

HH4091 Interdisciplinary History: Southeast Asian and East Asian Environmental History

Nanyang Technological University

Semester 1, AY2019/20

Draft Syllabus – June 23, 2019

1 Course Details

Academic units: 4

Meeting time: Thursdays, 1230–1630

Venue: LHS-TR+32

Instructor: Dr Lin Qi Feng

Email: qflin@ntu.edu.sg

Office hours: by appointment

2 Course Description

We study the history of the environment of Southeast Asia and East 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 entails three dimensions.

Punctuality: Attendance will be taken at 12:30pm 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 **before each substantive class on Tuesdays 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 1000–1500 words** in which they summarize the presented academic work as well as provide reviews by other scholars and share their reflection (**10%**). 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, by the beginning of class at 12:30pm.**

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 of **3000 words** (15%). Peer review of professionalism accounts for the remaining 5%. We will discuss the details in class.

From past experiences, some students might feel that the stipulated assignment lengths are excessive, only to request for its increase closer to the submission date.

5 Plagiarism Policy

All assignments should be original work, consistent with the university’s anti-plagiarism rules. Papers will be evaluated on rigour 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 Some Resources

Franceschini, Ivan, Nicholas Loubere, Kevin Lin, Elisa Nesossi, Andrea E. Pia, and Christian Sorace, eds. 2019. *Dog Days: Made in China Yearbook 2018*: ANU Press.

Open access book available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvfrxqcz>

http://www.minedinchina.com/e_past.html

9 Course Schedule and Readings

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

Week 1, August 15 – Introduction to Course: what is environmental history

Worster, Donald. 1988. “Doing Environmental History.” In *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*, edited by Donald Worster, 289–307. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Voss, James F., and Jennifer Wiley. 2006. “Expertise in History.” In *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance*, edited by K. Anders Ericsson, Neil Charness, Paul J. Feltovich, and Robert R. Hoffman, 569-584. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 2, August 22 – The Perception and Meaning of “Nature”: Chinese and Japanese Views

Williams, Raymond. (1972) 2005. “Ideas of Nature.” In *Culture and Materialism: Selected Essays*, 67-85. London; New York: Verso.

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.

Ebrey, Patricia, and Anne Walthall. 2014. “Connections: The Prehistory of East Asia.” In *East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*, 2–7. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Week 3, August 29 – Southeast Asian Perceptions of Nature

Kathirithamby-Wells, Jeya. 1995. “Socio-Political Structures and the Southeast Asian Ecosystem: An Historical Perspective up to the Mid-Nineteenth Century.” In

Asian Perceptions of Nature: A Critical Approach, edited by Ole Bruun and Arne Kalland. Richmond, Surrey: Routledge.

Boomgaard, Peter. 2016. "Environmental Histories of Southeast Asia." In *Routledge Handbook of the Environment in Southeast Asia*, edited by Philip Hirsch. Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9781315474892.ch3.

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

Supplementary

Dudley, Nigel, Liza Higgins-Zogib, and Stephanie Mansourian. 2009. "The Links between Protected Areas, Faiths, and Sacred Natural Sites." *Conservation Biology* 23 (3): 568-577.
<http://www.jstor.org.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/29738773>.

Week 4, September 5 – Urban Environmental History and Singapore

Cantley, Nathaniel. 1883. *Report on the Forests of the Straits Settlements*. Singapore: Singapore and Straits Printing Office.
<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/233219#page/1/mode/1up>.
Selection

Barnard, Timothy P. 2016. *Nature's Colony: Empire, Nation and Environment in the Singapore Botanic Gardens*. Singapore: NUS Press. Selection.

Tan, Hugh T. W., L. M. Chou, Darren C. J. Yeo, and Peter K. L. Ng. 2010. *The Natural Heritage of Singapore*. 3rd ed. Singapore: Pearson. Selection

Schott, Dieter. 2004. "Urban Environmental History: What Lessons are There to be Learnt?" *Boreal Environment Research* 9: 519–528.

Rajaratnam, S. 1972. *Singapore: Global City*. Singapore: Singapore Ministry of Culture. <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/speeches/record-details/fd2918de-3270-11e4-859c-0050568939ad>.

Selected oral history files

Supplementary

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.

Week 5, September 12 – TBA

Week 6, September 19 – TBA

Week 7, September 26 – Early China

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.

Supplementary

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.

*Schafer, Edward H. 1968. "Hunting Parks and Animal Enclosures in Ancient China." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 11 (3): 318-343. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3596278>.
Samuel Lawrence Evans

*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>.

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

*Cohen, David Joel. 2011. "The Beginnings of Agriculture in China: A Multiregional View." *Current Anthropology* 52 (S4): S273-S293. doi: 10.1086/659965.
<http://www.jstor.org.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/10.1086/659965>.

*Fuller, Dorian Q. 2011. "Pathways to Asian Civilizations: Tracing the Origins and Spread of Rice and Rice Cultures." *Rice* 4 (3-4): 78-92. doi: 10.1007/s12284-011-9078-7.

*Guedes, Jade D'Alpoim. 2011. "Millets, Rice, Social Complexity, and the Spread of Agriculture to the Chengdu Plain and Southwest China." *Rice* 4 (3-4): 104-113. doi: 10.1007/s12284-011-9071-1.

*Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Week 8, October 10 – Climate and Links between Southeast Asia and East Asia

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.

*Kathirithamby-Wells, J. 2005. *Nature and Nation: Forests and Development in Peninsular Malaysia*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

*Ruddiman, William F. 2013. “The Anthropocene.” *Annual Review of Earth and Planetary Sciences* 41: 45–68.

*Marmé, Michael. 2008. “Locating Linkages or Painting Bull's-Eyes around Bullet Holes? An East Asian Perspective on the Seventeenth-Century Crisis.” *The American Historical Review* 113 (4): 1080–1089.

Week 9, October 17 – Water and Rivers

Byrnes, Corey J. 2018. *Fixing Landscape: A Techno-Poetic History of China's Three Gorges*. New York: Columbia University Press. Selection.

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

Supplementary

Zhang, Alice Tianbo. 2018. “Within but Without: Involuntary Displacement and Economic Development.” doi:10.2139/ssrn.3358089.
<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3358089>.

Chang, Yung. 2008. *Up the Yangtze*. New York, N.Y.: Zeitgeist Films.

Jia, Zhang-Ke. 2008. *Still Life*. New York: New Yorker Video.

*Perdue, Peter C. 2005. *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

- *Ling, Zhang. 2016. *The River, the Plain, and the State: An Environmental Drama in Northern Song China, 1048–1128*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- *Schlesinger, Jonathan. 2016. *A World Trimmed with Fur: Wild Things, Pristine Places, and the Natural Fringes of Qing Rule*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- *Mueggler, Erik. 2011. *The Paper Road: Archive and Experience in the Botanical Exploration of West China and Tibet*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- *Wittfogel, Karl A. 1957. "Chinese Society: An Historical Survey." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 16 (3): 343–364.
- *Williams, Dee Mack. 1996. "The Barbed Walls of China: A Contemporary Grassland Drama." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55 (3): 665-691. doi: 10.2307/2646450.

Week 10, October 24 - Revolutionary China

- Shapiro, Judith. 2001. *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 5.
- *Gross, Miriam. 2016. *Farewell to the God of Plague: Chairman Mao's Campaign to Deworm China*. 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.
- *Miller, Ian Jared. 2013. *The Nature of The Beasts: Empire and Exhibition at The Tokyo Imperial Zoo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- *Szonyi, Michael. 2008. *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- *Li, Lillian M. 2007. *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s–1990s*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Week 11, October 31 – Nuclear Issues and Japan

- Pritchard, Sara B. 2013. "An Envirotechnical Disaster: Negotiating Nature, Technology, and Politics at Fukushima." In *Japan at Nature's Edge*, edited by Ian Jared Miller, Julia Adeney Thomas, and Brett L. Walker, 255-279. University of Hawai'i Press.
<http://www.jstor.org.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/j.ctt6wqhb3.17>.

- Matten, Marc Andre. 2018. "Coping with Invisible Threats: Nuclear Radiation and Science Dissemination in Maoist China." *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* 12 (3): 235-256.
- *Figal, Gerald A. 1999. *Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- *Moore, Aaron Stephen. 2013. *Constructing East Asia: Technology, Ideology, and Empire in Japan's Wartime Era, 1931–1945*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- *Walker, Brett L. 2005. *The Lost Wolves of Japan*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- *Arch, Jakobina K. 2018. *Bringing Whales Ashore: Oceans and the Environment of Early Modern Japan*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- *Clancey, Gregory K. 2006. *Earthquake Nation: The Cultural Politics of Japanese Seismicity, 1868-1930*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- *George, Timothy S. 2001. *Minamata: Pollution and the Struggle for Democracy in Postwar Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, distributed by Harvard University Press.
- *Richards, John F. 2003. "Ecological Strategies in Tokugawa Japan." In *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World, 148–192*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- *Morris-Suzuki, Tessa. 1998. "Environmental Problems and Perceptions in Early Industrial Japan." In *Sediments of Time: Environment and Society in Chinese History*, edited by Mark Elvin and Ts'ui-jung Liu, 756–780. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- *Walker, Brett L. 2001. *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590–1800*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- *Walker, Brett L. 2010. *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- *Watanabe, Takehiro. 2013. "Talking Sulfur Dioxide: Air Pollution and the Politics of Science in Late Meiji Japan." In *Japan at Nature's Edge*, edited by Ian Jared Miller, Julia Adeney Thomas, and Brett L. Walker, 73-89. University of Hawai'i Press.
- *Wilkening, Kenneth E. 2004. *Acid Rain Science and Politics in Japan: A History of Knowledge and Action toward Sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Week 12, November 7 – Smallholder Agriculture in Southeast Asia

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 7, 8, and 9.

*Boomgaard, P. 2001. *Frontiers of Fear: Tigers and People in the Malay World, 1600–1950*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
<https://www-jstor-org.ezlibproxy1.ntu.edu.sg/stable/j.ctt1np7f5>

Week 13, November 14 – Group Presentations