In parts of the Willamette National Forest trees grow so thick that it’s impossible to see for more than thirty feet in any direction. Fish runs in the Umpqua and Rogue watersheds were once so prolific that early white settlers said it was possible to walk across rivers entirely on the backs of salmon. The fertile soils of Washington’s Yakima Valley produce prodigious harvests of apples, cherries, and hops that are prized across the world for their richness and quality. The Columbia is fourth largest river in North America and the dams that span its banks once produced enough electricity to power most of the country. Whatever else it may be, the Northwest is a land of immense natural wealth.

Yet, despite this abundance people have fought bitterly over the Northwest’s natural resources, who has access to them, who gets to control them, and who gets to use them. American Indians, commercial fisherman, and sport fisherman have been arguing over salmon since the nineteenth century. Loggers and environmentalists have been fighting over forests for most of the twentieth century. And no sooner had the dams on the Columbia gone up than rural and urban people began arguing over who gets to control electric power allocation.

This course asks why in this land of plenty, in this region of excess natural wealth, in this place where there seems to be more than enough to go around, have people fought so fiercely over nature, who owns it, and who gets to use it?

In answering this question we will consider the social, political, economic, and environmental history of the Northwest from the eighteenth century to the present. We will examine how race, ethnicity, gender, and class have shaped peoples’ access to natural resources and explore how political movements and federal action have shaped the landscape and environmental policies. We will think about changing perceptions of nature and attempt to understand how culture and economic imperatives impact the way people relate to the physical environment.

Ultimately, this class attempts to give students new perspectives on the Northwest’s contemporary problems. We’re still fighting over nature today. By exploring the history of these conflicts, this class invites you to consider how the past informs present-day problems and encourages you to think critically and creatively about how those problems might be solved.
Learning Objectives

Students who take this course can expect:

• A better understanding of the history of the Pacific Northwest (defined here as British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and northern California) from roughly the seventeenth century to the present;

• A better understanding of environmental conflict in the Northwest and, in particular, the ways that race, ethnicity, gender, class, political movements, political economy, federal and state policy, and urban growth have shaped land-use debates and peoples' access to natural resources;

• To engage in critical discussions about the Northwest's present-day problems and to think about how history can help us better understand and creatively address those problems;

• To experiment with interdisciplinary approaches to the study of history and explore how methodologies from geography, political science, environmental studies, social history, and environmental history can enrich our understanding of both the past and present;

• To hone their writing, analytic, and interpretive skills through thoughtful classroom discussions, written assignments, and careful readings of primary and secondary source documents.

Class Format

This course is organized thematically. We will begin with an investigation of Native Americans, empire, and struggles for indigenous rights in weeks one and two, examine the capitalist transformation of the Northwest in weeks three and four, study state power and cities in weeks five and six, look at civil rights struggles in weeks seven and eight, and finish with a history of Northwest environmentalism and environmental justice in weeks nine and ten. Proceeding thematically means there will be some chronological overlap. However, this approach has the benefit of allowing us to more fully delve into a topic, explore it from multiple angles, and more carefully trace the histories of people, politics, and ideas through time.

This class meets twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Most class meetings will be dedicated to lectures. I encourage (and expect) you to be active participants in lectures. I will regularly ask questions or ask for your thoughts on pictures, photographs, or themes presented in lecture. In other words, come to class prepared to talk and interact with your classmates.

Three Thursdays throughout the quarter (October 6th, October 20th, and December 1st) will be dedicated to a discussion of readings.

Native American dip-net fisherman at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River, c. 1940

The Dalles Dam, c. 1960. When the dam was completed in 1957 it flooded the site of Celilo Falls and wiped out the Native American fishery that'd existed there for centuries.
Assignments

The major writing assignment for this class is a ten-to-twelve page research essay. Your task will be to identify a contemporary issue, debate, or problem in the Northwest and then situate that debate in its historical context. This project will require you to consult newspapers or other media sources to outline the contemporary dimensions of the issue you’re studying, then consult secondary sources to provide the historical context. A list of potential topics and recommend readings will be posted on the course website. On **October 11th** you must turn-in a short (roughly one-page) research proposal that states your intended topic. The final draft of your paper is due on **November 29th**.

You must also complete a take-home midterm and a (non-cumulative) take-home final. Both the midterm and final will be a combination of short-answer questions and a longer essay that will ask you to synthesize material presented in class and test your comprehension of lectures and readings. The take-home midterm is due on **October 25th** and the take-home final is due on **December 8th**. Questions for both the midterm and final will be distributed approximately one week before the due dates.

On **November 17th** you must attend a panel at the Oregon Migrations Symposium (the schedule can be found at: [http://waynemorsecenter.uoregon.edu/event/oregon-migrations-symposium/](http://waynemorsecenter.uoregon.edu/event/oregon-migrations-symposium/)) and then write a two to three paper that situates the information presented in that panel within the larger themes of the course. That paper is due on **November 27th**.

Finally, participation is a major part of your grade. Please have the readings completed by the day they are listed in the course schedule below and come to class prepared to discuss the major themes and ideas presented therein. I would also strongly encourage you to develop your own questions about the readings and pose those questions to your classmates.

You must complete every assignment to receive a passing grade in the class.
Final grades for this class will be determined on the following basis:

Participation 20%
Take-Home Midterm 20%
Take-Home Final 20%
Oregon Migration Symposium Paper 5%
Research Paper Proposal 5%
Final Research Paper 30%

The following table will be used to translate your point score into your final letter grade:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
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<td>A</td>
<td>989-940</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>939-900</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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Grading Guidelines

I will follow the guidelines established by the History Department in evaluating your work:

A+: Work of unusual distinction.
A: Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument.
B: Work that satisfies the main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality.
C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria reasonably well.
D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards.
F: Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or disregard for the assigned question.

For more information on the History Department's grading guidelines, please see [http://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/](http://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/)

Travel poster for Crater Lake National Park, c. 1940. During the New Deal, the Works Project Administration hired out-of-work artists to create advertisements and promote tourism in the Northwest.

Oregon's climate and soil are perfectly suited to growing hops like these. Oregon hops are prized by brewers from around the world and find their way into beers as far away as Germany.
Plagiarism

Students found guilty of academic misconduct may face disciplinary action as outlined in the Students' Code of Conduct:

https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx

You should familiarize yourself with the University’s policies concerning plagiarism and what constitutes academic misconduct:

http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html

Please come see me if you are unsure about how to properly cite and credit another author’s work, or if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism.

Graduate Students

Graduate students taking this course will have different reading and writing assignments. We will also meet as a group roughly every-other-week to discuss additional readings. I will distribute a separate syllabus for graduate students.

The Seattle Space Needle was built during the 1964 World’s Fair to rebrand the city as a center of “Space Age” industry and technology.

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Coos Bay, Oregon’s Steve Prefontaine won several collegiate championships while running under legendary University of Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman.
The following books are required for this course. They are available for purchase at the U of O Bookstore:


Additional readings listed in the course schedule will be posted in pdf form on the course website.

This course uses the Canvas system and you can access the course website via your Canvas front page. The course website contains this syllabus, assignment guidelines, the questions for the take-home midterm and final (when posted), and lecture slides. Please submit all written work online, via the course website. I will comment on and grade your written work directly in the Canvas system. If you would like me to evaluate and grade a hard copy of your work, please let me know and we can make suitable arrangements.

I am here to help you. I encourage you to come see me during my scheduled office hours, or if you can’t make those, let me know and I’m happy to find another time to meet. You can come see me to talk about any of the material covered in class, a reading you didn’t quite understand, or if there’s some aspect of Northwest history you’d like to know more about. I’m also more than happy to read early drafts of your paper and make suggestions for improvements. Or, you can just stop by just to chat. Email is the best way to get ahold of me. I will respond to all student emails within 24 hours.
Schedule of Topics and Readings

PART I  Power and Place in Northwest Indian Country

September 27
Settlers in a Native World or Natives in a Settler’s World?

September 29
Making Indians: Tribes, Treaties, and the Federal Government

October 4
“The Right of Taking Fish at All Usual and Accustomed Grounds:” Fish-Ins and Native American Activism in the Twentieth Century

October 6
October 11
Railroaded: Gilded Age Corruption, the Transcontinental Railroads, and the Resource Extraction Economy

Research Proposals Due

October 13
Life in the Resource Extraction Economy

In-class film: Cuts (dir. Charles Gustafson, 1980)

October 18
Rebels and Reformers: Radical Politics from the Depression to the WTO

October 20
Discussion of Polishuk, Sticking to the Union
PART III
“Turning Our Darkness To Dawn”
The State in the Twentieth Century

Grand Coulee Dam, c. 1945

October 25
The Gospel of Efficiency: Bringing Perfection to the Forests and Fields

Midterm Exam Due

October 27
“Roll On Columbia, Roll On:” Dams, the New Deal, and Rural Electrification

November 1
The Nuclear Northwest

November 3
The Oregon Story: Tom McCall and Land-Use Planning
November 8
The Alaskeros: Filipino Cannery Workers and the Northwest’s Civil Rights Struggle

November 10
Agricultural Workers and The Wonderful World of Pesticides

November 15
The Duwamish: Race and the Story of the Pacific Northwest’s Most Polluted River

November 17
NO CLASS. Instead, attend one of the panels at the Oregon Migrations Symposium:
http://www.ohs.org/events/oregon-migrations.cfm
November 22
“No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth:” Ecotage and Radical Environmentalism

Oregon Migrations Symposium Paper Due

November 24
No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday

November 29
Devil's Bargains: Tourism and the Collapse of the Rural Resource Economy

Final Paper Due

December 1
Discussion of Dietrich, *The Final Forest*

December 8
Take-Home Final due by 10:15 a.m.