Environment and History in Preindustrial Europe

Instructor: Paolo Squatriti

3 credits
ID
ENVIRON 236
lec (TTH, 10-11:30 am)

Course Guide Shortcut: bit.ly/fa18_hist236

How did preindustrial societies fit into the various ecological systems of western Eurasia? How different were the adaptations of people in Scandinavia, Normandy, or Andalusia to the climate, landscape, other animals, and vegetation of their regions? What ecological forces made some communities collapse and others thrive? Did nature determine what humans could do, and what they actually did? What impact did pre-industrial human activity have on the European environment?

This course focuses on the ancient, medieval, and early modern periods (roughly 300 BC to AD 1800), and ranges widely across the vast and diverse land mass of “Europe” (with some detours into the relevant sea masses, too). While offering a long view of environmental change, it shows that before the Industrial Revolution, just as in later industrialized societies, European people were entangled in nature, and that their history was shaped by ecological relationships.