

Wayland Mission Statement

Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, and service to God and humankind.

Contact Information

Course: GEOG/HIST 3318 VC01 – Environmental/Geographical History of the U.S.

Campus: WBUonline

Term/Session: SP 2 2026

Instructor: Prof. Jessica Patton Maer

Office Phone Number: 817-515-7674

WBU Email Address: jessica.patton@wayland.wbu.edu

Office Hours, Building, and Location: Online, MW 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Class Meeting Time and Location: Online, asynchronous

Course Information

Catalog Description: The changing ways our society has defined, interpreted, valued, and used nature; the varying social, political and economic agendas that have defined society's relationship with its natural surroundings; survey of the settlement patterns of the U.S., with special emphasis on Texas.

There is no prerequisite for this course.

Textbook Information

Required Textbook(s) and/or Required Materials: Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History, 4th edition, by Ted Steinberg; Oxford Publishers, 2019, ISBN: 9780190864422

*The textbook for this course is part of the **Wayland's Automatic eBook** program. You will have access to an eBook and interactive learning material on the first day of class through your Blackboard course site. The cost of this Automatic eBook will be billed directly to your student account when you register for the course. You will be notified via email with access instructions and additional information. If you do not wish to participate in the Automatic eBook program, you will have the first 12 days of class to opt-out of the program (additional details will be outlined in your email instructions). For more information on the Automatic eBook program, visit the Wayland Bookstore [Automatic eBook FAQ](#) page.*

Optional Materials: N/A

Course Outcome Competencies: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the diffusion of major regional cultures throughout the United States
- Explain how geographic factors have influenced settlement patterns, economic development, political relationships, and policies within Texas and the US
- Explain the doctrine of First Effective Settlement
- Explain the Central Place Theory
- Describe the location of various geographical features in the United States
- Explain the motivations behind the acquisition of territories by the United States
- Understand the changing concepts of the natural environment
- Describe common critiques of man's interaction with nature
- Demonstrate the challenge of balancing human needs with ecologically sound practices
- Describe major environmental catastrophes: Three Mile Island, extinction of animals, etc.
- Explain the development of the modern environmental movement in the US

Attendance Requirements

WBUonline

Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses. Online courses are no different in this regard; however, participation must be defined in a different manner. Student "attendance" in an online course is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus. Instructors in online courses are responsible for providing students with clear instructions for how they are required to participate in the course. Additionally, instructors are responsible for incorporating specific instructional activities within their course and will, at a minimum, have weekly mechanisms for documenting student participation. These mechanisms may include, but are not limited to, participating in a weekly discussion board, submitting/completing assignments in Blackboard, or communicating with the instructor. Students aware of necessary absences must inform the professor with as much advance notice as possible in order to make appropriate arrangements. Any student absent 25 percent of an 8-week session, may receive an F for that course. Instructors may also file a Report of Unsatisfactory Progress for students with excessive non-participation. Any student who has not actively participated in an online class prior to the census date for any given session is considered a "no-show" and will be administratively withdrawn from the class without record. To be counted as actively participating, it is not sufficient to log in and view the course. The student must be submitting work as described in the course syllabus. Additional attendance and participation policies for each course, as defined by the instructor in the course syllabus, are considered a part of the university's attendance policy.

University Policies

[Link to Statement on Academic Integrity , and reference one of the following in regard to how generative artificial intelligence \(GAI\) such as ChatGPT may or may not be used in this course:](#)

- a. No use of any generative AI tools permitted.

- i. Students are required to create and produce all work themselves or with assigned group members. Any work submitted that has used an AI generative tool like Chat GPT will be in immediate violation of the academic integrity policies for the course and WBU.
- ii. All assignments must be fully created, designed, and prepared by the student(s).
- iii. Any work that uses generative AI will be treated as plagiarism.

Disability Statement: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

Accessibility issues with content in WBUonline courses or in Blackboard should be addressed to the WBU accessibility coordinator, Dr. Rick Hammer, hammerr@wbu.edu or call (806) 292-9150.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

The course will start with an orientation discussion board, each worth 25 points. The remaining points for the course will consist of Discussion Board assignments and essay/short paper assignments. There will be no exams for this course.

Orientation Discussion Board – 25 pts.
3 Textbook Outline/Notes – 50 pts/each
4 Essay/Short Papers – 50 pts/each
4 blog posts – 25 pts/each
Final “reflective” paper – 100 points

Method of determining course grade: Each student’s final grade will be based on a total-point earned scale:

564 – 575 = A
457 – 563 = B
399 – 456 = C
342 – 398 = D
Below 342 = F

The University has a standard grade scale:

A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F= below 60, W = Withdrawal, WP = withdrew passing, WF = withdrew failing, I = incomplete. An incomplete may be given within the last two weeks of a long term, within the last week of an 8-week session, or within the last two days of a microterm to a student who is passing, but has not completed a term paper, examination, or other required work for reasons beyond the student’s control. A grade of “incomplete” is changed if the work required is completed prior to the

last day of the next long 16-week term or 8-week session, unless the instructor designates an earlier date for completion. If the work is not completed by the appropriate date, the I is converted to an F.

Student Grade Appeals: Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Vice President of Academic Affairs to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

Tentative Schedule

GEOG/HIST 3318 – ENVIRONMENTAL/GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF THE U.S. **COURSE PLANNER – SPRING 2 2026**

Orientation Discussion Board -- Due by Friday, March 27, at 11:59 p.m.

Module/Lesson 1: Textbook outline/notes for section 1 – Due by Thursday, April 2, at 11:59 p.m.

******No assignments due during the long Easter weekend, April 3 - 6***

Module/Lesson 1: Textbook outline/notes for section 2 -- due Thursday, April 9, at 11:59 p.m.

Module/Lesson 1: Textbook outline/notes for section 3 -- due Sunday, April 12, at 11:59 p.m.

Module/Lesson 2: “Earth” essay -- due Sunday, April 19, at 11:59 p.m.

Journal Entry #1 – due Sunday, April 19, at 11:59 p.m.

Module/Lesson 3: “Water” essay -- due Sunday, April 26, at 11:59 p.m.

Journal Entry #2 – due Sunday, April 26, at 11:59 p.m.

Module/Lesson 4: “Air” essay -- due Sunday, May 3, at 11:59 p.m.

Journal Entry #3 – due Sunday, May 3, at 11:59 p.m.

Module/Lesson 5: “Fire” essay -- due Sunday, May 10, at 11:59 p.m.

Journal Entry #4 – due Sunday, May 10, at 11:59 p.m.

Final Reflections paper -- due Saturday, May 16, at 11:59 p.m.

Additional Information

1. Because this is a 100% online course and all materials are available online, you will be able to work at your own pace (even working ahead if you choose to do so). Late work will be accepted for 3 days past the due date/time, with a 30% reduction in earned points. The Final Reflections paper will not have a late window, since May 16 is the last day of our class.
2. I do not accept any homework or discussion board assignments through email. Every graded assignment must be turned in through the BlackBoard portal. I would encourage you to save a screen shot of the confirmation page for every assignment you submit – this gives us something to work with if your assignment goes “missing,” which can happen with any online classroom platform. You can make a folder for submission confirmations (be sure to label each one individually). At the end of the semester after you receive your final grade, you can delete the entire folder.
3. All due dates/times are based on Central Daylight Savings Time (CDST). All graded work will be due at 11:59 p.m. on the respective due date/time, and the “late” window will begin immediately. If you live outside of the central time zone, please adjust the Course Planner accordingly so you won’t miss any due dates/times. Also, cut-off times for assignments are based on BlackBoard’s clock – not necessarily your computer’s clock, so please be aware of these deadlines. As soon as the “late” window passes, the graded activity will disappear from BlackBoard and you will not be able to turn in any completed work after it disappears. The best solution for avoiding a missed due date/time is to make sure you complete and turn in your work early. Any student who attempts to turn in graded activities at the last minute and misses the deadline will not be able to send those graded activities through email or receive an extension