: The Third Pillar of Sanitary Services: The rise of public refuse management, 1880-1920," p. 113-128.

Primary Source:

- http://archive.oah.org/special-issues/teaching/2013_12/sources/exercise2park.jpg
- <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html> [browse]

Optional: Georges Perkins Marsh, *Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (1864)

****Book Review due on March 14, 2020****

****03/16-03/22: Spring Break****

Week 8: Inclusion and Exclusion

03/24: Exclusion and Inclusion in the Modern City

Ari Kelman, “New Orleans’s Phantom Slave Insurrection of 1853: Racial Anxiety, Urban Ecology, and Human Bodies as Public Spaces” in *The Nature of the Cities*, ed. Andrew C. Isenberg. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006. pp. 24-37.

Peter Thorsheim, “Green Space and Class in Imperial London” in *The Nature of the Cities*, ed. Andrew C. Isenberg. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006. pp. 24-37.

Primary Source:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/1900/12/17/archives/struck-down-by-poachers-guard-attacked-in-bronx-park-and-beaten.html>
- <https://cambridge.dlconsulting.com/cgi-bin/cambridge?a=d&d=Tribune19031010-01.2.53&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->

03/26: Deploying the Modern City in Colonial Spaces

Vera S. Candiani, “The Desagüe Reconsidered: Environmental dimensions of class conflict in colonial Mexico,” Special Issue on Environmental History of *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 92:1 (Feb. 2012)

Michel Kooy and Karen Bakker, “(Post)Colonial Pipes: Urban Water Supply in Colonial and Contemporary Jakarta.” In *Cars, Conduits, and Kampongs: The Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920-1960*, edited by Colombijn Freek and Coté Joost, 63-86. LEIDEN; BOSTON: Brill, 2015.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76ts6.8?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Week 9: Suburbs

03/31: Urban Sprawl: the Creation of the Suburbs

Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*. Introduction and Chap. 1: “Levitt’s Progress: The Rise of the Suburban-Industrial Complex.”

Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City*. Abridged Edition. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2008. “Chapter 10: The Great Depression, World War II, and Public Works, 1920-1945,” p. 129-134.

Primary Sources:

- [Advertisings published in the Indianapolis Recorder](#)
- [Commercial for Parly, a suburb near Versailles, 1969](#)

****Research topic and primary source due on April 1, 2020****

04/02: New Dependences

Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City*. Abridged Edition. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2008. “Chapter 15: A Time of Unease: The ‘Water Crisis’ in an effluent society, 1945-1970,” p. 180-191.

Brian C. Black, "Oil for Living: Petroleum and American Conspicuous Consumption." *Journal of American History*, Vol. 99, issue 1, 2012, p. 40-50.

Primary Sources:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sClZqfnWqmc>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/7455138062/in/album-72157630314917356/>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/7455117764/in/album-72157630314917356/>

Week 10: Post-Industrial City

04/07: Urban Crisis of the post 1970

Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City*. Abridged Edition. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2008. "Chap. 18: From Earth Day to Infrastructure Crisis: Forces Shaping the New Sanitary City" and "Chap. 19: Beyond Broken Pipes and Tired Treatment Plants. Water Supply, Wastewater, and Pollution since 1970," pp. 210-239

Primary Source:

- Movie: Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner*, 1982

04/09: A Reaction: Environmental Activism

Robert R. Gioielli, *Environmental Activism and the Urban Crisis: Baltimore, St. Louis, Chicago*. Chap. 2: "Black Survival in Our Polluted Cities": St Louis and the Fight against Lead Poisoning."

****Bibliography Due on April 9, 2020****

Week 11: Environmental Justice

04/14: Environmental Justice and Injustice

David Harvey, "The Environment of Justice." In *The Urbanization of Injustice*, eds. Andy Merrifield & Erik Swyngedouw. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1996. Pp. 65-99.

04/16: Race, Class, and Environmental Injustice

Beverly H. Wright and Robert Bullard, "Coping with Poisons in Cancer Alley" Robert Bullard, ed. *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994).

Keller, R. C. "Place Matters: Mortality, Space, and Urban Form in the 2003 Paris Heat Wave Disaster" *French Historical Studies* (vol. 36, no. 2, 2013): 299-330.

Primary Source:

- <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/learn-about-environmental-justice>
- http://ci.columbia.edu/ci/tools/1162e_tools.html
- <https://www.propublica.org/article/welcome-to-cancer-alley-where-toxic-air-is-about-to-get-worse>
- Movie: Hang Ho Song, *Parasite*, 2019.

Week 12: Globalization and Privatization

04/21: Global Capitalism and the Environment (1): Privatization

Arild Vatn, "The Environment as a Commodity," *Environmental Values*, Vol.9, No. 4, pp. 493-509

Karen Bakker, "Neoliberalizing Nature? Market Environmentalism in Water Supply in England and Wales." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 2005, 95 (3), pp. 542-565.

Primary Source Reading:

1. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/op-ed/bs-ed-op-1022-privatize-water-20181018-story.html>
2. <https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/news/baltimore-becomes-first-big-us-city-ban-water-privatization>

04/23: Global Capitalism and the Environment (2): Consequences

Sam Bozzo, *Blue Gold Water Wars*, 2009 (on Kanopy: <https://jhu.kanopy.com/video/blue-gold-world-water-wars-0>)

Avner de-Shalit, "Is Liberalism Environment-Friendly?" *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. 2nd edition. Prentice Hall, 1998. pp. 386-406.

Week 13: Cities and Climate Change

04/28: "Risk Societies"

Soraya Boudia and Nathalie Jas, "Introduction: Risk and 'Risk Society' in Historical Perspective." *History and Technology*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (December 2007), pp. 317-331.

Christopher W. Wells, "Green Cities, the Search for Sustainability, and Urban Environmental History." *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2014), pp. 613-620

Primary Source:

- <https://www.oecd.org/gov/risk/preventing-the-flooding-of-the-seine-2018.pdf>

04/30: New Dangers, Global Warming: Climate Change

Patrick Troy and Bill Randolph, "A New Approach to Sydney's Domestic Water Supply Problem." *Built Environment*. Vol. 34, No. 3, The State of Australian Cities (2008), pp. 333-348.

Hugo Priemus and Piet Rietveld, "Climate Change, Flood Risk and Spatial Planning." *Built Environment*. Vol 35, No. 4, 2009, pp. 424-431.

Primary Sources:

- <https://apps.npr.org/ellicott-city/>
- <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/30/783360543/with-waters-rising-and-its-population-falling-what-is-venices-future>
- [Fridays for Future](#)

****FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE ON MAY 10, 2020 BEFORE 11:59 PM****

