## Curriculum Proposal

### HST 18-19 #39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Packet Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Summary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### New Course

| 1.2 HST 3650/5650 Environmental History (3 credits) |

| 1.10 Signatures |
BSU Curriculum Forms
Form 1
Curriculum Modification Summary

College: Arts, Education, and Humanities
Department: Humanities/History Program
Proposer: Dan Allosso
Proposer’s position: Asst. Professor

Describe the modification(s) you propose, and how it (/they) will work to students’ advantage. (This description and explanation will be included in Curriculum Report packets forwarded to the Faculty Senate.):

New course which will:
1. Add historical context into the Developing Sustainable Communities Emphasis to give students a needed perspective on how we have come to the situation that currently faces us and provides them with opportunities for critical thinking about choices that have been made in the past which can illuminate discussions about current choices.
2. For History majors, increases emphasis on environmental history and adds another explanatory lens to traditional political, social, cultural, and intellectual interpretations of the causes of change over time.
3. Cross-listing will result in the sharing of perspectives between ENVR and HIST students and will enhance our goal of infusing BSU’s shared fundamental value of environmental stewardship through the interaction of these two disciplinary perspectives.

Modifications proposed (specify number of each):

_____Course Modification(s) (form 2)
___x__New Course(s) (form 3)
_____Course Drop(s) (form 4)
_____Program Modification(s) (form 5)
_____New Program(s) (form 6)
_____Program Drop(s) (form 7)

The modifications affect (check):
___Liberal Education
___x_Undergraduate Curriculum
_____Graduate Curriculum
_____Teacher Licensure Program(s)
New Course Form

Course Number: HIST
  Undergraduate: 3650
  Graduate: 5650

Course Title: Environmental History

Course Description:

Environmental History is a relatively new historical discipline dedicated to understanding how our surroundings have influenced our choices and how we have affected our surroundings. Until very recently, history has treated the physical environment of continents, rivers, soils, and climates as a backdrop for political, social, or cultural action. Sometimes a colorful background, but not often a factor in the action taking place in the foreground. At its most basic, Environmental History makes three claims. First, we are influenced by our environments. Second, we change our environments. Third, our knowledge of and attitudes toward our environment change. In this course we’ll look at American History using each of these ideas and see things we wouldn’t have seen otherwise. Prerequisite(s): Junior/Senior status or consent of instructor.

Additional course information:
Each week’s work will include both a topical lecture and a reading that will be either an article or a chapter from one of Environmental History’s foundational texts, to introduce you to the core ideas of the field and the historians whose work shaped Environmental History. As you read these articles and excerpts, you’ll have the opportunity to choose one of these texts to read in its entirety for your final project in which you’ll respond to one of the discipline’s major texts in a paper that addresses its content, its place in the historiography of the field, and its relevance to the present. Grad students will additionally create a teaching module for a high school or undergraduate audience.

Credits: 3

Prerequisite(s):
  Undergraduate: Junior/Senior status or consent of Instructor
  Graduate:

1. Reason(s) for creating this course:
1. Adding historical context into the Developing Sustainable Communities Emphasis gives students a needed perspective on how we have come to the situation that currently faces us and provides them with opportunities for critical thinking about choices that have been made in the past which can illuminate discussions about current choices.

2. For History majors, increased emphasis on environmental history adds another explanatory lens to traditional political, social, cultural, and intellectual interpretations of the causes of change over time.

3. Cross-listing will result in the sharing of perspectives between ENVR and HIST students and will enhance our goal of infusing BSU’s shared fundamental value of environmental stewardship through the interaction of these two disciplinary perspectives.

2. How often will this course be offered? Once a year in the spring semester, depending on demand

3. What are the student learning outcomes for the course?

Students will:

- explain how the physical environment of the Americas shaped the experiences and the choices of people living here and how specific societies and cultures applied their own ideas and world-views in understanding and reacting to their environments.
- illustrate both the ways people have adapted to their environments and the ways they have changed them throughout our history.
- summarize the environmental challenges posed by human actions and the effects of changes in common rights to resources, externalities, and unanticipated consequences.
- identify the choices people have made that have impacted the environment and the range of other choices that existed and still exist, even when these are not highlighted in traditional historical narratives.
- assess and articulate how choices made in the past relate to challenges we face today and choices we may be called to make in the future.
- (for grad students) formulate an Environmental History module to a high school or undergraduate audience.

4. What are the major content areas for the course?

Course content will include pre-Columbian native America, the Columbian Exchange, European colonial experience, wilderness and frontier, resource extraction, transportation and industrialization, conservation and preservation, farming and agribusiness, population and limits to growth.

Undergrad and grad levels will focus on the same content, but with different levels of emphasis and assessment. Undergrads will write a research paper (history majors will probably focus on a full reading of one of the texts). Grad students will prepare an additional teaching module in
which they produce a pedagogically appropriate lesson for a high school or undergraduate audience.

5. Is this course repeatable for credit, and if so, what is the maximum number of credits that can be earned? No

6. If this course is intended primarily for off-campus delivery (not offered on campus), what delivery mechanism will be used? NA

7. What is the projected maximum class size (cap)? 25

8. What qualified faculty will be available to teach this course? Any History or Environmental Studies Faculty

NOTE WELL: Department and dean, in approving this proposal, attest both to the adequacy of the qualifications of faculty here named, and to their availability to teach the course at the frequency specified above, without excessive overload or disruption to other curriculum.

9. What additional library and other resources need or should be provided for this course, that are not already available? None

10. What special personal property or service fee(s) would be charged to students taking this course? These charges would be for 1) items that are retained by the student and have an educational or personal value beyond the classroom, or 2) services that are on the student’s behalf (see MnSCU Board Policy 5.11).
   Amount per student: $
   For:

11. Attach a sample syllabus for the course. Note: if this course is double-numbered (u-grad/grad), the syllabus must include an additional component for graduate students.
Course Goal

Environmental History is a relatively new historical discipline dedicated to understanding how our surroundings have influenced our choices and how we have affected our surroundings. Until very recently, history has treated the physical environment of continents, rivers, soils, and climates as a backdrop for political, social, or cultural action. Sometimes a colorful background, but not often a factor in the action taking place in the foreground. At its most basic, Environmental History makes three claims. First, we are influenced by our environments. Second, we change our environments. Third, our knowledge of and attitudes toward our environment change.

In this course we’ll look at American History using each of these ideas and see things we wouldn’t have seen otherwise. Prerequisite(s): Junior/Senior status or consent of instructor.

Each week’s work will include both a topical lecture and a reading that will be either an article or a chapter from one of the field’s major texts, to introduce you to the core ideas of the field and the historians whose work shaped Environmental History. As you read these articles and excerpts, you’ll have the opportunity to choose one of these texts to read in its entirety for your final project in which you’ll respond to one of the Environmental History’s major texts in a paper that addresses its content, its place in the historiography of the field, and its relevance to the present.

Organization

This is going to be a reading and discussion-oriented course. I’ll lecture a bit, to introduce new topics and give you background for discussions. You’ll be expected to respond to lectures and readings, and also to interact with your classmates. There will be due dates for reading responses prior to discussions – these are designed to keep us all talking about the same material at the same time. You are free to work ahead, but you'll need to be prepared to discuss and have your posts discussed at the scheduled times.

Links to videos of lectures will be posted on D2L. The chapters that are the sources of the lectures will be available for you to read as a free e-book, American Environmental History, by
The additional weekly readings will be posted on D2L. They will generally be chapters or articles.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- explain how the physical environment of the Americas shaped the experiences and the choices of people living here and how specific societies and cultures applied their own ideas and world-views in understanding and reacting to their environments.
- illustrate both the ways people have adapted to their environments and the ways they have changed them throughout our history.
- summarize the environmental challenges posed by human actions and the effects of changes in common rights to resources, externalities, and unanticipated consequences.
- identify the choices people have made that have impacted the environment and the range of other choices that existed and still exist, even when these are not highlighted in traditional historical narratives.
- assess and articulate how choices made in the past relate to challenges we face today and choices we may be called to make in the future.
- (for grad students) formulate an Environmental History module to a high school or undergraduate audience.

Grading & Academic Honesty

Each week, you'll have two types of course content to digest and respond to: a lecture and a reading. Your responses will be in the form of a 500-word post reacting to the lecture and a second post responding to the week’s reading. Your third grade each week will be for participating in discussion. Each post and participation in discussions will be worth ten points. That amounts to 140 points for the lectures, 140 for reading responses, and 140 for discussions. In addition, there will be 140 points for writing a class module or a final paper. In all, 560 points for the undergraduate grade. Grading is as follows: A: 504-560 points; B: 448-503 points; C: 392-447 points D: 336-391 points F: <335 points.

Graduate students will be graded on a different rubric on reading responses and discussions, reflecting a deeper engagement with the course content. Additionally, graduate students will complete a teaching module on a major topic area covered for an additional 140 points. In all, 700 points are available for graduate students. Grading is as follows: A: 630-700 points; B: 560-629 points; C: 490-559 points; D: 420-489 points; F: <419 points.

Academic Honesty: You know the drill. Don't cheat. Don't plagiarize. Do your own work.
Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Environmental History and American Prehistory
1/14/20: Lecture: American Prehistory, short discussion
1/16/20: Discussion of Reading: Crosby, excerpt from *The Columbian Exchange*

Week 2: Recontact
1/21/20: Lecture: Recontact
1/23/20: Discussion of Reading: Mann, excerpt from *1491*

Week 3: European colonies in North America
1/28/20: Lecture: Colonial North America
1/30/20: Discussion of Reading: Cronon, excerpt from *Changes in the Land*

Week 4: Westward Expansion
2/4/20: Lecture: Frontier and Grid
2/6/20: Discussion of Reading: Primary source documents: The Ranney Letters

Week 5: Industrialization
2/11/20: Lecture: Commons, Mills, and Corporations
2/13/20: Discussion of Reading: Steinberg, excerpt from *Nature Incorporated*

Week 6: Transportation Revolution
2/18/20: Lecture: Transportation Revolution

Week 7: Building the Modern World
2/25/20: Lecture: Centers and Peripheries
2/27/20: Reading: Excerpt from William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*

Week 8: Green Revolution
3/3/20: Lecture: Alfalfa, Manure, Nitrate
3/5/20: Discussion of Reading: Melillo, excerpt from *Strangers on Familiar Soil*

Week 9: Urban America
3/17/20: Lecture: City Life
3/19/20: Discussion of Reading: Steinberg, “Death of the Organic City.”

Week 10: Farmers Feed Everybody
3/24/20: Lectures: Farmers and Agribusiness
3/26/20: Discussion of Reading: Vaclav Smil, “Nitrogen cycle and world food production”

Week 11: Peaks and Challenges
3/31/20: Lecture: Limits to Growth?
4/2/20: Discussion of Reading: Oreskes, excerpt from *Merchants of Doubt*

**Week 12: Latin America**
4/7/20: Lecture: Mexico City, Cuba
4/9/20: Discussion of Reading: Miller, excerpt from *Environmental History of Latin America*

**Week 13: Treasures Underground**
4/14/20: Lecture: Mines and the West
4/16/20: Discussion of Reading: Limerick, excerpt from *The Legacy of Conquest*

**Week 14: Food and Choice**
4/21/20: Lecture: Food Choices
4/23/20: Discussion of Reading: Pollan, excerpt from *In Defense of Food*

**Week 15: Wrap-up**
4/28/20: Wrap-up Discussion

**Final Paper Due 4/28/20**

**Students with Special Needs**

BSU is committed to making all educational programs, course materials, services and activities sponsored by the University accessible to individuals with disabilities. Students requesting accommodations due to a disability or other need for access should contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Accessibility Services is located at Decker Hall 202. PH: 218.755.3883 or email: accessibility@bemidjistate.edu. This information is also available through Minnesota Relay Services at 800.627.3529.

**Tutor.com**

The Minnesota State system has updated the online tutoring service available to our students. We are now partnering with Tutor.com to offer 24/7 online tutoring, which will connect students with an expert tutor for extra assistance one-on-one. Online tutoring services can be accessed through the main page in D2L and your course page, by clicking on the tutor.com link, located in the “HelpLinks” menu. **All students will receive 15 hours of tutoring at no cost.** Tutoring services cover a variety of subject areas including math, writing, accounting, economics, biology, languages and nursing. Additional time may be purchased by students directly through tutor.com.
Extended Leave Procedure

If student has to be away from class from an extended period of time (more than two class sessions) for medical emergencies or a funeral, you are asked to contact the Student Life and Success Office where a leave notice will be given to your faculty. This notice informs the faculty of your departure and return date back to campus. This leave does not absolve you from any assignment you have due during your leave. You are to make arrangements with your instructors of when to complete any assignments due during the leave period. You can complete a leave form as this website [https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/student-life-success/extended-absence/](https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/student-life-success/extended-absence/)

Mental Health and Counseling

Students may experience mental health concerns or stressful events that may lead to diminished academic performance. The Student Center for Health & Counseling is available to assist you with concerns and can include stress relief services. They can be reached in Cedar Hall, First Floor. Phone: (218) 755-2053.
BSU Curriculum Forms
Form 8
Updated: 09.18.15
Signatures

Dan Allosso / Assistant Professor / 3.22.19
Proposer / Title / Date

Daniel Guentchev / History / 3.22.19
Chair or Director / Department or Program / Date
Note: "All departmental recommendations [on curriculum] must be reviewed and approved by the department’s faculty."--IFO/MnSCU Master Agreement 2009-2011, 20.A.3 (p. 80).

At this point, packet goes to Records Office/Curriculum Coordinator to be logged in to the Curriculum Proposal Progress Grid.

James Barta / Arts, Education and Humanities / 3.28.19
Dean / College / Date

Note: If proposal is sent back to the Proposer, please notify the Curriculum Coordinator. If approved, packet goes to Academic Affairs Office.