

TEACHING YOUR SUBJECT WITH WRITING: SMALL CHANGES TO COURSE DESIGN

(with examples from “Introduction to Environmental History”)

Start of Semester

End of Semester

Subject Content

The well-read student

Weeks 1-4: “World in Motion,” “Transforming the Continent,” “Revolutions in Production”

Weeks 5-7: “Depleting the Fertile Commons,” “Conservating and Improving Nature,” “Abundance and Its Limits”

Weeks 8-10: “The Nuclear Age,” “Wilderness and Suburbia,” “Towards an Environmental Consciousness”

Weeks 11-13: “The 1970s,” “Regulation and Environmental Justice,” “Environmental Politics”

Disciplinary Practice

Methodological proficiency

Weeks 1-3: Develop a framework for understanding and critiquing a secondary source, including summarizing its argument effectively and responding to it both fairly and critically.

Weeks 4-6: Develop a framework for understanding and critiquing a primary source, including understanding the source itself and relating it to a larger historical argument.

Week 7: Library session on locating and acquiring historical source material.

Weeks 8-13: Integrate primary and secondary sources in a way that produces an original argument that is both consequential and conversant with other scholars in the field.

Writing Conventions

The ideal piece of writing

Week 3: Choose a secondary source from the first few weeks of class and write a 500-700 word essay engaging and critiquing the item.

Week 4: Draft research paper topics are due.

Week 6: Choose a primary source document from the first few weeks of class and write a 500-700 word essay analyzing the item.

Week 10: Submit the first two or three introductory paragraphs of your research paper.

Week 13: Submit a research paper that examines a person, place, or issue, situating them in United States environmental history and making a historical argument about them.