

Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute

Seminar description for 2023

Paul Sabin

Randolph W. Townsend, Jr. Professor of History and Professor of American Studies

Energy and Environmental History of New Haven and the American City

The seminar will explore U.S. urban environmental history, including such topics as energy, water, animals, transportation, industry, housing, public health, open space, environmental justice, and restoration ecologies. These broad topics will be linked to the history of New Haven, including such issues as oyster harvesting; small dams and water management; canal, railroad, and highway development; air pollution and toxic pollution; urban parks, etc. As part of our seminar, we will take a field trip to visit history sites around the city. We also will connect with New Haven leaders active in urban environmental issues who can provide perspective on the longer history and current status of subjects that we discuss. We might also visit local archives to examine relevant primary sources. Participants will gain a broad perspective on urban environmental issues, and also develop a community of faculty interested in teaching about urban environmental issues in New Haven. At the close of the seminar, we will discuss what a sustainable future might look like for New Haven, and how teachers might engage students in thinking about the city's present and future environmental challenges.

This seminar draws on my past experience teaching U. S. energy and environmental history, including a regular "Environmental History Tour of New Haven" that I take my undergraduate students on each semester.