

Hist 315 Themes in World History, Summer 2021

Climatic and Environmental Change

Time: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu - 11:05am-1:35pm.

Place: Online

Instructor: Philip Gooding (him/his)

Email: philip.gooding@mcgill.ca

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course seeks to explore a historical perspective on the greatest challenge currently facing humankind, which is (notwithstanding the current pandemic) global climate change. It being the case that the future of humanity will be indelibly shaped by how societies face up to the challenge of global warming, this course examines how climate changes have also affected past human societies. It focuses on the period c.1500-1900, thus mirroring the growth of Capitalist expansion from the 'Age of Exploration' to the 'Scramble for Africa.' This periodization will enable students to think about the answers to several questions: How has Capitalist expansion since c.1900 contributed to global climatic changes? How have societies in this context exacerbated or attempted to mitigate against the effects of a changing climate? How can historians methodologically insert climatic factors into world history? And how might historians be able to contribute to knowledge that could help mitigate the effects of global warming in the present and future?

THIS COURSE HAS 3 AIMS:

1. To contextualise the importance of climatic and environmental factors in world history.
2. To demonstrate the methods of climate history and interdisciplinary climate reconstruction.
3. To put these methods into use through close examination of four periods of climatic and environmental change in world history.

FORMAT

In line with current guidelines, this course will take place entirely online. Sessions will comprise a mixture of recorded lectures, recorded interviews, break-out discussions, and student presentations.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

This course has three components of assessment:

- (1) Participation (10%)
- (2) Source analysis paper (25%) **Due: 11:59pm, Thu. 17 June.**
- (3) Essay Response paper (25%) **Due: 11:59pm, Thu. 24 June.**
- (4) Final Essay (40%) **Released in-class on Thu. 1 July; Due: 11:59pm, Thu. 8 July.**

Participation (10%): Students will be graded for their contributions to break-out discussions and responses.

Source Analysis Paper (25%): Students will write an answer to:

- Assess the usefulness of Gergis and Fowler's 'A history of ENSO events' to world historians.

Essays should be **1,500 words** in length and conform to the style guidelines below. Due: 11:59pm on Thu 17 June.

Essay Response Paper (25%): Students will choose one of two questions to answer:

- 1) What were the features and contexts of the seventeenth-century 'general crisis'?
- 2) How did climatic instability affect world history in the late 'Little Ice Age,' c.1780-1840?

Essays should be **1,500 words** in length and conform to the style guidelines below. Due: 11:59pm on Thu 24 June.

Final Essay (40%): Students will answer an answer to a question related climate and world history. Essays should be **2,500 words** in length and conform to the style guidelines below. The question will be released during class on Thu. 1 July. Answers are due: 11:59pm, Thu 8 July.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction and Key Concepts

Mon 7 June: Course outline; positionality statement

Tue 8 June: The 'Anthropocene' vs. 'Capitalocene' debate

Wed 9 June: Reconstructing past climates.

Thu 10 June: [Start time: 12:05pm] Writing Workshop

Readings

- Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The climate of history: Four theses,' *Critical Inquiry*, 35, 2 (2009), 197-222.
- Jason W. Moore, 'The Capitalocene, Part I: On the nature and origins of our ecological crisis,' *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 44, 3 (2017), 594-630.

- Jason W. Moore, 'The Capitalocene, Part II: Accumulation by appropriation and the centrality of unpaid work/energy,' *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45, 2 (2018), 237-79.
- Joëlle L. Gergis and Anthony M. Fowler, 'A history of ENSO events since A.D. 1525: Implications for future climate change,' *Climatic Change*, 92, 3-4 (2009), 343-87.

Week 2: The long seventeenth-century

Mon 14 June: Braudel's Mediterranean 'World' (1556-1598)

Tue 15 June: Sam White's 'Mediterranean World'? and breakout discussion.

Wed 16 June: The 'seventeenth-century crisis'

Thu 17 June: Break-out discussion and student responses.

Readings

- Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-2014* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), 87-108.
- Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, climate change and catastrophe in the seventeenth century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), Intro (xxi-xxix).
- Sam White, *A Cold Welcome: The Little Ice Age and Europe's Encounter with North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 1-8 & 70-87.
- Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1-14 & 187-225.
- Jingyun Zheng, Lingbo Xiao, Xiuqi Fang, Zhixin Hao, Quansheng Ge, and Beibei Li, 'How climate change impacted the collapse of the Ming Dynasty,' *Climatic Change*, 127, 2 (2014), 169-82.

Additional Readings

- Dagomar Degroot, *The Frigid Golden Age: Climate change, the Little Ice Age, and the Dutch Republic, 1560-1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- Philipp Blom, *Nature's Mutiny: How the Little Ice Age of the long seventeenth century transformed the West and shaped the present* (New York: Liverwright, 2019)
- Peter Boomgaard, 'Crisis mortality in seventeenth-century Indonesia,' in *Asian Population History*, eds. Ts'ui-jung Liu, James Lee, David Sven Reher, Osamu Saito, and Wang Feng (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191-220.

*** Source Analysis Paper Due: 11:59pm, Thu. 17 June. ***

Week 3: The late 'Little Ice Age,' c.1780-1840.

Mon 21 June: The world to c.1780-1840

Tue 22 June: Damodaran et al., the 1780s-90s, and the late Little Ice Age

Wed 23 June: Break-out discussion and student responses.

Thu 24 June: Statutory Holiday: No Class.

Readings

- Vinita Damodaran, Rob Allan, Astrid E.J. Ogilvie, Gaston R. Demarée, Joëlle Gergis, Takehiko Mikami, Alan Mikhail, Sharon E. Nicholson, Stefan Norrgård, and James Hamilton. 'The 1780s: Global climate anomalies, floods, droughts, and famines,' in *The Palgrave Handbook of Climate History*, eds. Sam White, Christian Pfister, and Franz Mauelshagen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 517-50.
- Richard Grove and George Adamson, *El Niño in World History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 81-92.
- Christian Pfister and Sam White, 'A year without Summer, 1816,' in *The Palgrave Handbook of Climate History*, eds. Sam White, Christian Pfister, and Franz Mauelshagen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 551-61.
- Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Tambora: The eruption that changed the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 72-96.

Additional Readings

- Gwyn Campbell, *Africa and the Indian Ocean World from Early Times to Circa 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), Ch. 9 (pp. 176-98).
- Richard H. Grove, 'The great El Niño of 1789-93 and its global consequences: Reconstructing an extreme climate event in world environmental history,' *The Medieval History Journal*, 10, 1-2 (2006), 75-98.
- Richard H. Grove, 'Global impact of the 1789-93 El Niño,' *Nature*, 393, 6683 (1998), 318-9.
- Gordon C. Jacoby, Karen W. Workman, Rosanne D. D'Arrigo, 'Laki eruption of 1783, tree rings, and disaster for northwest Alaska Inuit,' *Quaternary Science Reviews*, 18, 12 (1999), 1365-71.

*** Essay Response Paper Due: 11:59pm, Thu. 24 June. ***

Week 4: 'Late Victorian Holocausts'

Mon 28 June: Imperial expansion and global climatic change in the nineteenth century

Tue 29 June: Singh et al., and the 1876-8 Global Famine

Wed 30 June: The KNMI Climate Explorer

Thu 1 July: Statutory Holiday: No Class.

Readings

- Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño famines and the making of the third World* (London: Verso, 2002), Part 1.
- Deepti Singh, Richard Seager, Benjamin I. Cook, Mark Cane, Mingfang Ting, Edward Cook, and Mike Davis, 'Climate and the global famine of 1876-78,' *Journal of Climate*, 31, 23 (2018), 9445-67.
- Boyin Huang, Michelle L'Heureux, Zeng-Zhen Hu, Xungang Yin, and Huai-Min Zhang, 'How significant was the 1877/78 El Niño?,' *Journal of Climate*, 33, 11 (2020), 4853-69.
- Patricio Aceituno, Mariadel del Rosario Prieto, María Eugenia Solari, Alejandra Martínez, Germán Poveda, and Mark Falvey, 'The 1877-1878 El Niño episode: Associated impacts in South America,' *Climatic Change*, 92 (2009), 389-416.
- ZhiXin Hao, JingYun Zheng, GuoFeng Wu, ZueZhen Zhang, and QuanSheng Ge, '1876-78 severe drought in North China: Facts, impacts and climatic background,' *Chinese Science Bulletin*, 55 (2010), 3001-7.

Additional Readings

- Fiona Williamson, 'Responding to the extremes: Managing urban water scarcity in the late nineteenth-century Straits settlements,' *Water History*, 12, 3 (2020), 251-63.
- Philip Gooding, 'Tsetse flies, ENSO, and murder: The Church Missionary Society's failed ox-cart experiment of 1876-78,' *Africa: Rivista semestrale di studi e ricerche*, 1, 2 (2019), 21-36.
- Zozan Pehlivan, 'El Niño and the nomads: Global climate, local environment, and the crisis of pastoralism in late Ottoman Kurdistan,' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 63, 3 (2020), 316-56.

*** Final Essay question released after class on Wed 30 Jun ***

Week 5:

Mon 5 July: The climatic and human legacies of 1876-8

Tue 6 July: Conclusion and beginning of writing workshop

Wed 7 July: Ongoing writing workshop

Thu 8 July: Ongoing Writing workshop

*** Final Essay Due: 11:59pm, Thu. 8 June. ***