

**E&ES 1XXz: Natural History of the Connecticut River Valley
2020 winter session
Science Center 309**

Instructor: **Dana Royer**
 droyer@wesleyan.edu (Phone: 860-685-2836)

Course Description

Please note: readings and assignments will be due during winter break, prior to arriving on campus for Winter Session. Please visit the Winter Session website for the full syllabus – <http://www.wesleyan.edu/wintersession>. What did Middletown look like 200 million years ago? What about 20,000 years ago, or 200 years ago? The natural history of Middletown and the broader Connecticut River valley is a rich tapestry. In this course, we will explore some of its major threads, including the geologic, glacial, Native American, early European, and industrial histories. The primary goal of the course is to deepen your sense of place for this valley that you call home during your four years at Wesleyan.

Expectations

Prior to the start of class, you are expected to: read “The Face of Connecticut” by Michael Bell; propose (and vet with the instructor) a research topic on one aspect of the valley that will become your final paper; and complete the assignments for the first day of class. The primary modes of evaluation are: written responses to prompts about the readings and classroom material (to be completed before each class day) (50%); a five-page final paper (30%); a short presentation about your final paper (10%); and general participation (10%).

The majority of the class time will be spent visiting sites in the valley, both indoor and outdoor. You must be prepared to spend multiple hours outside, including walking up to two miles. The presence of snow may cause some trips to be postponed or cancelled. To remain flexible for these possible contingencies, students should keep the entire January 7-21 block open in their schedules.

Text

All readings are available electronically on Moodle.

Grading

Daily written responses	50%
Final paper	30%
Presentation on final paper	10%
Participation	10%

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at Wesleyan, and all members of the University are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts violate the fundamental ethical principles of the Wesleyan community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

In other words, everybody should follow the golden rule (and this includes me): Treat others only in ways that you're willing to be treated in the same situation.

This policy is consistent with the University's honor code, which can be viewed at: <https://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/index.html>

Course Outline

Before course starts:

- Read the book "The Face of Connecticut" by Michael Bell (1985). It is available electronically on Moodle (preferred format) and here: http://70.91.221.154/face_of_ct/
- Respond to written prompts about the book (the list of questions is on Moodle)
- Propose a topic for your final paper. The topic must be related to the natural history of the Connecticut River valley (where "natural history" can include human history). Please discuss your proposed topic with Professor Royer before finalizing your proposal. The proposal should clearly state what you seek to investigate, why the topic is interesting, and how you intend to collect the appropriate information; it should not exceed one page double-spaced.

Tuesday, January 7th (theme: geology)

Start time: 10:00

Approximate end time: 5:00

Readings and assignments due:

- See "Before class starts" above
- Read descriptions of field sites (posted on Moodle)
- Respond to prompts about field sites (the list of questions is on Moodle)

Classroom activities:

- Introduction to class
- Introduction to CT River valley
- Lecture on the geology of the CT River valley
- Review responses to prompts about today's class

Field activities:

- Hike up Mt. Higby (overview of CT rift basin)
- Powder Hill Dinosaur Park (dinosaur footprints)
- Target parking lot in Meriden (pillow basalts)
- Westfield Falls (basalts)
- CVS parking lot in Cromwell (contact between basalt and brownstone)
- Miner Brook lake beds (fish fossils)
- Rt. 9 southbound on-ramp at exit 21 (cyclicality of beds)

Thursday, January 9th (themes: geology and glacial histories)

Start time: 10:00

Approximate end time: 4:00

Readings and assignments due:

- **Expanded outline of final paper** (should contain all of your arguments—can be in bulleted form; length should be about two pages double-spaced)
- Read descriptions of field sites
- Respond to prompts last class and about today's field sites

Classroom activities:

- Review responses to prompts about last class and today's class

Field activities:

- Beneski Museum of Natural History at Amherst College
- Varves at UMass Amherst (glacial Lake Hitchcock)
- Turners Falls (basalt and brownstone) and Mackin gravel pit (delta of glacial Lake Hitchcock)
- Dinosaur Footprint Reservoir (dinosaur footprints)

Saturday, January 11th (theme: glacial history)

Start time: 10:00

Approximate end time: 3:00

Readings and assignments due:

- Read descriptions of field sites
- Respond to prompts last class and about today's field sites

Classroom activities:

- How to write a paper and give a talk; primary vs. secondary sources
- Lecture on glacial history
- Review responses to prompts about last class and today's class

Field activities:

- Indian Hill Cemetery (drumlin, Dr. Barratt tombstone, Native American history)
- Sand pit in Dividend Pond Open Space [or Glastonbury dump] (sediment dam for glacial Lake Hitchcock)
- Hale's Brook delta fan (alluvial fan near eastern border fault)

Monday, January 13th (themes: Native American and early European histories)

Start time: 10:00

Approximate end time: 3:00

Readings and assignments due:

- Read parts I and II about the Wangunk (Karen Cooper)
- Read "Pre-colonial History of the Wangunk" (Lucianne Lavin)
- Read "Middletown, 1650-1950" (Willard Wallace)
- Read section about slavery in "A Pictorial History of Middletown" (Elizabeth Warner)
- Read "College by the River" (Erik Hesselberg)
- Respond to prompts last class and about today's field sites

Classroom activities:

- Peer evaluation of final paper draft
- Review responses to prompts about last class and today's class
- Prepare for guest

Field activities:

- Wesleyan University Special Collections
- Wesleyan University Archeology Collections (Beman Triangle)
- Riverside Cemetery / Founders' Rock (Middletown history)
- Middlesex County Historical Society
- Institute for American Indian Studies

Wednesday, January 15th (themes: Industrial and ecological histories)

Start time: 10:00

Approximate end time: 3:00

Readings and assignments due:

- **Full draft of final paper** (maximum of five pages double-spaced excluding figures, bibliography, etc.)
- Readings about industrial history
- Read section in "Archaeology of mineral and waterpower resources in northwest Connecticut" (Robert Gordon and Michael Raber)
- Read "Beckley blast furnace"
- Read section in "Second Nature" by Michael Pollan
- Respond to prompts last class and about today's field sites

Classroom activities:

- Review responses to prompts about last class and today's class

Field activities:

- Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History
- Beckley Iron Furnace State Park
- Cathedral Pines

Friday, January 17th (themes: Brownstone and sea level histories)

Start time: 10:00

Approximate end time: 3:00

Readings and assignments due:

- Read "Climate change and the rise and fall of sea level over the millennium" (Johan Varekamp and Ellen Thomas)
- Read "Heart of stone: the brownstone industry of Portland, Connecticut" (Alison Guinness)
- Read about Hall-Atwater brownstone (Peter LeTourneau)
- read transcripts about Brownstone quarry
- Respond to prompts last class and about today's field sites

Classroom activities:

- Peer evaluation of final paper draft
- Review responses to prompts about last class and today's class
- Prepare for guests
- Guest: brownstone quarry person
- Guest: Johan Varekamp

Field activities:

- Portland brownstone quarry

Sunday, January 19th (themes: river summary)

Start time: 10:00

Approximate end time: 3:00

Readings and assignments due:

- Read two sections about deforestation in “Changes in the Land” (William Cronon)
- Read section about deforestation in “Forests in Time” (David Foster and John Aber)
- Read section about floods and hurricanes in “A Pictorial History of Middletown” (Elizabeth Warner)
- Respond to prompts last class and about today’s field sites

Classroom activities:

- Review responses to prompts about last class and today’s class

Field activities:

- George Seymour Dudley State Park
- Gillette Castle State Park
- Connecticut River Museum
- Griswold Inn

Tuesday, January 21st (themes: river ecology and wrap-up)

Start time: 10:00

Approximate end time: 12:00

Readings and assignments due:

- Read Chernoff paper
- Respond to prompts last class and about today’s material

Classroom activities:

- Review responses to prompts about last class and today’s class
- Prepare for guest
- Guest: Barry Chernoff
- **Student presentations about final paper topic** (3 minutes, no slides)

FINAL PAPER IS DUE: Wednesday January 22nd by midnight