

GESM 130: How Water Made Modern Los Angeles

Units: 4

Spring 2019, T TH 11–12:20 pm

Section: 35430

Location: VKC 255

Instructor: Dr. Audra Bardsley

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Course Description

Los Angeles is the second most populous city in America, yet has meager local water supplies and straddles a river prone to periodic catastrophic flooding. How did this seemingly unsuitable landscape come to support an economically robust, densely populated metropolis? In this course, we will examine the extraordinary engineering feats, people, and policies that brought water to thirsty Southern California and tamed the unpredictable Los Angeles River. We'll also explore some of the environmental and social justice issues that have developed as a result. Finally, we'll discuss potential solutions to LA's water needs for the coming century and efforts to revitalize the Los Angeles River.

Course Objectives

Students will apply tools from social analysis to:

1. Evaluate the key people, policies, and infrastructure development that allowed for massive changes to California's natural water systems for municipal/irrigation use and flood protection in Los Angeles
2. Consider the economic/environmental winners and losers of water infrastructure development in California during the 20th century and the impact of that legacy on modern Los Angeles and imported water source regions like Owens Valley, Mono Lake, and the Colorado River
3. Examine components of class and privilege in the history of LA's water acquisition and flood control efforts including modern day plans to revitalize the Los Angeles River

4. Consider the broader national social and political climate that allowed for massive investment in water infrastructure during the 20th century and LA's imported water revolution
5. Discuss potential solutions to LA's key water challenges for the next century and LA River revitalization efforts
6. Practice critical thinking, reading, writing, and speaking skills through response to reading questions, news article analyses, film review, in-class discussion, and a final research paper/presentation examining social and/or environmental impacts of water management

Required Readings

Water and Los Angeles: A Tale of Three Rivers, 1900-1941 by William Deverell & Tom Sitton (Available for free online through UC Press or as a Kindle Textbook via Amazon)

Introduction to Water in California by Carle David, 2015. California Natural History Guides. **ISBN-13:** 978-0520287907

Water to the Angels: William Mulholland, His Monumental Aqueduct, and the Rise of Los Angeles by Les Stanford, 2016. Ecco; Reprint edition. **ISBN-13:** 978-0062251459

Storm over Mono: The Mono Lake Battle and the California Water Future by John Hart (Available for free online through UC Press)

Additional readings in the form of articles, planning documents, and excerpts will be posted on Blackboard.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Students will write a research paper (~10 pages) that examines the social justice and/or environmental impacts of one aspect of water policy and infrastructure that we have discussed in class, or one that is closely related. Possible topics might include submersion of ancestral Native American sites due to dam construction, or air pollution impacts on Owens Valley communities from alkali dust exposed following diversion of the Owens River to the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Papers should outline key actors, relative class status of involved parties, economic aspects of

the social injustice or environmental degradation, key policies or legislation that led to the inequity, and any suggested or enacted remedies. Papers must include a works cited section and at least two primary sources. Topic selection requires prior instructor approval. The paper will be graded mostly on content, but also for writing clarity and style. Students will share their research topics with the class in the form of a 5-10 minute PowerPoint presentation at the end of the semester.

Students will also write a ~2 page review of the film Chinatown evaluating its historical merits, treatment of class/race, and use of LA as a backdrop for the storyline.

The news article analysis is a ~1-2 page analysis of observations, interpretations, and bias in two news articles pertaining to the topics we are covering in class. Students will use a guide (given by the instructor) on how to look for bias and fact in the news for this assignment. We will also discuss your analysis in class on the day each assignment is due.

Guiding questions for reading assignments will be distributed through Blackboard each week they are assigned (10 total). These short questions should help students focus on key concepts, prepare them for class and discussion, and help with exam review.

Exam questions will be drawn from course readings and lecture materials, and will include short answer and essay questions. All three exams will cover the lecture and reading material immediately after the preceding exam (or starting on the first day of class for midterm 1). ***No make-up exams or assignments will be allowed without explicit permission.*** If a student misses an exam and/or assignment, they will receive a zero for that portion of the course. During exams, students will NOT be allowed to have notes, books, cell phones, etc. Only pens/pencils and a calculator are required. Failure to comply with exam policies will automatically result in a grade of "0" for that particular exam.

Course Notes

This course will use Blackboard for communication, information and turning in assignments. Lecture slides will be made available after the lecture is given. Additional readings may be assigned periodically throughout the semester, and these will be announced in class, posted on Blackboard, and an email reminder sent to the class.

Course Schedule

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/ Due Dates
Week 1	Introduction & course overview Water cycle & importance of water for human settlements	Carle (Ch. 1) Deverell & Sitton (Preface)	Hometown water questionnaire
Week 2	Climate of LA, major natural water courses/sources LA landscape during pre/early-European settlement Early human influence on LA waterways	Carle (Ch. 2 Pgs. 85-89) Selections from Historical Ecology & Landscape Change (posted on Blackboard)	Reading questions pt. 1
Week 3	City of LA at the turn of 20 th century Local & national political atmosphere Limited municipal & agricultural water supply, damage from periodic flooding	Deverell & Sitton (Ch.2) Waterandpower.org (<i>Water in Early Los Angeles & LA's Early Water Works System</i> articles)	Reading questions pt. 2 News article analysis #1
Week 4	Mulholland: the man & his vision for Los Angeles Federal Reclamation Act, Bureau of Reclamation Bringing water to LA: Owens Valley, key actors, bond initiative, political progressivism, building the aqueduct	Standiford (Ch. 2 – 19) Deverell & Sitton (Pgs. 33-58)	Reading questions pt. 3
Week 5	LA responds to its new water source; a few profit big CA Water Commission Act	Standiford (Ch. 1, 20-22)	Reading questions pt. 4

	<p>Reservoir construction & LA's water conveyance system</p> <p>Unrest in Owens Valley</p> <p>St. Francis Dam Disaster</p>	<p>Deverell & Sitton (Pgs. 110-115; 127-130)</p>	
Week 6	<p>LA outgrows its aqueduct</p> <p>Formation of SoCal Municipal Water District (MWD)</p> <p>LA Aqueduct extension to Mono Basin</p> <p>MWD builds Colorado River Aqueduct</p> <p>State Water Project</p>	<p>Deverell & Sitton (Pgs. 58-80; 91-95; 131-137)</p> <p>Carle (Ch. 3)</p> <p>Cadillac Desert</p> <p>Documentary (Part 1, 2; link to youtube video on Blackboard)</p>	<p>Reading questions pt. 5</p> <p>News article analysis #2</p>
Week 7	<p>Rise of Environmental Legislation & Protection Efforts</p> <p>Environmental & cultural impacts of water transfer in California</p> <p>Mono Lake case study</p>	<p>Watch <i>California's Water Wars</i> short documentary (link on Blackboard)</p> <p>Hart (Ch. 2-11)</p>	<p>Reading questions pt. 6</p>
Week 8	<p>Midterm</p> <p>Mono Lake case study cont'd</p>		Midterm
Week 9	<p>Destructive LA River floods in the burgeoning metropolis</p> <p>Army Corp. of Engineers and channelization of the Los Angeles River</p>	<p>Deverell & Sitton (Pgs. 22-32; 81-85; 95-105; 117-127)</p>	<p>Reading questions pt. 7</p> <p>Select a topic for final paper/presentation</p>
Week 10	<p>Watch Chinatown</p> <p>Movie discussion</p>	<p>Standiford (Ch. 23-24)</p>	<p>2-page movie review</p>

Week 11	<p>Current status of water in LA</p> <p>From where and how much do we import/consume?</p> <p>Contentious issues: overuse of Colorado River, State Water Project & Delta Smelt, etc.</p> <p>County of Origin Act</p>	<p>Deverell & Sitton (Epilogue, pgs. 139-144)</p>	<p>Reading questions pt. 8</p> <p>Submit three sources for final paper/presentation</p>
Week 12	<p>Municipal water sources for LA in coming decades</p> <p>Changes in imported water allocation</p> <p>Water security and climate change</p>	<p>Carle (Ch. 4, 5)</p>	<p>Reading questions pt. 9</p> <p>Submit outline for final paper/presentation</p>
Week 13	<p>Current status of the LA River, riparian environment</p> <p>Plans for LA River Restoration</p>	<p>Army Corp. of Engineers Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study (Blackboard)</p> <p>City of LA, Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (Blackboard)</p>	<p>Reading questions pt. 10</p>
Week 14	<p>Student final presentations</p>		<p>Final research paper; final PowerPoint presentation</p>
Week 15	<p>Class summary</p> <p>Key event timeline construction</p> <p>Review for final</p>		
FINAL			

Notes: Schedule is subject to change based upon in class progress, discussion, speaker availability.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Midterm	100	20%
Final	150	30%
Chinatown Movie Review	15	3%
News Article Analysis (15 total)	15	3%
Reading questions (10 total)	50	10%
Final Project Topic	10	2%
Final Project Outline	10	2%
Final Presentation	50	10%
Final Paper	100	20%
TOTAL	500	100%

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Additional Policies

If there is a conflict with an exam, you must email the instructors *2 weeks in advance* to see if arrangements can be made (under reasonable circumstances). Otherwise, make-up exams will not be given except in extreme emergencies. Make-up exams will also be more difficult, so it is in your best interest to take the exam on the day it is scheduled. If you have an emergency on exam day, you must get in touch with us before the exam if possible. Assignments will not be accepted late. Additionally:

Come to class prepared

Be respectful of me and other students in class

Please leave cell phones outside the classroom or turned off

If you have to miss class, make sure you arrange to get notes and announcements.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu