



HIST 3081 Tech and Environment

Professor: Germán Vergara
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: vergara@gatech.edu

Course Description

This course examines global environmental history from prehistory to the present.

Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be prepared to offer your own answers to these questions. Every reading assignment and classroom activity has been designed to improve your literacy on global environmental history. Throughout the semester, you will develop a good understanding of the main patterns and changes in the history of the relationship between human societies and their environments.

The other objective of the course is to develop your skills for engaging critically with reading material, be it primary or secondary sources. Course meetings will involve discussions of readings and other material covered in class. You should come to class each week having completed all assigned reading and reflected upon its relationship to larger themes of the course.

Requirements/Evaluation

Your course grade, based on a 100-point scale, will be determined by **attendance, the quality and regularity of your participation, and the completion and quality of assignments**. This is how I will break it down:

1. Class participation and attendance (18 points). Students are expected to participate actively, thoughtfully, and respectfully in class. If you find that participating in class discussion is not coming easily, come talk to me and we can discuss strategies to help you jump in. Once during the semester, you will sign up to bring a primary source to class. The source should be relevant to that week's readings. It could be a document, an image, a piece of art, music, or an object. Whatever you select, your source should illustrate one aspect of the topic under discussion during that week. You will briefly explain your object, how it relates to the course material and pose a question for class discussion (which you will be in charge of leading). Attendance: Students may have only two unjustified absences. Every additional unjustified absence after the two "free" absences will lower your final grade 5 points. If you miss 4 classes (or a total of 6), you will fail the course.
2. Written responses (3 points each; 42 points total). Each week, students will turn in a written response on Canvas under the "Assignments" tab. The objective for these assignments will be to synthesize the readings' main argument, locate the readings in the overall course narrative, and raise questions that may be addressed collectively in the classroom. The written response will also provide students with an opportunity to engage in economic writing, as responses will have to be 400-600 words long.
3. Final exam (40 points). The exam will cover materials from lectures and readings and will consist primarily of IDs and short and long essay questions. I will give you a study guide before the exam.

Office Hours

You may meet with me throughout the semester as you progress with your reading and assignments. I will answer emails within 24 hours, except during the weekend.

Course Website

A course website is available through Canvas. There you will find course-related information, including the syllabus, paper assignments, required readings, and supplemental materials such as current newspaper and magazine articles related to the course content. This site also features a board (in the "Assignments" tab), where you will post your weekly reading responses. In addition, in the "Resources" tab you will find a variety of materials to assist you with the complexities of historical reading, research, and writing.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means using the words AND ideas of others without giving them due credit. **The use of ANY AI will be considered plagiarism.** Please review Georgia Tech's statement on plagiarism on <http://osi.gatech.edu/content/honor-code>

Computing Devices

Unless you have a formal, sanctioned accommodation that requires it, laptops, smart phones, tablets, and other electronic devices are not allowed in the classroom. We will rely on discussion, old-fashioned paper note-taking, and a variety of classroom techniques to enhance our understanding of the course material.

**This course fulfills the Science, Technology, and Medicine requirement for HTS majors.
This course fulfills the Elective requirement for the B.S. in Environmental Science.**

Course Readings:

Daniel Headrick, *Humans versus Nature: A Global Environmental History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020. (**You'll need to buy this book**). Other than the main text, course readings are available through the Canvas class website.