1 Course Details

Academic units: 4
Meeting time: Monday, 1:30pm–5:30pm
Venue: LHS-TR+33 (I am in the process of changing the venue to LHS-TR+17 at level B3 of the Hive)
Instructor: Dr Lin Qi Feng (Please call me Dr Lin. I am not a professor.)
Email: qflin@ntu.edu.sg
Office hours: by appointment

2 Course Description

We study the interaction between humans and the rest of the environment and its influence on history. The human is located in an environmental and natural context. However, concepts such as “environment” and “nature” are located in human thought. However, the environment, its well-being, and human dependence on it came to the fore during the mid-twentieth century as a result of major environmental insults. Studying environment history will enable us to locate the environmental
dimension in history in general and prepares us for an environmentally uncertain future.

3 Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to

1. Appreciate the role of the environment in history and analyse the environmental dimension of historical events;
2. Understand how nature and the environment are understood in the West, and the ramifications in history; and
3. Appreciate the possible environmental trajectory of human society.

4 Student Assessment

Assessment consists of three components that are weighted similarly to ensure that you pay equal and painstaking attention to them. To do well in this course, you need to do well in all components.

4.1 Participation (30%)
Participation entails three dimensions.

Punctuality: Attendance will be taken at 1:30pm sharp. I would arrive 15 minutes before class.

In-class participation: Feel free to articulate your considered thoughts and questions in a respectful way in class, and to interrupt me at any moment. This is not a TED talk.

Reading response: Before each substantive class, please submit a reading response in NTULearn for the required readings that were assigned. This will require that you: 1) summarize the reading; 2) state the author’s arguments; 3) articulate your views on the readings.

Reading responses are due on the Saturday before each class at 2359.

Please respond to all required readings.

Responses can be read by everyone. Please write your response before reading that of others to ensure your responses are original and not influenced by others.

You do not need to submit a reading response for the week (topic) in which you are presenting.
4.2 Individual presentation and write-up (35%)
Each student will deliver a 30-minute presentation on an academic book or two academic articles (25%). After the presentation has ended, students are also required to briefly comment on their classmates’ reading responses.

Students will also have to submit a write-up in which they summarize the presented academic work as well as provide reviews by other scholars and share their reflection (10%). These reports will be shared by the entire class. By the end of the semester, we would have accumulated a decent collection of summaries and reviews of academic works. The write-up is due the same day as your presentation.

An Important Note: First, preparation for a good presentation of a book or two journal articles require time and effort. Please start preparing for your presentation at least three weeks in advance. If you are scheduled to present during a particular week, make sure you are fully prepared and physically well. If you know you have commitments later in the semester, choose to present at the times that work best for you.

If you miss your opportunity to present, you will most likely not get it again and hence will score nothing if you do not present (25%) and do not submit a write-up (10%). See Section 7, “Concerning the Use of Medical Certificates”.

You are more than welcome to look for articles, books, and whole topics to present. The suggested titles here are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

4.3 Group presentation and write-up (35%)
Students will work in groups on a chosen topic and deliver a 20-minute presentation (15%) as well as a brief report (15%). Peer review of professionalism accounts for the remaining 5%. We will discuss the details in class.

5 Plagiarism Policy

All assignments should be original work, consistent with the university’s anti-plagiarism rules. Papers will be evaluated on rigor and depth of research, clarity and concision of writing, proper footnoting, and list of works cited using Chicago referencing style.

6 Late Policy

For each day for which an assignment is late, 15% will be deducted from the overall marks. For example, an assignment that is late by a day will be graded out of 85%, while one that is late by two days will be graded out of 70%. In the event of extenuating circumstances, please refer to the university’s leave policy for undergraduates.
7 Concerning the Use of Medical Certificates

Medical Certificates (MCs) are not “get out of jail free” cards. The presentation of a medical certificate does not automatically excuse an absence or late work. Depending on circumstances, I will usually ask you to complete additional work to make up for your absence or late work.

8 Required Texts

We will be reading the following title in its entirety. It will be available for loan in the reserves section at the Library Outpost and for purchase at the bookstore.


9 Course Schedule and Readings

**Week 1, August 13 - Course Introduction**


Winged Migration (89 min)

**Week 2, August 20 - The Big Bang Theory and Images of the Earth**


Supplementary:


**Week 3, August 27 – Western Perspectives of Environment and Nature**


Supplementary:


**Week 4, September 3: Southeast Asian Environmental History**


*Figure 2: Windows Spotlight Wallpaper*

**Week 5, September 10: Urban Environmental History**


(Possibly Garden City of Singapore)


**Supplementary:**


**Week 6, September 17: Sources of Environmentalism**


*Figure 3: Windows Spotlight Wallpaper*

**Week 7, September 24: Climate**

*The Great Derangement* 3–66


(Articles are to be presented in pairs)

Week 8, **October 11, Thursday: The Great Derangement**

In lieu of class, we will attend Amitav Ghosh’s talk at HSS Auditorium from 11:30am–1pm.

Finish *The Great Derangement*, 66–162

Supplementary


**Week 9, October 15: American Environmental History**


**Week 10, October 22: Race and Gender**


**Supplementary**


**Week 11, October 29: Agriculture**


**Week 12, November 5: TBA**

**Week 13, November 12: Group Presentations**