

HIST 224/ENST 202
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY
SPRING 2024 SEMESTER
AUGUSTANA UNIVERSITY

Dr. Will Wright, Instructor

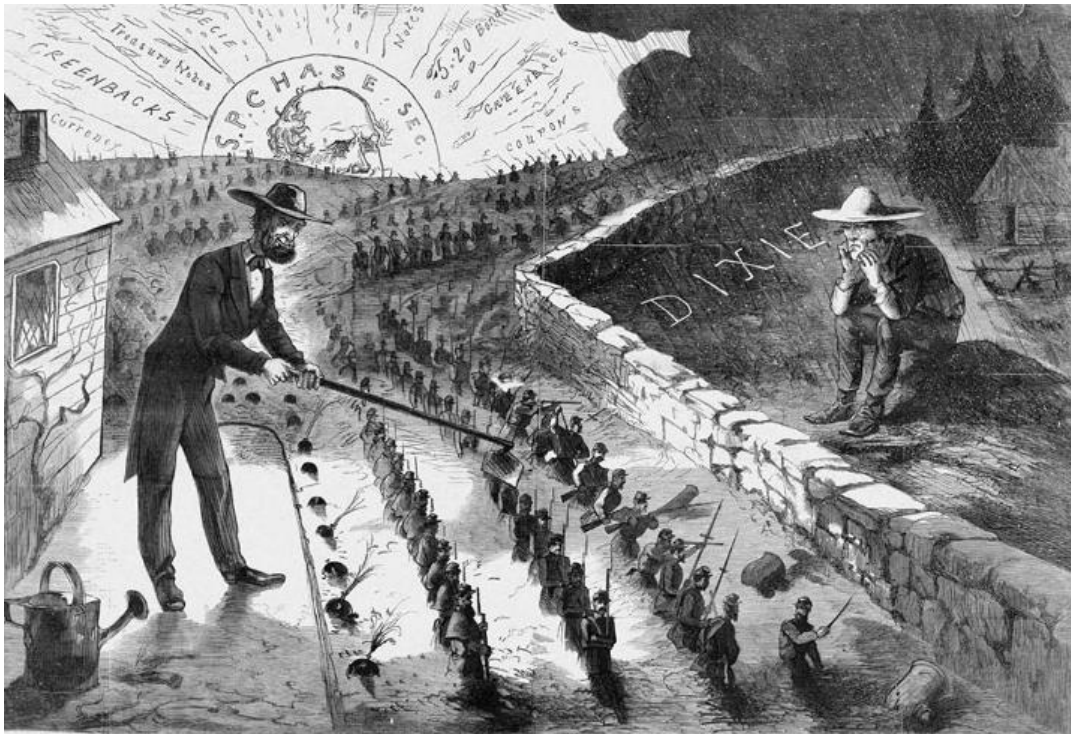
Email: will.wright@augie.edu

Office Location: Madsen Center 236

Course Location: Madsen Center 102

Student “Drop-In” Hours: MWF, 2-4 p.m.

Course Day/Time: MWF, 1-1:50 p.m.



“Symptoms of Spring—Uncle Abraham’s Crop Begins to Shoot,” Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Magazine, 1 April 1864. Why were Union soldiers depicted as garden vegetables tended by President Abraham Lincoln during the U.S. Civil War? Or why did fellow members of the Whig Party, back in 1837, refer to Lincoln as “one of Nature’s Noblemen”? Environmental history, which examines the reciprocal relationship of people and nature over time and space, will provide some answers to those questions during this course.

Course Description

This course examines the interactions of society, nature, and power in North American and United States history with emphasis over the period from pre-conquest to the present. The primary objective is to understand the ways in which changes in the natural world and changes in human societies have been integral, interdependent parts of history. We will focus on three major themes. First, we will study

how nature, and people's use of nature, shaped social, political, and economic systems. Second, we will consider some of the ways that people thought about nature and their place in it. And third, we will examine how people's thoughts and actions altered nature, and the consequences of those alterations for both nature and society.

As we follow these themes through time and space, we will address topics such as epidemics, forests, agriculture, animals, water control and irrigation, soil erosion, extinctions, urbanization, national parks, mass consumption, toxics and pollution, energy transitions, climate change, conservation, environmentalism, and the onset of a new epoch in the Earth's history that some scientists have labeled the Anthropocene. But we also will study the ways that conventional American history subjects—the Revolution, the Civil War, slavery and race relations, industrialization, world wars, and the development of the modern bureaucratic state—were functions of society's interactions with nature.

To study these themes and issues, we will combine lectures, readings, discussion, research, field observation, and writing. The major project is "landscape analysis" by studying and practicing the concepts of common property theory, transect walk methodology, and other tools to understand the history of environmental change at a specific place.

Learning Outcomes

Students who diligently complete this course in good faith will be able to:

- Examine the relationship between culture and environment. *
- Analyze the ways culture and environment influence one another. *
- Evaluate different cultural approaches to understanding our environment and our place in it. *
- Understand approaches to studying environmental history and interpretive processes for examining landscapes as the product of evolving relationships between human actions and natural forces.
- Gain a broad sense of environmental changes in North America – how patterns of land, resource, and water use, as well as beliefs about nature and the natural have shifted, from pre-conquest to the present. Discover how those changes played out in U.S. history – the people, places, biota, and events involved and their impact.
- Develop your ability to think and speak historically – examining the past on its own terms, understanding change and continuity over time, analyzing historical arguments, contextualizing people and places.
- Conduct landscape analysis by researching and interpreting a particular place in-depth.

* Outcomes for an ENST 202: Environmental Culture course

Required Reading

Books (Available for purchase/rental at Online Bookstore)

- Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2002).
- Megan Black, *The Global Interior: Mineral Frontiers and American Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).
- Nancy Langston, *Toxic Bodies: Hormone Disruptors and the Legacy of DES* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

Articles (Available for download on Canvas)

In addition to texts above, there will be articles and book excerpts assigned according to the week in which they are due. See the class schedule below for specific details. Listed here are the articles we will use to understand common property theory for landscape analysis.

- Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162 (13 December 1968): 1243-1248.
- Elinor Ostrom, "Reflections on the Commons," in *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-28.
- Aldo Leopold, "Great Possessions," "Thinking Like a Mountain," and "The Land Ethic," in *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 43-46, 137-140, 237-263.
- Louis Warren, "Going West: Wildlife, Frontier, and the Commons," in *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-Century America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 1-20.
- Mark Fiege, "The Weedy West: Mobile Nature, Boundaries, and Common Space in the Montana Landscape," *Western Historical Quarterly* 36 (Spring 2005): 22-47.

It is imperative that you come to each class session having read the assigned materials beforehand as they will introduce approaches and issues in environmental history. I strongly recommend printing hard copies off to take notes on or bringing your laptop/tablet with comments in the .pdf file.

Grading Components (Weighted by Category)

Field Observation	15%
"Three Lenses" Report	15%
"Commons" Paper	15%
Final Landscape Paper	25%
Book Quizzes (4 @ 5% each)	20%
Attendance	10%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	60-66
B-	80-82	F	0-59
C+	77-79		

Frontispiece from Matthew Hopkins, *The Discovery of Witches* (1674). The witches depicted were Rebecca West and Elizabeth Clarke, as well as various satanic animals in the foreground. In colonial North America, people believed that attendants—devilish imps, cats and other small animals, and weird composites of various creatures—did the bidding of the witches, almost always women, on whom they suckled. Animals featured prominently in what historian Alfred Crosby has called "ecological imperialism."



Grades will be maintained and updated on Canvas. If you have questions or concerns about grades, please contact me via email or talk to me in-person during office hours, before or after class.

Assignments

Field Observation Report (Due March 1)

The course utilizes the Long Assignment method: four (4) smaller, nested assignments that contribute to the larger project goal of learning how to "read" a landscape. In consultation with me, your first task is to go outside and choose a relatively undeveloped landscape around Sioux Falls for study. (No urban or suburban blocks, city parks, playgrounds, schoolyards, picnic shelters, highly paved areas, Augustana University campus, or the like, please.) Your landscape could be, for example, a pasture, an irrigation or drainage system, a buffalo jump or other hunting site, a forest, a stretch of prairie, a riparian zone or floodplain, an alluvial fan, a wildlife preserve or refuge, or other landscape that contains a relatively even mixture of non-human natural features and human alterations and constructions. After you have chosen your landscape, visit it and observe it closely, using as many senses as possible (sight, sound,

smell, touch, taste) and taking notes on what you find. In addition, as you walk across and observe your landscape, make sketches and take photographs of what you see. You should note all geological features (landforms, soils, waterways, etc.), plants and animals (agricultural, exotic, native, wild and feral, etc.), and human features, including earthworks, fences, buildings, machinery, roads, and any other artifacts, alterations, and disturbances evident in the landscape. Then, write a typed, double-spaced paper of at least five (5) pages that describes what you discovered and offers a provisional answer to the following question: In light of what you found, what do you think is the story of this landscape? Your paper should be written in a precise but informal, first-person style and should include—in addition to your minimum five (5) pages of text—three to five (3-5) photographs or sketches of your landscape and its key features.

“Three Lenses” Archival Research (Due April 3)

Your next major task will be to conduct archival and library research on your chosen landscape. You will go to the Siouxland Heritage Museum’s Irene Hall Museum Resource Center and find at least three different kinds of hard copy, non-digital library sources on, or relevant to, your landscape, and at least three archival sources on, or relevant to, your landscape. Ask your librarian and archivist for help in locating the appropriate sources. These must include three different “lenses” on your landscape: state or federal government documents, scientific or resource management journal articles, newspaper and magazine articles, photographs, maps, and the like. Then, you will write a typed, double-spaced paper of at least five (5) pages describing the sources that you found and explaining how each different source provides a unique angle on understanding the history of the landscape that you wrote about in the field observation report. In sum, what are these sources and how do they help you explain the story of your chosen landscape? Your essay should be precisely written but must be rendered in an informal, first-person style, and it must include—in addition to your minimum five (5) pages of text—six (6) photographs of the sources that you found.

Common Property Theory Paper (Due April 12)

Drawing on the articles that propound or use common property resource theory (e.g., Hardin, Ostrom, Leopold, Warren, and Fiege), and using what you have learned so far about your landscape, your third task will be to write a paper in which you explain the significance of common property, or “the commons,” to the history of your chosen landscape. How have different resource users attempted to share the landscape? What landscape features or elements have resulted in conflict or cooperation over time? Your essay must be typed, double-spaced, at least 5 pages in length, and it must be precisely written although in an informal, first-person style.

Landscape Analysis Paper (Due May 15)

Your final task, and the capstone for the course, will be to write a fully-fledged environmental history of the landscape that you have been studying and about which you have written three assignments already. Now, using knowledge and information gained from course lectures, readings, and discussions, and synthesizing it with your field observations, library and archival research, and common property theory analysis, you will write a paper of at least fifteen (15) typed, double-spaced pages that explains the history of your chosen landscape. How does your landscape connect to larger national themes regarding environmental change (as detailed in Anderson, Stoll, Black, or Langston)? In essence,

you will revisit and again attempt to answer the following question: In light of what you now know, what is the story of this landscape?

Book Quizzes

To hold you accountable for the readings, we will have a short quiz consisting of three questions at the beginning of class (first 15 minutes). You may use notes taken on a 5-by-7-inch notecard that I will provide ahead of time. Each book corresponds with a different theme in environmental history, examining peoples' relationships to animals, plants, minerals, and toxics. Please adhere to the pacing guide in the schedule below to keep up on reading. I recommend taking a paragraph worth of notes on each chapter, summarizing its main point and evidence. These books provide models for how you might conduct your landscape analysis paper.

Attendance

Former UCLA men's basketball coach John Wooden, who won 10 NCAA titles, once said that ninety percent of success is just showing up. I will be taking attendance for every class; and your overall attendance will be the first requirement (10%) to your participation grade. If you will be gone for extenuating circumstances (extracurricular activities, family emergency, illness, etc.), please contact me in advance so that we make alternative arrangements for staying up with the instruction.

Learning Environment

Cell Phones and Other Technology

Please ensure that your cell phone is on silent or turned off during class. Texting during class is not acceptable. If you need to take an important phone call, please step out of the classroom. You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes, but please avoid using the devices for other activities (checking email, online shopping, etc.). Your compliance will help to maintain the positive environment for teaching and learning in our class period.

Late Work Policy

All late assignments are still eligible for partial credit (95% after 1 day late, 90% after 2 days late, etc.); please turn them in. In many cases, I am happy to give deadline extensions if you communicate with me about how much more time you need and why.

Recording Disclaimer

Please be advised that class sessions may be recorded for sharing with your classmates. This is the sole intention of this recording, and not intended for use in any broader sense. Should you have any questions or concerns about this, please discuss with the instructor directly.

Academic Integrity, Accommodations, and Well-Being Resources

Honor Code

As a community of scholars, the students and faculty at Augustana University commit to the highest standards of excellence by collectively embracing an Honor Code. As a University of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we understand the individual and collective responsibility we have in fostering integrity. Augustana's ultimate purpose is to form an engaged body of academically excellent, highly articulate, and

morally centered persons. To that end, we pledge that we will abide by the highest standards of academic integrity and that we will abide by the decisions of the joint student/faculty Honor Board.

The Honor Code requires that examinations and selected assignments contain the following pledge statement to which students are expected to sign:

“On my honor, I pledge that I have upheld the Honor Code, and that the work I have done on this assignment has been honest, and that the work of others in this class has, to the best of my knowledge, been honest as well.”

Accessibility

Augustana welcomes students of all abilities to participate in all its courses, programs, services, and activities. If you have a documented disability and are requesting accommodations, please contact Jeff Merkle, Director of Accessibility. His office is located in room 223 of the Madsen Center, and he may be reached at 605-274-4631 or accessibility@augie.edu.

Student Well-Being

Augustana promotes student well-being and healthy self-care by offering a number of services on campus in the areas of counseling services, health services, and other wellness-related resources.

- The **Campus Clinic** is located in the lower level of Solberg Hall and is staffed by a Sanford Health Registered Nurse and Certified Nurse Practitioner. The clinic is available for all medical needs and can be reached at 605-274-5552. Services provided by the RN are covered under the student activity fee and Certified Nurse Practitioner visits will be billed toward insurance.
- Students may contact the **Dean of Students Office** for assistance with mental health and other health-related concerns or help setting up counseling appointments by calling 605-274-4124 or emailing Beth Elam at belam@augie.edu.
- The **Campus Pastor** is available to meet with students around topics of grief, anxiety, vocational discernment, or spiritual care. Contact Pastor Ann Rosendale in the Chapel (605-274-5403) to schedule an appointment).
- Concerns related to academics, career, and vocation may be directed to the **Student Success Center** (605-274-4124). Career and academic specialists are ready and eager to meet with students.
- The **International Programs Office** (605-274-5050) assists international and third culture students when issues of culture shock and adjustment arise, as well as with other cultural elements such as adjusting to U.S. academic and classroom expectations.

All Augustana students have access to confidential counseling services through our campus partners at **Sioux Falls Psychological Services**. Counseling services are available across the street from the Mikkelsen Library—located on Summit Avenue. The door to the counseling services will be on the east side of the building (facing Norton Avenue). Our counselors are licensed professional counselors and specialize in a number of mental health areas including anxiety, depression, transition to college, grief & loss, and many more. Students can

call 605-334-2696 to set up a time that works best. All counseling sessions are covered under the student activity with no billing towards insurance or copays.

Commitment to Diversity

Augustana University is committed to creating and fostering a learning and working environment based on open communication and mutual respect. This is an integral part of the academic mission to enrich our students' educational experiences and prepare them to live in and contribute to a global society. If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination please contact the Title IX Coordinator at 605-274-4044 or belam@augie.edu. If you make a report of this nature to a faculty member, they must notify the Title IX Coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). For more information about options at Augustana, please visit www.augie.edu/titleix.

COVID-19 Policies

Guided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Augustana's own monitoring of the fluid situation in our region, the university has established protocols and guidelines for your own protection as well as for the health and safety of those who teach you, learn alongside you, live in community with you, and serve you. These protocols can be found on the Viking Flex page on the portal. Utilizing current local conditions, AU has thus established the following guidelines to be followed in academic buildings for the launch of the Fall 2022 semester:

- First and foremost, if you are ill, do not come to class.
- If you have COVID symptoms, administer a self-test for COVID-19. Tests are available at the Campus Safety desk in the Morrison Commons and at the Campus Clinic.
- If you test positive, do not come to class. Contact your instructor regarding options for making up missed work, following policies specified on the syllabus.
- If you have symptoms and test negative, wear a mask until symptoms resolve.
- If you have no symptoms, but you have had a known close contact with someone with COVID-19, wear a mask for 10 days and follow CDC guidelines based on your vaccine status.
- If you have no symptoms, but would be more comfortable wearing a mask and/or socially distancing as much as the space you are in allows, please do so.
- Students, faculty and staff who are unvaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear masks.
- Keep in mind that mask-wearing has become a normal occurrence. Consider wearing a mask anytime you feel that you may be coming down with an illness in order to protect those around you. Please be considerate of people who choose to wear a mask and social distance.

As members of Augustana's caring community of students, faculty, and staff, we each have a role to play in keeping one another healthy and safe during this difficult time. Be aware that pandemic-related conditions are dynamic and evolving and may thus require frequently updated protocols.



Protestors led by Reverend Joseph Lowery march against a proposed toxic waste dump in Warren County, North Carolina, in October 1982. The demonstration initiated an environmental justice movement, which drew upon the civil rights tradition and was often at odds with mainstream environmentalists who focused on issues related to wilderness and wildlife.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Please note that topics, readings, and deadlines below are subject to revision.

UNIT 1- CONCEPTUALIZING THE ENVIRONMENT

Week One

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Introduction: History of Your Lunch (It's Apples and Bananas!)

Readings

- None

Week Two

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5

1491: Fire and the Wilderness that Never Was*

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Children of the Corn: Indigenous Peoples and the "Honorable Harvest"

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

The Long Assignment: How to "Read" a Landscape

Readings

- F: William Cronon, "How to Read a Landscape," <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/landscapes.htm>.
- F: Jennifer Price, "Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in LA" Believer Magazine, 1 April 2006, 1 May 2006, <https://www.thebeliever.net/thirteen-ways-of-seeing-nature-in-la/>.

UNIT 2- PIGS, COD, AND HORSES, OH MY! PEOPLE AND ANIMALS IN HISTORY, C. 1500-1783

Week Three

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Lockean Property: The Meaning of Hogs and Fences for Narragansetts and New Englanders

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

71% of the Earth: Marine Environments and Fishing in the Atlantic Economy

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Horses, Bison, and the Nomadic Experiment

Readings

- MWF: Virginia Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, 1-71.

Week Four

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Ecological Imperialism: Animals of Conquest?

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Pox Americana: Animals and Germs

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Field Day! Transect Walk of Local Landscape (Weather Dependent)

Readings

- Virginia Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, 72-171.

Week Five

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

American Revolution and Nature

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Book Quiz and discussion of *Creatures of Empire*

FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Field Observation Report Due

Readings

- Virginia Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, 172-246.

UNIT 3- SOILS, SLAVERY, AND SETTLEMENT: AGRO-ECOLOGY IN HISTORY, C. 1783-1890

Week Six

MONDAY, MARCH 4

Jefferson's Agrarian Ideal and the Westward Moving Grid

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

The Cotton Plant and Southern Slavery

FRIDAY, MARCH 8

Visit the Center for Western Studies or Irene Hall Resource Center

Readings

- MWF: Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth*, 3-66.

Week Seven

NO CLASSES THIS WEEK (SPRING BREAK MARCH 11-15)

Readings

- None

Week Eight

MONDAY, MARCH 18

War Upon the Land: Towards an Environmental History of the U.S. Civil War

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

Sewage or Sanitation? Death of the Organic City

FRIDAY, MARCH 22

Conservation and Preservation

Readings

- MWF: Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth*, 67-169.

Week Nine

MONDAY, MARCH 25

Book Quiz and discussion Soil Mining vs. Soil Husbandry in *Larding the Lean Earth*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27

Visit the Center for Western Studies or Irene Hall Resource Center

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

NO CLASS (Good Friday)

Readings

- M: Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth*, 170-226.

Week Ten

MONDAY, APRIL 1

NO CLASS (Easter Monday)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

“Three Lenses” Paper Due

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

NO CLASS (Gone at Conference)

Readings

- WF: Common Property Theory Readings (e.g., Hardin, Ostrom, Leopold, Warren, and Fiege)

UNIT 4- MINERALS OF MASS CONSUMPTION: ENERGY REGIMES IN HISTORY, C. 1865-1973

Week Eleven

MONDAY, APRIL 8

Iron Horses: Organic and Mineral Energy in the Making of the Transcontinental Railroads

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

Dam Power: Western Rivers as Energy Systems

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

Common Property Theory Paper Due

Readings

- MWF: Megan Black, *Global Interior*, 1-50.

Week Twelve

MONDAY, APRIL 15

Mining the West: From Placer to Hardrock

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

Mass Consumption of Electricity, Mass Destruction in Copper

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

Car Country: Oil and The Great Acceleration

Readings

- MWF: Megan Black, *Global Interior*, 51-147.

Week Thirteen

MONDAY, APRIL 22

Book Quiz and discussion of *Global Interior*

Readings

- M: Megan Black, *Global Interior*, 148-250.

UNIT 5- POLLUTION, BODIES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN HISTORY, C. 1945-PRESENT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

A Total War on Insects from World War I to World War II

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

Better Living through Chemistry? Bodies as Environments

Readings

- WF: Nancy Langston, *Toxic Bodies*, vii-xiii, 1-16.

Week Fourteen

MONDAY, APRIL 29

Shades of Green: The Postwar Environmental Movement

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

Baptized in PCBs: Race, Toxics, and Environmental Justice

FRIDAY, MAY 3

Air Pollution, Global Warming, and Climate Justice

Readings

- Nancy Langston, *Toxic Bodies*, 17-82.

Week Fifteen

MONDAY, MAY 6

Merchants of Doubt: Denial and Deceit in the Public Sphere

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8

Merchants of Doubt: Denial and Deceit in the Public Sphere

FRIDAY, MAY 10

Book Quiz and discussion of *Toxic Bodies*

Readings

- MWF: Nancy Langston, *Toxic Bodies*, 83-166.

Week Sixteen

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 (FINALS WEEK)

Final Examination 1:00-3:00 p.m., Landscape Analysis Paper Due