Instructor: Prof. Peder Anker  
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Office hours: Wednesdays 9:30-11:30.  
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Course Description

This seminar will provide an overview of the history of the environmental sciences from ancient times to Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*. We will explore ways in which naturalists and lay people came to know the environment and in what ways nature could mobilize social and moral authority. With a focus on the history of the European environmental problems from the ancient Greeks, Middle Ages, to colonial and Modern experiences, we will survey different ways of knowing nature. Where did the idea of nature as “designed” come from? How did natural historians and philosophers unveil nature’s secrets? What role did scientists play in the colonial experiences? How could Modern scholars imagine “improving” the face of the Earth? These broad questions will guide us in our readings of a series of primary sources, including great and not-so-great books by Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pliny, St. Francis, Evelyn, Grew, Bacon, Linnaeus, Buffon, Jefferson, Rousseau, Malthus and Darwin, as well as largely forgotten texts by anonymous authors and colonial explorers.

Course Objectives
The objective of this course is to learn something about the entangled history of our relationships to the natural world from ancient times to the work of Charles Darwin.

Required Texts/Online Resources


*Anonymous, The Book of Beasts*, Terence H. White (trs.).


Plato, *Critias*, Benjamin Jowett (trs.).

Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, John Bostock and H.T. Riley (trs.) 1855.

Katherine Wentworth Rinne (et.al.), *Aqua Urbis Romae: The Waters of the City of Rome*.


Required Assignments
There will be three 10 page papers due October 1, October 29, and December 12. The papers have to engage primary sources discussed in class. Late papers are not accepted.

Other Course Requirements
This is a zero-footprint “green” course. All papers must be submitted electronically.

**Grading**
Mandatory attendance
25 % Course participation
25 % 1\textsuperscript{st} paper “The Ancient Paper”
25 % 2\textsuperscript{nd} paper “The Medieval/Early Modern Paper”
25 % 3\textsuperscript{rd} paper “The Modern Paper”
Statement on Academic Integrity
"As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website."^1

Session by Session Details:

Sept. 2  Wednesday: Introductory meeting  
No readings

Sept. 7  Labor Day: No classes

Sept. 9  Wednesday: Ancient Environments: Greece  

Sept. 14  Monday: Ancient environments: Hippocrates  

Sept. 16  Wednesday: Ancient environments: Plato  
Plato, *Critias*, entire.

Sept. 21  Monday: Ancient environments: Aristotle  

Sept. 23  Wednesday: Ancient Environments: Rome  
Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, selections (geography)

Sept. 28  Monday: Ancient Environments: Waters of Rome  
Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, selections (animals and plants)

Sept. 30  Wednesday: Ancient Environment: Pliny

Oct. 5  Monday: Ancient environmental problems: Pliny
1st paper due! “The Ancient Paper”
Rinne (et.al.), *Aquae Urbis Romae: The Waters of the City of Rome* (website)

Oct. 7  Wednesday: Medieval Environments: St. Francis of Assisi
St. Francis of Assisi, “Sermon to the Birds” and “Canticle of the Sun”

Oct. 12 Fall Recess
Oct. 13 Tuesday: Legislative day, classes will meet according to Monday schedule: Medieval Environments: Natural History

Oct. 14  Wednesday: New Environments: West India
Anonymous, *Histoire Naturelle Des Indes*, 16th century (late), entire

Oct. 19  Monday: Early Modern Environments: Forestry

Oct. 21  Wednesday: Early Modern Environments: Bacon

Oct. 25  Monday: Early Modern Environments: Grew
Oct. 28 Wednesday: Rare Library Visit

2nd paper due! “The Medieval/Early Modern Paper”

The Fales Library and Special Collections, Bobst
70 Washington Square South, 3rd Fl.

We will look at:
- Pliny, Naturalis historia, (Rotterdam, 1668-69).
- John Ogilby, America: being the latest and most accurate description of the new world, (London, by the author, 1671).

Nov. 2 Monday: New Environments: New England

Cronon, Changes in the Land, entire.

Nov. 4 Wednesday: Modern Environments: Buffon

Buffon, Natural History, 1781, selections
Dugatkin, Mr. Jefferson and the Giant Moose, 1-46.

Nov. 9 Monday: New Environments: Jefferson

Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 1787, selections.
Dugatkin, Mr. Jefferson and the Giant Moose, 47-129.

Nov. 11 Wednesday: Modern Environments: Linnaeus


Nov. 16 Monday: Modern Environments: Lamarck

Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, Zoological Philosophy or Exposition: Of the considerations relevant to the natural history of animals; to the diversity of their organic structure and of the faculties which they derive from it; to the physical causes sustaining life in them and producing the movements which they carry out; finally, to those causes which produce feeling in some and intelligence in others endowed with it, 1809, part I: chapter 5 and 7.
Nov. 18 Wednesday: Romantic Environments: Rousseau


Nov. 23 Monday: Modern Environments: Animal Rights

Anonymous [Taylor], *A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes*, 1792.

Nov. 25 Wednesday: Thanksgiving recess! No class.

Nov. 30 Monday: Modern Environments: Paley


Dec. 2 Wednesday: Modernity: Malthus


Dec. 7 Monday: Evolutionary Biology: Charles Darwin


Dec. 9 Wednesday: Evolutionary Biology: Charles Darwin

Browne, *Darwin's Origin of Species*, 57-117.

Dec. 14 Monday: Summary/Last day of Class

3rd paper due! “The Modern Paper”