

NAME: _____

October 2020

SECTION: _____

HISTORY / GEOGRAPHY / ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 460, MIDTERM EXAM

Choose one of the following questions and write an essay of no more than 800-1200 words in response. Be sure to use evidence drawn not only from lectures, but from the readings and discussion sections as well. You do not need to provide citations, but you *should* illustrate and exemplify your arguments with sources you name in your essay. Given your limited word count, it's probably not worth including quotations unless you intend to analyze them closely in your argument.

Remember that it's worth spending 10-15 minutes (no more than that) outlining your answer, and we strongly encourage you to paste your outline at the bottom of your essay so we can see the template you were following in constructing your essay in case you run out of time or leave something out.

This exam will become available to you on Canvas at 2:30pm on Monday, October 12, and you will have until 2:30pm on Tuesday, October 13, to upload your answer to Canvas as a Word or PDF file. We expect you to take no more than three hours in writing your essay (any outline you create should be done within this three-hour limit); if you'd like, you can break divide the three hours into 2-3 segments if you need to take a break. The exam is open-book, so you can consult course materials while you're writing if doing so is helpful to you. That said, our goal is for you to write an essay that represents your own synthesis of what we've studied, so copying and pasting (or merely paraphrasing) course materials will probably not be the best use of your time or the number of words you've been allotted. Finally, we expect this to be your own work, so please do NOT consult with classmates or anyone else in writing it.

1. In comparing William Cronon's *Changes in the Land* and Susan Hill's *The Clay We Are Made Of*, how can we assess the accuracy and reliability of these two very different historical accounts? Is one more "true" than the other? On what do you base your assessment? Please provide evidence from lectures, readings, discussion sections, and/or primary source documents, etc., to support your arguments.

2. Historians have traditionally appealed to human ideas, intentions, institutions, and actions to explain past events. Environmental history also looks to a variety of non-human actors, material conditions, and environmental relationships in constructing its explanations, while also seeking to understand the causes of environmental change itself. Construct a carefully crafted essay using three extended case studies, supported by evidence from readings, lectures, and discussion sections, that seem to you to offer diverse and especially compelling examples of how environmental history works, offering an argument about what you see as the field's most valuable contributions to our understanding of the past.

3. The centuries prior to 1900 saw North America becoming ever more integrated into markets and trade networks that became more geographically extensive over time. Using examples drawn from lectures, readings, and discussion sections, analyze what you see as the most important impacts this process of market expansion and integration had on the lives of native peoples, plants, and animals in North America.

4. Using Sanford Gifford's, "Hunter Mountain, Twilight, 1866" as the focus of your essay (you'll find a reproduction of this painting on the next page), identify 3 major themes of American environmental history that we've explored in class so far and discuss how they relate to elements visible (or perhaps not visible?) in this painting. Be sure to ground your analysis by connecting this painting to historical details and ideas drawn from our readings, lectures, and discussion sections to illustrate and support your arguments and to explain the historical significance of the themes you select.



Sanford Robinson Gifford, "Hunter Mountain, Twilight," 1866

This is quite a high-resolution image, so you should be able to zoom in if you want to explore it in greater detail.

You can also find an even higher resolution version here:

<https://conversations.terraamericanart.org/artworks/hunter-mountain-twilight>