

Geography 359

AUSTRALIA: Environment and Society

Instructor: Dr. Morgan Robertson (mmrobertson@wisc.edu)

Office Hours: TBA

Office Location: 208 Science Hall

Classroom: Science Hall 360

Lecture Meeting Times: MWF 1:20-2:10

*Here is a land in distant seas
Full of all contrarities.*

anonymous Australian poet, 1850

Australian history is almost always picturesque; indeed, it is so curious and strange, that... it does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies.

Mark Twain, *Following the Equator*, 1897

... Nature has, as it were, garbed herself in the robes of a teacher and displayed a continent with the least complexity of outline, build and structure, so that it may be said to resemble a "blackboard" on which our geographical problems may be elucidated.

Griffith Taylor, *Australia*, 1940

Australia is a settler country, a former British colony, the scene of indigenous genocide, a mythical unknown, a prison, a biophysical puzzle, home to a startling diversity of life, a cradle of modern democracy, and a powerful industrial economy with a rich resource base. As such, it serves in many ways as a mirror for the US – even matching the US roughly in size, if not in population. The two countries share many elements of a common history and biogeography and yet the human and environmental geographies of the two countries have traced very different paths into the modern world.

This course is an introduction to the human and environmental geography of "The Lucky Country," a sobriquet embraced since the 1960s in celebration of its abundant resources, general affluence, stunning natural beauty, and the perception that it is not entwined in the dark historical complexities of Europe and Asia. So far, much like the US. However, this title was bestowed ironically in the 1960s by an author, Donald Horne, whose view was that Australia hadn't quite earned its good fortune and good standing in the world. Later, Horne said of his quotation:

When I invented the phrase in 1964 to describe Australia, I said: 'Australia is a lucky country run by second rate people who share its luck.' I didn't mean that it had a lot of material resources ... I had in mind the idea of Australia as a [British] derived society whose prosperity in the great age of manufacturing came from the luck of its historical origins ... In the lucky style we have never 'earned' our democracy. We simply went along with some British habits.

Horne is exemplifying the long tradition in which the country's people and landscapes have often been viewed (often by Australians themselves) as insufficient, inverted, or irredeemably alien, especially when compared with Europe. And yet Australia hovers near the top of all indices of prosperity and development, year after year, and in American media it is often presented as home to a set of endless beaches, environmentally sustainable development, quirky progressive politics, and an unequalled richness of biodiversity. It is hard to understand modern Australian human-environmental relations understanding the complex history of relationships between colonizing Europeans and Australian Aboriginal people, and the relationships between both groups and the landscape. In that way, again, Australia is a mirror for the US, but the vast differences in the biophysical landscape have resulted in a very different set of relationships than obtain in the US.

This course is introductory in that it is not meant to provide in-depth study on particular aspects of Australian geology, ecology, society or culture: rather, we will be treating such topics in a survey manner. This is appropriate to a 300-level class, and is also necessary because of the near-total lack of any Australian curriculum at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Course goals include:

- Understanding the biophysical characteristics of the Australian continent
- Understanding the resource challenges of managing biodiversity in Australia, and some of the strategies characteristic of Australian government and society.
- Understanding how climate change may specifically impact Australia
- Understanding the socio-environmental relations characteristics of Aboriginal Australians, both historically and today.
- Understanding the colonial process of settlement, genocide, and assimilation as it unfolded in Australia.
- Understanding the general demographic, political and geographic patterns characterizing modern Australia
- Understanding Australia's place in the global environment and in economic/political globalization.

There is no required textbook for this class, but you will be expected to do weekly readings, to attend class, and to complete required assignments.

Evaluation

There will be a number of assignments during the course of the semester, requiring the student to report on an aspect of Australian environment and society.

Map Library Assignment (10%): The Cartography Library will provide a set of maps of Australia covering a range of themes. There will be an assignment sheet that you will complete on your own time, visiting the library (which is on the 3rd Floor of Science Hall).

Herbarium Assignment (10%): UW Herbarium will provide a collection for viewing, and there will be an assignment sheet for you to complete on your own time.

CARTO Assignment (20%): Each assignment will be worth 20% of the final grade. The topics can be drawn from the list of weekly topics given below. Each student will submit one geographic analysis using the CARTO application that has been prepared with data for the class.

The CARTO assignment will be graded on the following rubric:

Conceptual: 60% of the grade will be based on the conceptual strength of the project. How clear is the argument or discussion? How organized and complete is the narrative or analysis? This is not about being right or wrong, it's about communicating a concept effectively.

Aesthetic: 30% of the grade will be based on the visual composition and appropriateness of aesthetic choices for communication about the topic.

Technical: 10% of the grade will be based on the mastery of the technical process of producing the map.

The specifics of these assignments will be provided in documents loaded on to the course's Canvas page on Learn@UW. Assistance with CARTO can be obtained from the Design Lab in the College Library (HC White).

Book/Movie Report (20%): Read a book, or watch three movies, from the supplied list and write a brief report on how it reflects people-environment relations in Australia.

Exams (40%): There will be two exams in this course, one in late October, and one on the last day of classes. These will be a mix of short answer, matching, and map usage. They are NOT cumulative, and there is no final exam. Exams will cover both reading and lecture material. Each will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Grading Scale: This course is graded on the following scale, where scores are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. Scores falling exactly on the 0.5% mark will be rounded up.

A: 92-100%

AB: 88-91%

B: 82-87%

BC: 78-81%

C: 70-77%

D: 60-69%

F: =/ $<$ 59%

The instructor reserves the right to use professional judgment to adjust the scale to make final grades reflect the quality of work performed by the class as a whole.

- The adjustment will only be made in the direction of more generous grading; it will never make the grading scale more strict than what is given above. In other words, an 82% will always be a B, but it is possible that the instructor will expand downwards the numeric range of B grades (or any other grade). This determination will be made only after all assignments have been graded.
- In no case will any student receive a final grade higher than another student who has achieved a higher percentage score.

Class Policies:

- You are expected to attend all classes and to take comprehensive notes on lectures and reading materials. You will not do well in this class if you do not follow that advice.
- You will be expected to help maintain a civil and focused classroom environment. This means no chatting, no cell phone calls, no texting, no surfing the internet, and no reading newspapers.
- There will be no make-up exams as a rule, except for 'excused' absences. Excused absences are those arranged with me **before an exam** and for University-approved reasons (per UW Administrative Code) or those documentable as health- or crisis-related after an exam. You also are entitled to an excused absence for the purpose of observing a religious holiday; but you must notify me of your request for one during the first week of class.
- Note that all exams are in the usual classroom for the course, and that the third exam is scheduled during the class exam period in Finals Week.
- If you find yourself falling behind, or having trouble with any part of this course, please see me sooner rather than later.
- It is assumed that you are familiar with University policy on cheating and plagiarism as set forth in your copy of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- **Late work will be accepted at a discount rate of 15% per day late.**

Classroom Civility

You are expected to contribute to an environment of mutual respect and open discussion. Any actions or words which, in the opinion of the instructor, degrades the environment of mutual respect and open discussion may be met with disciplinary action. Behavior which disrupts the classroom environment will be subject to disciplinary action proportional to the severity of the disruption, and may include dismissal for the day and the forfeit of assignment grades.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

It is assumed that you are familiar with University policy on cheating and plagiarism as set forth in UWS 14. UWS 14 is the chapter of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative code that regulates academic misconduct. UW-Madison implements the rules defined in UWS 14 through our own "Student Academic Misconduct Campus Procedures." UWS 14.03 defines academic misconduct as follows.

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation;
- paraphrasing from the web without crediting the source;
- using notes or a programmable calculator in an exam when such use is not allowed;
- using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one's own by not properly crediting the originator;
- stealing examinations or course materials;
- changing or creating data in a lab experiment;
- altering a transcript;
- signing another person's name to an attendance sheet;
- hiding a book knowing that another student needs it to prepare an assignment;
- collaboration that is contrary to the stated rules of the course, or tampering with a lab experiment or computer program of another student.

Plagiarism is the use of text from **any source** without attribution. If you repeat **your own words** from an earlier composition, without citation or quotation marks, it is still plagiarism and held to the same standard.

If you are accused of misconduct, you may have questions and concerns about the process. If so, you should feel free to call SAJA at 263-5700 or send an email to dean@studentlife.wisc.edu.
(This section adapted from: <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/samplesyllabus.html>)

Course Schedule and Readings

Topic 1: Introduction to Australia

Susan Maushart, 2011. *Australia, we don't know you, but we love you, say our American friends.*

John Hirst, 2008. An Oddity from the Start. *The Monthly.*

The state of Australia: Our environment, 2014

Topic 2: People-Environment Geography

Griffith Taylor, 1940. *Australia*, Chapter 19

Tim Flannery, 1994. *The Future Eaters*, Chapter 33

Topic 3: Australian Geomorphology

Tim Flannery, 1994. *The Future Eaters*, Chapter 6

ABC, 2016. *The mining boom that changed Australia.*

Topic 4: Australian Biogeography and Climate

Tim Flannery, 1994. *The Future Eaters*, Chapter 8

Neville Nicholls, 1989. How Old is ENSO? *Climatic Change* 14: 111-115]

NOVA Australia's Vanished Beasts Guide

Topic 5: Marsupials and Monotremes

David Smith, 1990. *Continent in Crisis*, Chapter 2

Topic 6: Eucalyptus

Stephen J. Pyne, 1991. *Burning Bush: A Fire History of Australia*. Chapter 1.

The Rise and Fall of the Gum Tree, Nexus.

House, A. 1992. Eucalypts: Curse or Cure? The impact of Australia's 'World Tree' in other countries. Canberra, ACIAR.

Australian Story: Eucalyptus. Website, University of Technology, Sydney.

Topic 7: Aboriginal settlement

Josephine Flood, 2006. *The Original Australians: Story of the Aboriginal People*. Chapter 6.

Topic 8: Fire Ecology and Firestick Farming

Rhys Jones, 1969. Fire-Stick Farming. *Australian Natural History*, 16, 224-28.

Stephen J. Pyne, 1990. Firestick History. *Journal of American History* 76(4), 1132-1141.

R. Bird et al., 2008. The 'fire stick farming' hypothesis: Australian Aboriginal foraging strategies, biodiversity, and anthropogenic fire mosaics. *PNAS* 105(39): 14796-14801.

A. Gill et al. 2002. Fire regimes and biodiversity: legacy and vision. In Bradstock et al (eds), *Flammable Australia: The Fire Regimes and Biodiversity of a Continent*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Topic 9: Dreamtime and Songlines

Bill Gammage, 2013. *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*. Chapter 4.

Creative Spirits, 2016. What is the 'Dreamtime' or the 'Dreaming'?

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/what-is-the-dreamtime-or-the-dreaming>

Helen Watson and the Yolgnu Community. 2008. Singing the Land, Signing the Land.

<http://singing.indigenouknowledge.org/home/contents>

Exam 1

Topic 10 European Colonization

Robert Hughes, 1985. *The Fatal Shore*. Chapter 3 (pp. 43-51).

Babakueria. 1988. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUMpPgMGce8>

Thomas Keneally, 2009. *Australia: Origins to Eureka*. Chapter 15.

Tim Flannery, 1998. *The Explorers*. Introduction, William Dampier, Watkin Tench.

Topic 11: Nature as Prison

Thomas Keneally, 2005. *Commonwealth of Thieves*. Chapter 1.

Robert Hughes, 1985. *The Fatal Shore*. Chapter 17.

Topic 12: Landscape, Art, and Literature

Bonyhady, 1985. *Images in Opposition: Australian Landscape Painting, 1801-1890* (Chapter TBA)

Taylor, 1990. *Australian Architecture since 1960*. (Chapter TBA)

Topic 13: The Great Barrier Reef

UNESCO report on Great Barrier Reef (summary):

<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2012/whc12-36com-7BAde.pdf>

Topic 14: The Wet Tropics

Topic 15: The Red Centre

Topic 16: Flood, Drought and Bushfire

O'Gorman, Emily, *Flood Country: An Environmental History of the Murray-Darling Basin*

(Collingwood: CSIRO Publishing, 2012) (Chapter TBA)

Topic 17: Australian Resource Geography

- Butzer, Karl W., and David M. Helgren, "Livestock, land cover, and environmental history: The tablelands of New South Wales, Australia, 1820–1920", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95 (2005) 1, 80-111.
- Martin et al. 2016. Mining in Aboriginal Australia. In Gilberthorpe and Hilson, eds., *Natural Resource Extraction and Indigenous Livelihoods*.
- Mudd, 2010. The Environmental sustainability of mining in Australia: key mega-trends and looming constraints. *Resources Policy*.
- Dargavel, 1995. *Fashioning Australia's Forests* (Chapter TBA)

Topic 18: Aboriginal Survival, Reconciliation and Land Rights

- Shaun Tan, 2010. *Rabbits*
- National Sorry Day Letter, 2007
- Long, Jeremy. 1996. Frank Hardy and the 1996 Wave Hill Walkoff. *Northern Perspective*.
- Mabo and Wik case summaries

Topic 19: Australian Conservation and Climate Change

- Low, 2002. *Feral Future: The Untold Story of Australia's Exotic Invaders* (Chapter TBA)
- Jensen, L. 2011. The whiteness of climate change. *The Journal of the European Association of Studies on Australia* 2(2).

Exam 2

Further reading

Aboriginal Culture and Civil Rights

- Broome, Richard. 1982. *Aboriginal Australians*. North Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Reynolds, Henry. 1989. *Dispossession: Black Australians and White Invaders*. North Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Flood, Josephine. 2004. *Archaeology of the Dreamtime: The story of prehistoric Australia and its People*. Marlestone, SA: JB Publishing.
- Flood, Josephine. 2006. *The Original Australians: Story of the Aboriginal People*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Hallam, Sylvia J. 2014. *Fire and Hearth: a study of Aboriginal usage and European usurpation in south-western Australia*. Perth: UWA Press.
- Gammage, Bill. 2012. *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Rose, Deborah B. 2013. *Wild Dog Dreaming: Love and Extinction*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

- Rose, Deborah B. 1991. *Hidden Histories: Black Stories from Victoria River Downs*. Acton, ACT: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Rose, Deborah B. 2002. *Country of the Heart: An Australian Indigenous Homeland*. Acton, ACT: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Rose, Deborah B. 1994. *Dingo Makes us Human: Life and Land in an Australian Aboriginal Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, Deborah B. 1996. *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal views of Landscape and Wilderness*. Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission.

History of European Colonization and Exploration

- Moorhead, Alan. 1963. *Cooper's Creek*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Trainor, Luke. 1994. *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, conflict and compromise in the late nineteenth century*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ryan, Simon. 1996. *The Cartographic Eye: How explorers saw Australia*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hughes, Robert. 1986. *The Fatal Shore*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Murgatroyd, Sarah. 2002. *The Dig Tree: The story of bravery, insanity, and the race to discover Australia's wild frontier*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Keaneally, Thomas. 2009. *Australians: Origins to Eureka*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Welsh, Frank. 2006. *Australia: A new history of the Great Southern Land*. New York: Overlook Press.
- Heathcote, R.L. 1965. *Back of Bourke: A Study of Land Appraisal and Settlement in Semi-Arid Australia*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press.
- Keaneally, Thomas. 2006. *A Commonwealth of Thieves: The Improbable Birth of Australia*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Flannery, Tim (ed.). 1998. *The Explorers: Stories of discovery and adventure from the Australian frontier*. New York: Grove Press.
- Clendennin, Inga. 2005. *Dancing with Strangers: The true history of the meeting of the British First Fleet and the Aboriginal Australians, 1788*. New York: Cannongate.

Environmental and Natural History

- Flannery, Tim. 1994. *The Future Eaters*. Sydney: Reed New Holland.
- Smith, David. 1990. *Continent in Crisis: A natural history of Australia*. Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Press
- Carter, Paul. 1987. *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bryson, Bill. 2000. *In a Sunburned Country*. New York: Broadway Books.

- Lines, William J. 1991. *Taming the Great South Land: A history of the conquest of nature in Australia*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Taylor, Griffith. 1943. *Australia*, 2nd ed. New York: Dutton & Co.
- Pyne, Stephen. 1991. *Burning Bush: A fire history of Australia*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Woodford, James. 2000. *The Wollemi Pine: The incredible discovery of a living fossil from the age of the dinosaurs*. Melbourne: Text Publishing.
- Low, Tim. 2001. *Feral Future: The untold story of Australia's exotic invaders*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dargavel, John. 1995. *Fashioning Australia's Forests*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rolls, Eric. 1969. *They all ran wild: The animals and plants that plague Australia*. London: Angus & Robertson.
- Chatwin, Bruce. 1987. *The Songlines*. New York: Penguin.
- Hay, Ashley. 2002. *Gum: The story of eucalypts and their champions*. Sydney: Duffy & Snellgrove.
- Paddle, Robert. 2000. *The Last Tasmanian Tiger: The History and Extinction of the Thylacine*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Low, Tim. 2002. *The new nature: Winners and losers in wild Australia*. New York: Viking Press.

Ecology, Botany and Zoology

- Groves, R.H. (ed.). 1994. *Australian Vegetation*, 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, Jann E. & John C.Z. Woinarski. 1997. *Eucalypt Ecology: Individuals to Ecosystems*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dickman, Christopher & Rosemary W. Ganf. 2008. *A Fragile Balance: The extraordinary story of Australian marsupials*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bowman, David M.J.S. 2008. *Australia's Rainforests: Islands of Green in a Land of Fire*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Keast, Alan (ed.) 1981. *Ecological Biogeography of Australia. Vol. 1: Development of the Environment*. Boston: Dr. W. Junk bv Publishers.
- Keast, Alan (ed.) 1981. *Ecological Biogeography of Australia. Vol. 2: Flora*. Boston: Dr. W. Junk bv Publishers.

Modern Environmental Politics and Society

- Hutton, Drew & Libby Connors. 1999. *A history of the Australian environmental movement*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Birrell, Robert, Doug Hill & John Stanley (eds.). 1982. *Quarry Australia? Social and environmental perspectives on managing the nation's resources*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Crowley, Kate & KJ Walker (eds.) 2012. *Environmental Policy Failure: The Australian Story*. Prahran, Vic: Tilde University Press.
- Hage, Ghassan. 2000. *White Nation: Fantasies of White supremacy in a multicultural society*. New York: Routledge.
- McLeod, A.L. (ed.) 1963. *The Pattern of Australian Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Macintyre, Stuart. 2009. *A Concise History of Australia*, 3rd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Curran, James & Stuart Ward. 2010. *The Unknown Nation: Australia after Empire*. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press.
- Lindenmayer, David et al. (eds.). 2008. *Ten Commitments: Reshaping the Lucky Country's Environment*. Collingwood, Vic: CSIRO Publishing.