

University of California Berkeley
Department of History

HIST103S: Of Whales and Warfare: Environments, Animals, and Militarism

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OUR ANIMATIONS

Warfare dramatically impacts human lives and societies, as well as landscapes, ecosystems, and the lives of animals. But our relationships with nature have also shaped the practices of war. Today, the U.S. military is the world's biggest environmental polluter, biochemical weapons are altering human and nonhuman genetics, and the bodies and movements of bees inspire the design of military drones. How did we get here, and what is at stake?

COURSE CONTENT

This course offers a historical examination of environments, animals, and militarism in the U.S. from the 1800s to present. We will examine the ways that environmental destruction has been weaponized in the U.S. (for example, through the extermination of food species like salmon and bison, or the contamination of fresh water and soils). In turn, we will look at how the environment itself has shaped U.S. weapons (such as in the use of mosquitos and parasites for biological warfare, or the way whale and dolphin communication contributed to sonar technology). By the end of this course, students will understand the “natural” and “nonhuman” world is not just a setting for military violence, but an active agent in shaping the production of war, occupation, and surveillance. We will also pay particular attention to the ways that the relationship between nature and militarism differently impact communities along the lines of Indigeneity, race, class, and gender.

Students will leave this course with an understanding that nature and animals are not just “settings” or “collateral” of militarism—rather, they actively shape and are shaped by warfare and militarization. Ecological violence can be a tool of warfare, warfare has ecological consequences, and even the study of animals/natural resources has a direct co-constitutive relationship with technologies of war.

Students will engage with a *non-traditional* examination of what has often been studied as separate threads: environmental history and the history of warfare/military. This course will demonstrate that these two histories cannot at all be separated. We will explore this assertion, and how different authors approach it, in four ways (each of which is historical) that foreground different approaches and questions: Part One examines how environmental change, and actions directed specifically at environments and animal populations, have (intentionally or unintentionally) also effected a militarization of space. Part Two examines the immediate and lasting impacts and respatializations of land and environments as a result of military activity. Part Three turns

specifically to animals, and investigates the use of animals and impact on animals of military activity, as well as the ways that animal bodies and biological knowledge or animals in turn shapes military strategies and technologies. Part Four highlights the ways that critical scholars, activists, and scientists themselves have disrupted and resisted the structural violences and linkages we have explored throughout the course.

OBJECTIVES

Refine close reading skills for assessing and analyzing secondary sources (academic literature) as well as primary sources.

Develop capacious and rigorous understandings of “environment,” “animal,” and “militarism,” that can be taken elsewhere—applied to historical trends as well as our contemporary moment.

Synthesize key theoretical and methodological approaches to the critical analysis of environment, animals, and military.

Demonstrate growth in skills of archival research and primary document analysis, including contextualizing documents in their historical political and social context.

Successfully navigate the scholarly research process through the final project (defining a problem, writing a literature review, finding scholarly sources, etc).

Demonstrate proficiency in critical scholarly engagement, including self-reflexivity and the process of peer review and revision.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grading will be relative to where you are when you begin the course. Successful progress toward the degree always requires both insight and effort, but the proportions vary from student to student. Following are rough proportions for each area of activity, to help you apportion your efforts:

15% Class participation and Attendance

15% Reading Responses

Select 8 weeks to write a reading response to share with your classmates by Monday before seminar. Write no more than 1 page, 12 point font, and decent tabs. Provide a paragraph summarizing the main claims and arguments of all the authors read for that week, each in relation to the others. Provide a second or third paragraph that assesses the authors’ positions, their use of evidence to make their points, and their arguments in relation to one another, their empirical material, and/or the current or previous ideas covered in class.

15% Archival Document Exercises (select and analyze documents from an archival source, one electronic and one on campus, twice (5% each))

15% Annotated Bibliography

20% Mid-Term Paper

This will comprise the first half of the long-form research paper that you will submit at the end of the semester.

20% Final Paper

This final paper revises and expands on the Mid-Term submission.

ACCESS/ACCESSIBILITY

I am committed to making success in my classes possible for all students. On the first day of class we will establish a Community Agreement about how to be accountable to one another – respectful, participatory, generous and empowering – that we can refer to throughout the semester. If at any point in the semester you find that success is a challenge for you—because of my teaching style, the arrangement of the class, life constraints, technology issues, or a disability—please talk to me. It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact their instructor to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. Resources for ensuring access can be found at dsp.berkeley.edu.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America. Virginia DeJohn Anderson. (2004). ISBN: 9780195304466

Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country. Marsha Weisiger. (2009). ISBN: 978029599141-2

Militarized Landscapes: From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain First Edition - Second Impression Edition. Chris Pearson (Editor), Peter Coates (Editor), Tim Cole (Editor). (2010). ISBN: 978-1441117021.

Militarizing the Environment Climate Change and the Security State. Robert P. Marzec. (2016). ISBN: 978-8166-9723-6

Proving Grounds: Militarized Landscapes, Weapons Testing, and the Environmental Impact of U.S. Bases ed Edwin A. Martini. (2017). ISBN: 9780295741710

“Animals and War”: Confronting the military-animal industrial complex. (2014). ISBN: 978-90-04-23620-2

Disrupting Science: Social Movements, American Scientists, and the Politics of the Military, 1945-1975. Kelly Moore. (2013). ISBN-10: 0691113521

*Please note that we will be reading selections from these texts. Many are available as PDFs on BCourses, or online through OskiCat. Please don't hesitate to ask me if you need help accessing them without purchasing!

**Please note that the syllabus is subject to change

SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: Why History of Science Now? (8/28/19)

Popular Media Articles

Rachel Woodward, “Military Landscapes: agendas and approaches for future research,” *Progress in Human Geography*, 2014, pp40-61.

PART ONE: environments, animals, and militarism

Part One will help us develop a capacious definition of what constitutes “militarism” and “militarization.” We will discuss *why* a capacious definition is analytically useful for both historical research and critical thinking about our contemporary moment. We work toward this objective through the following questions: Why think with environments and animals when asking questions about occupation and militarism? How have imperial projects been enacted—intentionally or unintentionally—through changes in the land? How do animal biopolitics—securing the proliferation or animal life, or determining their death—come to bear on human social, cultural, and political relations? With what consequences and for whom?

WEEK TWO (9/4/19)

Mark Brilliant, “Reading Historiography.”

Aaron Skabelund, “Animals and Imperialism: Recent Historiographical Trends,” *History Compass*, 2013, pp801-807.

Billy-Ray Belcourt, “Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re)Locating Animality in Decolonial Thought,” *Societies*, 2015, pp1-11.

WEEK THREE (9/11/19)

Virginia Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America*. (2004). *Selections*.

WEEK FOUR (9/18/19)

Marsha Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*. (2009). *Selections*.

PART TWO: militarized environments

We are developing a capacious definition of militarism and militarization—active warfare, ongoing occupation, surveillance, and policing. In Part One we also thought about environmental and ecosystemic change as forms of violence in the broader context of U.S. conquest. In Part Two, we dive deeper into the environmental impacts of military activity. Here, we want to develop a capacious definition of *environment* and *landscape*. What are the immediate and lasting reconfigurations of land and resources as a consequence of military activity? How do these authors understand the relationship between militarization and nature? How are changing forms of militarisms shaped by, and in turn shaping, material landscapes and our conceptions of nature?

WEEK FIVE (9/25/19)

J.R. McNeill, “Woods and Warfare in World History,” *Environmental History*, pp388-410.

Chris Pearson (Editor), Peter Coates (Editor), Tim Cole (Editor), *Militarized Landscapes: From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain First Edition - Second Impression Edition*. (2010). *Selections*.

WEEK SIX (10/2/19)

Robert P. Marzec, *Militarizing the Environment: Climate Change and the Security State*. (2016). *Selections*.

WEEK SEVEN (10/9/19)

Peter Harris, “Militarism in Environmental Disguise: The Greenwashing of an Overseas Military Base,” *International Political Sociology*, 2015, pp19-36.

WEEK EIGHT (10/16/19)

Proving Grounds: Militarized Landscapes, Weapons Testing, and the Environmental Impact of U.S. Bases ed Edwin A. Martini. (2017). *Selections*.

PART THREE: animals and militarism

We have investigated the manipulation of the natural environment as a tool of militarism; the impact of militarism on landscapes and the ongoing impacts of such; and now we turn specifically to non-human beings. Throughout the course we have troubled categories of “militarism” and “environment” and so too will we trouble categories of “animal.” We will also heighten our focus on scientific knowledge production. What are trends in the historical relationships between military technologies and animal bodies? What can we learn about socionatural orders by investigating the ways biology and militarism have been inextricably linked?

WEEK NINE (10/23/19)

“Animals and War”: Confronting the military-animal industrial complex. (2014). *Selections*.

WEEK TEN (10/30/19)

Perkins, “Reshaping Technology in Wartime: The Effect of Military Goals on Entomological Research and Insect-Control Practices,” *Technology and Culture*, 1978.

Ritts and Shiga (2016). “Military Cetology.”

William Adams, “Geographies of conservation II: Technology, surveillance, and conservation by algorithm,” *Progress in Human Geography*, 2019, pp337-350.

WEEK ELEVEN (11/6/19)

David Hu, *How to Walk on Water and Climb up Walls: Animal Movement and the Robots of the Future*. (2018). *Selections*.

Adam Dodd, “The Trouble with Insect Cyborgs,” *Society and Animals*, 2014, pp153-173.

Jake Kosek (2010). “Ecologies of Empire: On the New Uses of the Honeybee.”

WEEK TWELVE (11/13/19)

Lisa Meierotto, “A Disciplined Space: The Co-evolution of Conservation and Militarization on the US-Mexico Border,” *Anthropological Quarterly*, pp637-664.

Sarah Jaquette Ray, “Endangering the Desert: Immigration, Environment, and Security in the Arizona-Mexico Borderland,” *Interdisciplinary studies in literature and the environment*, 2010.

Mary E. Mendoza, “Treacherous Terrain: Racial Exclusion and Environmental Control at the U.S.-México Border,” *Environmental History*, 2018, pp117-126.

PART FOUR: resistance, disruption, refusal

Part Four should be an entire course on its own. We have critically examined “militarism,” “environment,” and “animal,” the relationships between the material and ideological machinations and conceptualizations of each in the context of ongoing U.S. settler colonialism and imperialism. Finally, we get to focus on who—and how—are manifesting critiques, social movements, and actions that address the violences we have been studying. How do activists tackle the nexus of environmental harm and occupation? . How do scientists themselves respond to these links between their research and militarism? What do we learn from them about envisioning a politic that seeks justice for humans, non-human animals, and environments?

WEEK THIRTEEN (11/20/19)

Kelly Moore, *Disrupting Science: Social Movements, American Scientists, and the Politics of the Military, 1945-1975*. Kelly Moore. (2013). *Selections*.

Brendon M. H. Larson, "The War of the Roses: Demilitarizing Invasion Biology," *Frontiers in Ecology and Biology*, 2005, pp495-500.

Déborah Berman Santana, "Resisting Toxic Militarism: Vieques vs. the U.S. Navy," *Social Justice*, 2002, pp37-47.

WEEK FOURTEEN (11/27/19 ADMIN HOLIDAY)

NO CLASS

WEEK FIFTEEN (12/4/19)

Ruha Benjamin, ed., *Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life*. (2018). *Selections*.

Kristen Simmons, "Settler Atmospherics," *Cultural Anthropology*, 2017, pp#.

"We Are the Scientists Against a Fascist Government," <https://medium.com/the-establishment/we-are-the-scientists-against-a-fascist-government-d44043da274e>