WILDLIFE IN AMERICA
University of California, Santa Barbara
Winter 2011

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Office Hours: HSSB 4231, TBA

Course Number: History 102WA & Environmental Studies 193WA
Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-4:45 PM
Place: Phelps 3515
Course Web site: GauchoSpace

OVERVIEW

Humans and wild animals have lived together in North America for more than 13,000 years. During that time, about 150 native species have gone extinct, and thousands of exotic species have colonized the landscape. Wild animals have served as food, clothing, shelter, servants, companions, weapons, and totems. A few charismatic species—such as the gray wolf, bald eagle, and American bison—have even attained the status of national icons. Today’s wildlife symbols include a peculiar menagerie: California condors, spotted owls, desert tortoises, polar bears, delta smelts, and Delhi Sands flower-loving flies to name just a few. As we will see in this class, their stories have much to tell us not only about ecological science and environmental politics, but also about American history and culture.

This course will explore the turbulent, contested, and colorful history of wildlife in North America. It will span from the Pleistocene to the present and it will cover the entire continent. Throughout the term, we will return to examples from California—the U.S. state with the greatest biological diversity, largest human population, and richest conservation history. The goal of this course will be for you, the students, to develop a sophisticated understanding of the changing relationships between people and wild animals over time. There are no easy answers for why things happened the way they did, and no simple lessons for what we should do in the future. But it’s a good story, and one that offers myriad, often unexpected, insights for serious students of history and environmental studies.

LEARNING GOALS

1. To develop an understanding of why the relationships between people and wild animals have been so complex and controversial throughout American history

2. To develop a sense of how debates about wildlife have shaped, and been shaped by, other social and cultural issues such as race, class, gender, property, social welfare, and economic growth

3. To develop basic skills for interpreting and analyzing original documents, popular culture sources, political rhetoric, and contemporary scholarship related to wildlife in North America

4. To develop an appreciation for how history can inform current policy and management for wildlife conservation in the United States and beyond
**Requirements**

*Lectures:* Each class will begin with a brief update of administrative issues, followed by a short group, writing, or peer review exercise. The lecture and discussion period will last for about 50 minutes. I expect you to come with questions and be prepared to contribute. A schedule of daily topics appears on page 3 of this syllabus.

*Readings:* This course will involve a considerable amount of reading. In fact, if you don’t enjoy reading, then you probably shouldn’t enroll. Before each class you should complete all of the assigned readings. You can purchase the reader at Grafikart, 6550 Pardall Road, in Isla Vista. A complete list of the readings on pages 4 to 7 of this syllabus.

*Daily Exercises:* 30% of the final grade. At the beginning of each class, you will complete a short group, writing, or peer review exercise worth two points on your final grade. To receive credit, you must give thoughtful, coherent, and legible responses written on standard 3x5” notecards. The precise nature of these responses will vary depending on the day’s assignment. For example, on January 25\textsuperscript{th} and February 24\textsuperscript{th} the daily exercises will take the form of peer reviews for your draft essays. Daily exercises will not occur on the first two days or the final day of class. You will not be allowed to make up a daily exercise without prior approval.

*Essays:* 20% of the final grade. During the quarter, you will complete two short take home writing assignments, 3 to 4 pages in length. For both assignments, I will post a collection of primary source documents on *GauchoSpace* related to the environmental history of a particular species. You will examine the sources and write a short interpretive paper—your own version of history.

*Quizzes:* 20% of the final grade. You will complete two short, multiple-choice quizzes during the quarter. Each quiz will be followed by an in-class peer grading and discussion exercise.

*Final Exam:* 40% of the final grade. The final exam will include 10 to 12 essay questions. You will select and answer 8 of these questions, and each of which will be worth 5% of your final grade. The exam will take place on Friday, March 18\textsuperscript{th}, from 4 to 7 PM. Sorry, I didn’t choose the time.

**Policies**

*Late Assignments:* If you need to miss class (and therefore the daily exercise) for personal, health, or religious reasons, you must to make arrangements with me ahead of time.

*Late Attendance:* You will not be allowed to make up the daily exercise if you miss class without prior approval, or if you show up late after your classmates have already completed it.

*Email:* I welcome all of your questions, but I prefer not to receive emails asking about the course content or logistics. I would much rather answer your questions in person, either in class or during my office hours. Please contact me by email only if you absolutely need to do so. You can, however, feel free to contact me by email before 3:00 PM on the day of class if you are sick and cannot attend.

*Suggestions:* This course is still very much a work-in-progress. I welcome any and all suggestions for how to improve it. I will award a point of extra credit to any student who provides a clear, insightful, and practical suggestion, in writing, for how to make the course better.
# Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
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| 1/4  | 1     | *Delta Smelt*  
Introduction to the readings, assignments, goals, and expectations | None | 0 |
| 1/6  | 2     | *Woolly Mammoth*  
What happened to the Pleistocene megafauna? | None | 0 |
| 1/11 | 3     | *Pacific Salmon*  
Were American Indians sustainable stewards? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 1/13 | 4     | *Black Bear*  
How abundant was native wildlife when the Europeans arrived? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 1/18 | 5     | *Beaver*  
How did the fur trade affect North American wildlife? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 1/20 | 6     | *Plains Bison*  
What caused the near extinction of an American icon? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 1/25 | 7     | *California Grizzly*  
Essay #1 – First Draft & Peer Review Exercise | Daily Exercise (Peer Review) | 2 |
| 1/27 | 8     | Quiz #1  
Essay #1 – Final Draft | Quiz #1  
Essay #1 | 10  
10 |

## Part II: The Age of Conservation

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<th>Topic</th>
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<th>Points</th>
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| 2/1  | 9     | *Passenger Pigeon*  
Who were the first wildlife conservationists and what did they want? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 2/3  | 10    | *Elk*  
How did conservation affect resource dependent communities? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 2/8  | 11    | *Wolf*  
How has science shaped ethics and values toward wildlife? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 2/10 | 12    | *Mountain Lion*  
How have changes in attitudes about wildlife shaped law and policy? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 2/15 | 13    | *Snail Darter*  
How did the Endangered Species Act (ESA) change wildlife law? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 2/17 | 14    | *Desert Tortoise*  
How has conservation changed since the passage of the ESA? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 2/22 | 15    | *Deer*  
Why have some native species become so overabundant? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 2/24 | 16    | *Northern Spotted Owl*  
Essay #2 – First Draft & Peer Review Exercise | Daily Exercise (Peer Review) | 2 |
| 3/1  | 17    | Quiz #2  
Essay #2 – Final Draft | Quiz #2  
Essay #2 | 10  
10 |

## PartIII: An Uncertain Future

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
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| 3/3  | 18    | *Burmese Python*  
How have exotic species transformed North American ecosystems? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 3/8  | 19    | *Pika*  
What does wildlife have to do with climate change politics and policy? | Daily Exercise | 2 |
| 3/10 | 20    | *Leatherback Turtle*  
How can history inform ecological restoration? | None | 0 |
| 3/18 | ---   | Final exam on Friday, March 18, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. | Final Exam | 30 |

**Total** 100
Readings

Part I: Before Conservation

January 4, Class 1. Introduction

No reading.

January 6, Class 2. Woolly Mammoth: What happened to the Pleistocene megafauna?


January 11, Class 3. Pacific Salmon: Were American Indians sustainable stewards?


January 13, Class 4. Black Bear: How abundant was native wildlife when the Europeans arrived?


January 18, Class 5. Beaver: How did the fur trade affect North American wildlife?

Dolin, Eric Jay. Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in North America (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010): 3-57. (*This excerpt is not included in your reader. It is posted on GauchoSpace for you to download.)

January 20, Class 6. Plains Bison: What caused the near extinction of an American icon?


January 25, Class 7. California Grizzly: Essay #1 - First Draft & Peer Review Exercise

Reading: primary sources for essay #1.

January 27, Class 8. Quiz #1: Essay #1 – Final Draft

No reading.

Part II: The Age of Conservation

February 1, Class 8. Passenger Pigeon: Who were the first wildlife conservationists and what did they want?

Price, Jennifer. Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America (New York: Basic Books, 1999): 1-111. (*This excerpt is not included in your reader. It is posted on Gauchospace for you to download.)

February 3, Class 9. Elk: How did conservation affect resource dependent communities?


February 8, Class 10. Wolf: How has science shaped ethics and values toward wildlife?


February 10, Class 11. Mountain Lion: How have changes in attitudes about wildlife shaped law and policy?


February 15, Class 12. *Snail Darter*: How did the Endangered Species Act (ESA) change wildlife law?


February 17, Class 13. *Desert Tortoise*: How has conservation changed since the passage of the ESA?


February 22, Class 15. *Deer*: Why have some native species become so overabundant?


February 24, Class 16. *Northern Spotted Owl*: Essay #2 – First Draft & Peer Review Exercise

Reading: primary sources for essay #1.

March 1, Class 17. Quiz #2: Essay #2 – Final Draft

No reading.

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Part III: An Uncertain Future

March 3, Class 18. *Burmese Python*: How have exotic species transformed North American ecosystems?


March 8, Class 19. *Pika*: What does wildlife have to do with climate change politics and policy?


March 10, Class 20. *Leatherback Turtle*: How can history inform ecological restoration?


March 18. Final Exam, 4-7 PM, Phelps 3515