

# HH4091 Interdisciplinary History: Southeast Asian and East Asian Environmental History

Nanyang Technological University

Semester 2, AY2018/19

Draft Syllabus

## 1 Course Details

Academic units: 4

Lecture time: 1330-1730 (Tues)

Venue: LHS-TR+32

Instructor: Dr Lin Qi Feng

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Office hours: by appointment

## 2 Course Description

We study the history of the environment of Southeast Asia and East (“Northeast”?) Asia, focusing on what is present-day China and Japan (though we might touch on other territories such as Taiwan, the Korea peninsula, Mongolia, etc.). We will study how “nature” and “the environment” or rather, and more accurately, how *cognate concepts* in Southeast and East Asian societies are understood in the regions throughout history. We will study how these cognate concepts are perceived through the philosophy and worldview of the region and how environmental processes have intertwined with socio-economic, cultural, and political processes. Some of the major themes include forest, agriculture, climate, colonialism, war, industrialism, and environmentalism. By the end of the course, we would have gained a deeper appreciation for the climate and terrain of the two regions, how humans have maintained livelihoods there, and how the environment has played a role in human history.

## 3 Learning Objectives

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

1. Appreciate the role of the environment in history;
2. Understand how nature and the environment are understood in Southeast and East Asia, in contradistinction to Western civilisation;
3. Understand environmental characteristics of the region;
4. Articulate the major environmental processes and events in the history of the region;
5. Understand how the environment and human society have interacted in the history of Southeast and East Asia.

## 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 consists of three dimensions.

- 4.1.1 **Punctuality:** Attendance will be taken at 1:30pm sharp. I would arrive 15 minutes before class.
- 4.1.2 **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.
- 4.1.3 **Reading response:** Before each substantive class, please submit a reading response in NTULearn for the required readings that were assigned. This will require you to: 1) summarize the reading; 2) state the author's arguments; 3) articulate your views on the readings.

Reading responses are due on Sundays before each substantive 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 of **1500 words** 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, at the beginning of class at 1:30pm.

An Important Note: First, preparation for a good presentation of a book or two journal articles requires 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 your commitments in the semester, choose to present at the time that works 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%).

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 of **3000 words (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 Required Texts**

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

Dove, Michael. 2011. *The Banana Tree at the Gate: A History of Marginal Peoples and Global Markets in Borneo*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

### **8 Course Schedule and Readings**

Readings that are intended for presentations are marked by an asterisk (\*).

#### **Week 1 Introduction to Course**

Hudson, Mark J. 2014. "Placing Asia in the Anthropocene: Histories, Vulnerabilities, Responses." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 73 (4): 941-962. doi: 10.1017/S0021911814001582.

#### **Week 2 Chinese and Japanese Perspectives of Nature**

Weller, Robert P. 2006. "New Natures." In *Discovering Nature: Globalization and Environmental Culture in China and Taiwan*, 43–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kalland, Arne, and Pamela J. Asquith. 1997. "Japanese Perceptions of Nature: Ideals and Illusions." In *Japanese Images of Nature: Cultural Perspectives*, edited by Pamela J. Asquith and Arne Kalland, 1–35. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.

Perdue, Peter C. 2010. "Is There a Chinese View of Technology and Nature?" In *The Illusory Boundary: Environment and Technology in History*, edited by Martin Reuss and Stephen H. Cutcliffe, 101–119. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

### **Week 3 Early China**

Lander, Brian. 2014. "State Management of River Dikes in Early China: New Sources on the Environmental History of the Central Yangzi Region." *T'oung Pao* 100 (4-5): 325-362.

Miller, Ian Matthew. 2017. "Forestry and the Politics of Sustainability in Early China." *Environmental History* 22 (4): 594-617. doi: 10.1093/envhis/emx084.

Sanft, Charles. 2010. "Environment and Law in Early Imperial China (Third Century BCE–First Century CE): Qin and Han Statutes Concerning Natural Resources." *Environmental History* 15 (4): 701-721. doi: 10.1093/envhis/emq088.

### **Week 4 Southeast Asia and East Asia**

Lieberman, Victor B. 2003–2009. *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830*. 2 vols. New York: Cambridge University Press.  
Vol 1: Chapter 1, Part A only  
Vol 2: Chapter 1, sections 1–3

Lieberman, Victor, and Brendan Buckley. 2012. "The Impact of Climate on Southeast Asia, circa 950–1820: New Findings." *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (5): 1049-1096. doi: 10.1017/S0026749X12000091.

### **Week 5 Water and Rivers**

Andaya, Barbara Watson. 2017. "Seas, Oceans and Cosmologies in Southeast Asia." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48 (3): 349-371.

Elvin, Mark. 2004. "Water and the Costs of System Sustainability." In *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China*. New Haven: Yale University. 115-164

Ball, Philip. 2017. *The Water Kingdom: A Secret History of China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1.

\*Zhang, Ling. 2016. *The River, the Plain, and the State: An Environmental Drama in Northern Song China, 1048–1128*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### **Week 6 “Frontiers” and Expansion**

Bello, David A. 2005. “To Go Where No Han Could Go for Long: Malaria and the Qing Construction of Ethnic Administrative Space in Frontier Yunnan.” *Modern China* 31 (3): 283–317.  
<http://www.jstor.org/ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/20062612>.

Perdue, Peter C. 2007. “Sustainable Development on China's Frontier.” In *Nature's Past: The Environment and Human History*, edited by Paolo Squatriti, 172–197. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

\*Walker, Brett L. 2001. *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590–1800*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

\*Yeh, Emily T. 2013. *Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

\*Liu, Ts'ui-jung. 1998. “Han Migration and the Settlement of Taiwan: The Onset of Environmental Change.” In *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History*, edited by Mark Elvin and Ts'ui-jung Liu, 165–199.

\*Vermeer, Eduard B. 1998. “Population and Ecology along the Frontier in Qing China.” In *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese*

\*Bello, David. 2010. “The Cultured Nature of Imperial Foraging in Manchuria.” *Late Imperial China* 31 (2): 1–33. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/408284>.

### **Week 7 Volcanism and Earthquakes**

Atwell, William S. 2001. “Volcanism and Short-Term Climatic Change in East Asian and World History, c. 1200–1699.” *Journal of World History* 12 (1): 29–98.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20078878>.

Cao, Shuji, Yushang Li, and Bin Yang. 2012. “Mt. Tambora, Climatic Changes, and China's Decline in the Nineteenth Century.” *Journal of World History* 23 (3): 587–607.

\*Clancey, Gregory K. 2006. *Earthquake Nation: The Cultural Politics of Japanese Seismicity, 1868–1930*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

### **Week 8 Night Soil and Urban Environmental History**

Xue, Yong. 2005. "Treasure Nightsoil As If It Were Gold: Economic and Ecological Links between Urban and Rural Areas in Late Imperial Jiangnan." *Late Imperial China* 26 (1): 41-71.

Kreitman, Paul. 2018. "Attacked by Excrement: The Political Ecology of Shit in Wartime and Postwar Tokyo." *Environmental History* 23 (2): 342-366. doi: 10.1093/envhis/emx136.

\*Rogaski, Ruth. 2004. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*: University of California Press.

### Supplementary

Otaki, Yurina, Masahiro Otaki, and Osamu Sakura. 2007. "Water Systems and Urban Sanitation: A Historical Comparison of Tokyo and Singapore." *Journal of Water and Health* 5 (2): 259-265.

### **Week 9 Revolutionary China**

Peter Ho, "Mao's War against Nature? The Environmental Impact of the Grain-First Campaign in China," *The China Journal* 50 (2003), pp. 37-59.

\*Shapiro, Judith. 2001. *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

\*Gross, Miriam. 2016. *Farewell to the God of Plague: Chairman Mao's Campaign to Deworm China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

### **Week 10 Southeast Asia Smallholder Agriculture - I**

Dove, Michael. 2011. *The Banana Tree at the Gate: A History of Marginal Peoples and Global Markets in Borneo*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.  
Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

### **Week 11 Southeast Asia Smallholder Agriculture - II**

Dove, Michael. 2011. *The Banana Tree at the Gate: A History of Marginal Peoples and Global Markets in Borneo*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.  
Chapters 6, 7, 9, and 10.

### **Week 12 Documentary *Under the Dome***

Hayes, Jack Patrick 2017. "Film Forum: Under the Dome." *Environmental History* 22 (2): 345-348. doi: 10.1093/envhis/emw111.

Shapiro, Judith. 2016. *China's Environmental Challenges*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Chapter 1.

### **Week 13 Group Presentations**