



**HIST 468**

## **History of the Pacific Northwest**

Fall 2021 | University of Oregon | 104 Condon Hall  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:20

**Instructor: Steven Beda**

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**Office: 307 McKenzie Hall**

**Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00  
and by appointment**

### **Course Description**

In parts of the Umpqua National Forest trees grow so thick that it's impossible to see for more than thirty feet in any

direction. More than 20,000 salmon still return to the Willamette River system every year to spawn. The fertile soils of Washington's Yakima Valley produce prodigious harvests of apples, cherries, and hops that are prized across the world for their richness and quality. The Columbia is fourth largest river in North America and the dams that span its banks power most of the Northwest. Whatever else it may be, the Northwest is a land of immense natural wealth.

Yet, despite this abundance, Northwesterners continually fight over the region's natural resources. American Indians, commercial fisherman, and sport fisherman regularly argue over salmon quotas. Loggers and environmentalists debate the size and scope of the timber harvest. Urban and rural people clash over land-use planning and the ways grazing land and water are allocated.

This course asks why in this land of plenty—in this region of excess natural wealth—do people fight so fiercely over nature, who owns it, and who gets to use it?

To answer this question we will look at the social, political, economic, and environmental history of the Northwest from the eighteenth century to the present and explore how contemporary debates and problems in our region are products of history. We will explore how race, ethnicity, gender, and class have shaped peoples' access to nature. We will explore how political movements, federal action, and state policies have shaped and reshaped the way people use natural resources. And we will think about changing perceptions of nature and attempt to understand how culture and economic imperatives impact the way people see the physical environment.

Ultimately, this class uses history to give students new perspectives on the present. By exploring the history of resource-use and land-use conflicts in the Northwest's past, this class invites you to think critically and creatively about how such conflicts might be addressed in the future.

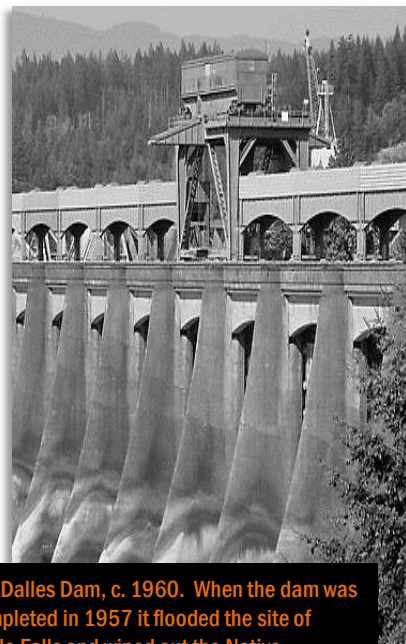
## Learning Objectives

Students who take this course can expect:

- A better understanding of the history of the Pacific Northwest (defined here as British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and northern California) from roughly the eighteenth century to the present;
- A better understanding of environmental conflict in the Northwest and, in particular, the ways that race, ethnicity, gender, class, political movements, political economy, federal and state policy, and urban growth have shaped land-use debates and peoples' access to natural resources;
- To engage in critical discussions about the Northwest's present-day problems and to think about how history can help us better understand and creatively address those problems;
- To experiment with interdisciplinary approaches to the study of history and explore how methodologies from geography, political science, environmental studies, social history, and environmental history can enrich our understanding of both the past and present;
- To hone their writing, analytic, and interpretive skills through thoughtful classroom discussions, written assignments, and careful readings of primary and secondary source documents.



Native American dip-net fisherman at Celilo Falls on the Columbia River, c. 1940



The Dalles Dam, c. 1960. When the dam was completed in 1957 it flooded the site of Celilo Falls and wiped out the Native American fishery that'd existed there for centuries.

## Class Format

This course is organized thematically. We will begin with an investigation of Native Americans and indigenous rights in weeks one through two, examine the capitalist transformation of the Northwest in weeks three and four, study the growth of state power in weeks five and six, and explore the promises and perils of modern environmentalism in weeks seven through ten. Proceeding thematically means there will be some chronological overlap. However, this approach has the benefit of allowing us to more fully delve into a topic, explore it from multiple angles, and more carefully trace the histories of people, politics, and ideas through time.

This class meets twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Most class meetings will be dedicated to lectures. I encourage (and expect) you to be active participants. I will regularly ask questions or ask for your thoughts. In other words, come to class ready to talk and interact with your classmates.

Three Thursdays (October 7, October 21, December 2) will be dedicated to a discussion of readings. See schedule below for more details.

## Assignments

The major writing assignment for this class is a ten-to-twelve page

research essay. Your task will be to identify a contemporary issue, debate, or problem in the Northwest and then situate that debate in its historical context. This project will require you to consult newspapers or other media sources to outline the contemporary dimensions of the issue you're studying, then consult secondary sources to provide the historical context. A list of potential topics and recommend readings will be posted on the course website. On **October 8<sup>th</sup>** you must turn-in a short (a page or less) research proposal that states your intended topic. The final draft of your paper is due on **November 19<sup>th</sup>**.

You must also complete a take-home midterm and a (non-cumulative) take-home final. Both the midterm and final will be a combination of short-answer questions and a longer essay that will ask you to synthesize material presented in class and test your comprehension of lectures and readings. The take-home midterm is due on **October 29<sup>th</sup>** and the take-home final is due on **December 8<sup>th</sup>**. Questions for both the midterm and final will be distributed approximately one week before the due dates.

You are also required to attend the field trip (see discussion on next page) on **November 6<sup>th</sup>**, and complete a shore reaction paper (roughly two pages) due on **November 12<sup>th</sup>**.

Finally, participation is a major part of your grade. Please have the readings completed by the day they are listed in the course schedule below and come to class prepared to discuss the major themes and ideas presented therein. I would also strongly encourage you to develop your own questions about the readings and pose those questions to your classmates.

You must complete every assignment to receive a passing grade in the class.



Wildland firefighters battling a grassland blaze near The Dalles, Oregon, 1948

## Field Trip

On **Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>** we will take a field trip to visit the Bauman Tree Farm.

Attendance is **MANDATORY**. Exceptions will only be made in the case of a family or medical emergency. So please plan accordingly.

Transportation will be provided. We will leave the UO campus (specific location TBD) at approximately 8:00 a.m. and return no later than 3:30 p.m.

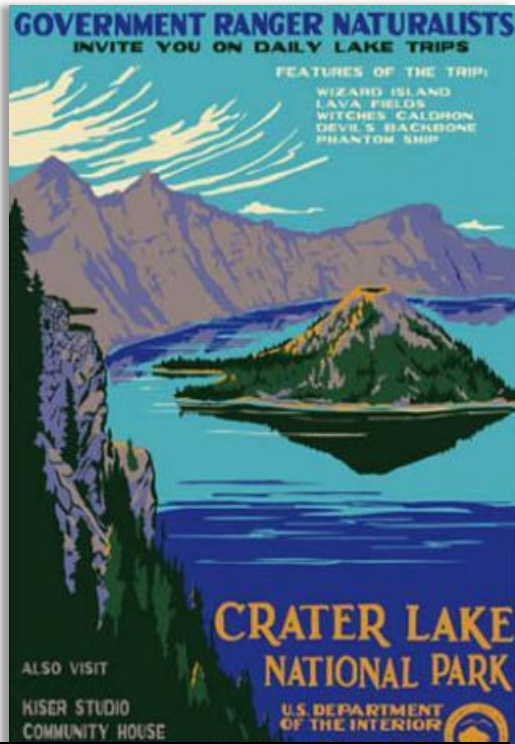
The tour involves an approximately three mile walk. While it is not a difficult hike, we will be walking along gravel roads and up a few steep inclines. If you are concerned about your ability to complete the tour or have any disabilities or medical issues that might make the hike difficult for you, please contact me and we will figure out an alternative assignment.

We will go rain or shine, and the trip will only be cancelled if the weather is so bad that it would make driving or the tour dangerous. This is Oregon in early-November, so rain is likely. Plan accordingly.

After the trip you will be required to write a two page reaction paper that discusses what you learned and what you found interesting. That assignment is due by **November 12<sup>th</sup>**.



Forest in the Hoh River Drainage on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, present day.



## Grading Guidelines

I will follow the guidelines established by the History Department in evaluating your work:

**A+:** Work of unusual distinction.

**A:** Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument.

**B:** Work that satisfies the main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality.

**C:** Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria reasonably well.

**D:** Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards.

**F:** Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or disregard for the assigned question.

For more information on the History Department's grading guidelines, please see

<http://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/>

Travel poster for Crater Lake National Park, c. 1940. During the New Deal, the Works Project Administration hired out-of-work artists to create advertisements and promote tourism in the Northwest

## Grade Breakdown

Final grades for this class will be determined on the following basis:

Participation	20%
Take-Home Midterm	20%
Take-Home Final	20%
Research Paper Proposal	5%
Tree Farm Reaction Paper	10%
Final Research Paper	25%

The following table will be use to translate your point score into your final letter grade:

A+	1000-990
A	989-940
A-	939-900
B+	899-870
B	869-840
B-	839-800
C+	799-770
C	769-740
C-	739-700
D+	699-670
D	669-640
D-	639-610
F	609-0



Oregon's climate and soil are perfectly suited to growing hops like these. Oregon hops are prized by brewers from around the world and find their way into beers as far away as Germany.



The Seattle Space Needle was built during the 1964 World's Fair to rebrand the city as a center of "Space Age" industry and technology.

## Plagiarism

Don't do it. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated and

students found guilty of academic misconduct may face disciplinary action as outlined in the Students' Code of Conduct:

<https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx>

You should familiarize yourself with the University's policies concerning plagiarism and what constitutes academic misconduct:

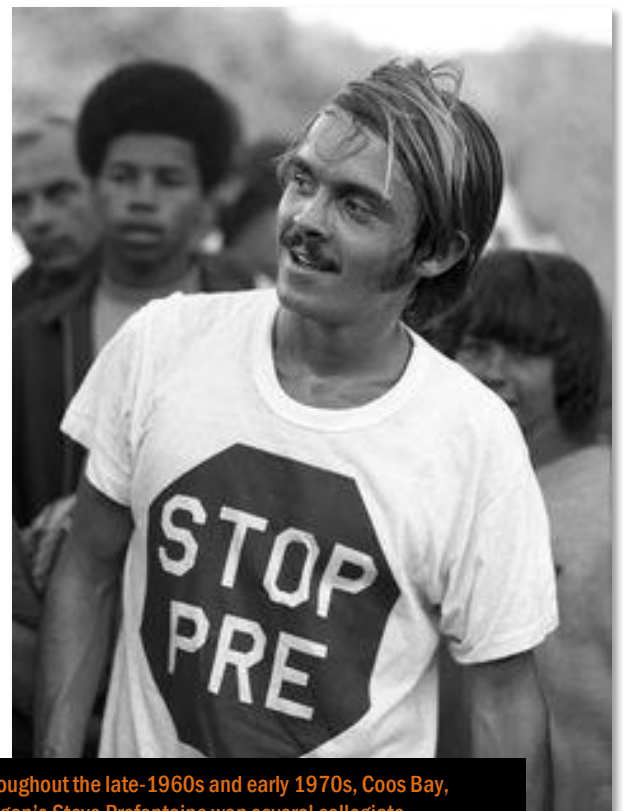
<http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>

Please come see me if you are unsure about how to properly cite and credit another author's work, or if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism.

## Graduate Students

Graduate students taking this course will have different reading and writing assignments. We will

also meet as a group roughly every-other-week to discuss additional readings. I will distribute a separate syllabus for graduate students.



Throughout the late-1960s and early 1970s, Coos Bay, Oregon's Steve Prefontaine won several collegiate championships while running under legendary University of Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman



A high-climber works his way up a giant Sitka spruce in Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, c. 1950

## Required Texts

The following books are required for this course. They are available for purchase at the U of O Bookstore:

- Robert Sullivan, *A Whale Hunt: How a Native American Village Did What No One Thought It Could* (New York: Scribner, 2002);
- Sandy Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union: An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003);
- William Dietrich, *The Final Forest: Big Trees, Forks, and the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992, 2010).

## Course Website

This course uses the Canvas system and you can access the course website via your Canvas front page.

The course website contains this syllabus, assignment guidelines, the questions for the take-home midterm and final (when posted), and lecture slides. Please submit all written work online, via the course website. I will comment on and grade your written work directly in the Canvas system. If you would like me to evaluate and grade a hard copy of your work, please let me know and we can make suitable arrangements.

## Instructor Contact

I am here to help you. I encourage you to come see me during my scheduled office hours, or if you can't make those, let me know and I'm happy to find another time to meet. You can come see me to talk about any of the material covered in class, a reading you didn't quite understand, or if there's some aspect of Northwest history you'd like to know more about. I'm also more than happy to read early drafts of your paper and make suggestions for improvements. Or, you can just stop by just to chat. Email is the best way to get ahold of me. I will respond to all student emails within 24 hours.

# Schedule of Topics and Readings

PART I

## Power and Place in Northwest Indian Country



Actor Marlon Brando and Puyallup Tribal Leader Bob Satiacum protest the government's violation of Native American treaty rights during a "fish-in" on Washington's Nisqually River, March 2, 1964

### WEEK 1

September 28  
Settlers in a Native World

September 30  
Making Indians: Tribes, Treaties, and the Federal Government

### WEEK 2

October 5  
"The Right of Taking Fish at All Usual and Accustomed Grounds:" Native Activism in the Twentieth Century

October 7  
Discussion of Sullivan, *A Whale Hunt*

**RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8 BY 5:00 pm ON COURSE CANVAS SITE**



PART II

## The Stumps of Enterprise: The Capitalist Transformation of the Northwest



Clearcut in the Gordon River Valley, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, c. 2010

### WEEK 3

October 12

Railroaded: Transcontinental Railroads and the Resource Extraction Economy

October 14

Life in the Resource Extraction Economy

**In-class film: *Cuts* (dir. Charles Gustafson, 1980)**

### WEEK 4

October 19

Rebels and Reformers: Radical Politics, from the Depression to the WTO

October 21

Discussion of Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union*

**PART III**

**“Turning Our Darkness To Dawn”  
The State in the Twentieth Century**



**Grand Coulee Dam, c. 1945**

**WEEK 5**

October 26

The Gospel of Efficiency: Bringing Perfection to the Forests and Fields

October 28

“Roll On Columbia, Roll On:” Dams, the New Deal, and Rural Electrification

**TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29 BY 5:00 pm ON COURSE CANVAS SITE**

**WEEK 6**

November 2

The Nuclear Northwest

November 4

The Oregon Story: Tom McCall and Land-Use Planning

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6: TOUR OF BAUMANTREE FARM**

**PART V** | **Ecotopia?**



Environmentalists protest logging in Southern Oregon's Siskiyou National Forest, 2004

**WEEK 7**

November 9  
Troubled Waters in Ecotopia: The Columbia Slough and Environmental Racism in Portland

November 11  
**NO CLASS**

**TREE FARM TOUR REACTION PAPER DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12 BY 5:00 pm ON COURSE CANVAS SITE**

**WEEK 8**

November 16  
The Wonderful World of Pesticides: Agricultural Workers and Farming in the Northwest

November 18  
"No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth:" Radical Environmentalism

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19 BY 5:00 pm ON COURSE CANVAS SITE**

**WEEK 9**

November 23  
**NO CLASS**

November 25  
**NO CLASS**

**WEEK 10**

November 30  
From the Timber Wars to #TimberUnity

December 2  
Discussion of Dietrich, *The Final Forest*

**TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE BY WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8 BY 5:00 pm ON COURSE CANVAS SITE**