

HSTR 467 – History of Mountaineering – Final Exam Study Guide

The final exam will require you to write short answers, primarily focusing on the readings, but also incorporating material from my lectures and our discussions. You need to bring a blue book to the exam. No notes or books will be allowed.

Sample Questions

What does “orogeny” mean? What do I argue is the most recent orogeny? What do I argue is the value of looking through history vertically vs. horizontally?

Who are the “wall rats”? What are they hauling up (metaphorically) the cliffs of Yosemite, and why?

Why does Isaac Rosenfeld believe climbing is a branch of theology?

How does Julian Huxley see the “transience of the hills”? Why does he think it is significant?

Why are the explorers, led by Father Sogol, looking for Mount Analogue? According to Daumal, what is the point to climbing, the reason to climb?

How does the allegorical narrative for the search for Mount Analogue relate to the age of exploration?

In “Tides of Empire,” how did I link empire and tidal theory? Why did a “vertical consciousness” arise?

In “Oceans Through Islands to Mountains,” how did Humboldt (or, rather, a Humboldtian view) influence the views of Darwin and Hooker?

How did I use verticality as an analytical approach in my book proposal to Chicago?

Robert Macfarlane says his book is not a history of mountaineering, but rather a history of the imagination. What does he mean?

What is the importance of Burnet’s “Great Stone Book”? How was the “foundation of Western geology ... laid down in the mountains”?

What role does Macfarlane give to the sublime? What is it, and why is it so important in the 18th century?

What role does Macfarlane ascribe to mapping?

Who was Albert Smith and what was the significance of his show?

How was TIME transformed in the nineteenth century and through what means?

Why did Mallory go back to Everest for a third time?

What significance does Schrepfer give to the act of naming? Give specific examples.

What is the relationship, according to Schrepfer, between mountains and our ideas of “wilderness”?

How does Susan Schrepfer use a vertical orientation to describe the conservation movement in America? What was the role of Alpine Clubs?

The Wilderness Act of 1964 plays a central role in Schrepfer’s analysis. What is her take on it?

Explain how Joseph Taylor uses guidebooks as sources in his “Mapping Adventure.” How do guidebooks mirror the culture of their time? How do they ascribe ethics onto the mountain?

What is the significance of the gendered and militaristic language in Herzog’s *Annapurna*? Give numerous examples.

Herzog alludes to the fact that many on the expedition were disappointed when they first saw the Karakorum. Why might this be? What is the significance of their inability to see (or even find) the mountain?

What role did cigarettes play in the expedition?

What happens to Herzog during the descent, and how is this metaphorically significant?

How – and most importantly, why – does Harrer defend alpine mountaineering in *The White Spider*?

According to Joseph Taylor, who are the “moralists” and who are the “dirtbags”?

How does Taylor view Royal Robbins? What about Warren Harding? How were they attempting to “invent tradition” or “refine an aesthetic”?

According to Taylor, climbers climbed to “mark themselves via some astonishingly bourgeois principles” in what he calls a “quest for subcommittees”? What does he mean, and what is the paradox involved?

How did the dynamic between climbers in Yosemite and the Park Service employees shift, and what events prompted this shift?

Where does Taylor place Chouinard’s 1972 catalog within his narrative concerning aesthetics and tradition?

In Sherry Ortner’s view, how and on what levels are the Sherpas “constructed”? And, in turn, how do they themselves participate in this process?

How does Ortner use “serious games” as a way to unpack “intentions and desires”? With these “intentions and desires” in mind, how – and most importantly, why – did the early British mountaineers characterize Sherpas? How (and why) did this change over time?

How does Ortner use “big” and “small” people to explain the Sherpa relationship with Western climbers?

According to Ortner, how has tourism and the commodification of mountaineering transformed Sherpa culture? Is it all negative? Is it all positive?

What significance does Ortner give to the counterculture movement? How did it transform the role of Sherpa women? The mentality of European climbers? The agency of the Sherpas themselves?

What is “clean” climbing? How is it related to the environmental movement?

What is the conflict – the paradox – that Chouinard finds himself grappling with? What is his solution? What is your solution?

Why are mountains important? Why are they important for a historian? Why teach a course on mountain history, rather than, say, a course on a specific nation state (e.g. French History), a specific time period (e.g. The Civil War), or a specific approach (e.g. Political History)?

Methodologically (that is, how we practice history, its method), how and why is verticality significant?