

## **FA 362 Chicago's Environment: Past, Present, and Future -Spring 2008**

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Hours: Loop: Wednesday 6:00-9:00

### Competencies:

S3C: Can understand the scientific and social dimensions of an environmental problem.

H4: Can analyze power relations among racial, social, cultural, or economic groups in the United States.

H1H: Can describe and analyze the challenges faced by communities in urban, suburban, or rural areas.

I am also willing to negotiate H-1-X and S-3-X competencies.

Texts: Robert Spinney: City of Big Shoulders: A History of Chicago

### Course Description:

This course will explore the history of Chicago from an environmental perspective. Key themes will include Chicago's relationship to the surrounding region, the city's changing urban environment, the relationship between ethnicity, race, and class and environmental justice, and the response of government, scientists, and local communities to environmental problems. We will examine the environmental benefits and costs associated with changes in technology during various periods of Chicago's history, as well as Chicagoans' changing attitudes about the environment, and the ideological and historical basis for their beliefs. Finally, we will connect these historical events and trends to a wide variety of current environmental issues.

### Learning Experience:

The majority of each week's class will consist of discussion based on philosophical, historical, ethical, and political questions central to the week's readings. In addition, there will be a number of short lectures, some in-class group work, and an occasional video. Each student will be expected to present a brief presentation on a current environmental issue. If class members' schedules permit, we will consider taking a class fieldtrip.

### Assessment:

Class Participation and Attendance: 25%

Writing (3-page Analytical Responses): 25%

Exam: 25%

Final Project and Presentation: 25%

### Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to abide by the guidelines on academic honesty and integrity found in the DePaul Student Handbook.

### Biographical Sketch:

Chris Wonderlich is working towards a Ph.D. in History at the University of Illinois Chicago, with a focus on environmental politics in southeast Chicago. Chris earned a B.S. in Aviation Management from the University of Dubuque and an M.A. in history from the University of Rhode Island.

### Class Calendar:

#### Week 1: Course Introduction

What is the "environment" and how do we define "environmental history"? Where do our environmental values and perspectives come from?

Readings: (In class) Hardin, "Tragedy of the Commons" and White "Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis."

Week 2: Why Chicago?

Why is Chicago where it is? What were the key factors in its development? Was "Chicago" inevitable?

Readings: Spinney, Ch. 1

Week 3: Nature and the Market

How can we define the relationship between Chicago and the "Great West"? How did Chicago transform the region? What does it mean to commodify nature and what was Chicago's role in this process?

Readings: Spinney, Ch. 2

Week 4: Living and Working in the Industrial City

What was it like to live in Chicago the late-19th and early 20th Century? How did a person's occupation influence the environment he/she experienced in Chicago? Do this week's readings change the way you think about Nature's Metropolis?

Readings: Spinney, Ch. 3

Due: Ideas for class project.

Week 5: (Re)Building Chicago: From the Great Fire to the Burnham Plan

Why did Chicago's city leaders feel it necessary to create a city plan? What environmental attitudes/values are evident or implicit in city leaders' plans for Chicago? Do these attitudes/values reflect a "modern" attitude?

Readings: Spinney, Ch. 4

Due: Analytical Response

Week 6: Chicago: City of Neighborhoods

Why is Chicago referred to as a "city of neighborhoods"? Why do you think Chicago's neighborhoods developed this way? What do you consider the benefits and problems of this development?

Readings: Spinney, Ch. 5

Week 7: Race and Chicago

How did the second great migration impact Chicago's urban environment? What problems did the newcomers face, and how did they, and governmental authorities, attempt to alleviate those problems? Compare and contrast the experience of Latino migrants to Chicago to those of their predecessors from the first half of the course.

Readings: Spinney, Ch. 6.

Due: Outline of Final Project due. The outline should include a definition of the issue/problem to be addressed, a short paragraph outlining the scope of the project, and a list of sources.

Week 8: Modern Environmentalism, Waste, and Environmental Justice

What are the primary motivators that get people involved in environmental issues? How does Pellow define environmental justice? Is the possibility of an environmentally just society realistic?

Readings: Spinney, Ch. 7

Exam

Week 9: Chicago's Environment: Present and Future

What are the key environmental problems facing Chicago today? Why do we have these problems and what should we do about them? Based on what you have learned, what environmental problems do you think Chicago will face in the future?

Readings: Spinney, Ch. 8

Week 10: Pizza and Final Project Presentations

Due: Class Projects