



Global Environmental History-distance

Discussion questions for online seminar, Friday November 30th 16:00-18:00

The seminar will last for 2 hours. Please enter the online chat room at least fifteen minutes before the seminar starts.

Please discuss the following questions during the seminar. **From the following eight subjects, you should discuss at least four. Question four and five are mandatory** for all groups to discuss. (Our aspiration is that this question will help you gain a deeper understanding of the course material and literature.) The groups have the choice whether to engage in deeper discussions about fewer questions or cover more questions more broadly. You may discuss the following subjects in the order of your own choice. Remember to keep to the subjects so that you can make the most of the seminar!

1. Discuss the value of biodiversity and the consequences of destroying it, in relation to Rachel Sussman's and Jeremy Jackson's videos.
 - a. Based on the general course material, what do you think about how biodiversity has been valued in different times and different places?
2. Based on the video lecture by Penelope Jagessar Chaffer and Tyrone Hayes and the general course material, how has our relationship to and view of bodies changed over history, and what have been the consequences of that?
 - a. A theme of the course has been the mechanistic, machine-like, view on nature (for example Carolyn Merchant's article). How does this relate to the changing historical view of the body?
 - b. Are there differences between the kinds, amounts and ways in which we, our parents, and our grandparents as well as previous generations have been exposed to toxins?
 - c. What do you think the consequences will be of the accumulation and perpetuation of poisonous synthetic chemicals?
 - i. For humanity?
 - ii. For the ecosystem?
3. Discuss what counts as a natural landscape? And what is a landscape, really? Is it a backdrop to humanity as an actor?
 - a. The meaning of the word "landscape" was defined in the 1600s as "painting representing natural scenery". How do you see the landscapes presented in "Manufactured landscapes" in relation to this definition? Has our view of what a "natural" landscape is changed over time?
4. **Mandatory question:** What is the relationship between how humanity has treated and treats its own bodies, the environment and our fellow species? What differences and similarities are there?



- a. Are the reasons for our destructive behavior the same in all the three cases, or are they different?
5. **Mandatory question:** Discuss the tragedy or non-tragedy of the commons.
 - a. How do these perspectives relate to the previous question?
 - b. In which environmental historical issues can you see the tragedy of the commons?
 - i. Discuss if/how the environmental historical issues you've discussed through the lens of the tragedy of the commons might be seen as a non-tragedy of the commons.
 - c. Why has the tragedy of the commons been such an influential idea?
6. Many environmental scholars have suggested that the underlying structure behind the dominance over people based on their gender, ethnicity etc. and the dominance over other animals and nature itself is the same. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.
 - a. How have the lives, reproduction and the death of the aforementioned been subjected to control?
7. How do you see the historical and contemporary relationship of politics and maps? And more specifically, how do you see the historical and contemporary relationship between colonialism and maps?
8. Discuss the possible connections between the term "metabolic rift" and the mechanistic worldview presented in week 48.
 - a. Do you agree or disagree with the authors?

Good luck!

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Course coordinators