

**Environmental Justice ENVI 237/HIST 237/AMST 294
Macalester College, Spring 2017**

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Course Description

Poor and minority populations have historically borne the brunt of environmental inequalities in the United States, suffering disproportionately from the effects of pollution, dispossession of land, resource depletion, dangerous jobs, limited access to common resources, and exposure to environmental hazards. Paying particular attention to the ways that race, ethnicity, class, and gender have shaped the political and economic dimensions of environmental injustices, this course draws on the work of scholars and activists to examine the long history of environmental inequities in the United States, along with more recent political movements—national and local—that seek to rectify environmental injustices and develop new possibilities for understanding the human place in nature.

Objectives

- Learn to think critically about conceptions of nature and the environment and how race, class, gender and sexuality shape interactions with the environment
- Understand how environmental inequalities and injustices are created and impact communities and different approaches and methods for studying environmental justice
- Learn about the history and contemporary efforts of the environmental justice movement in the U.S.
- Develop communication (writing and speaking) and critical thinking skills

Grading

Participation and attendance	10%
Weekly Reading Responses	20%
Op/Ed	15%
Group Issue Report and Presentation	30%
Final Take-Home Exam	25%

Assignment Description

Participation and attendance:

Our class will involve discussion, activities, lectures and film screenings, which rely on your active engagement in class discussions. Your regular attendance is essential for

engaging with the material in our class as well as with your peers. Therefore, attendance is required in order to receive a passing grade for the course, regardless of how well you do on your written assignments. If you must be absent due to illness or other extenuating circumstance, contact me before class. More than one unexcused absence may result in a reduction in your participation grade. Your participation grade will be based upon active engagement in class and regular attendance.

Reading Responses:

Once a week you will post a reflection response on our readings on Moodle by **9pm the night before class** so the rest of the class and I can read before meeting. The post should be a 300-500 word critical reflection on the readings that addresses the major arguments and debates as well as your analysis and reactions to the readings. What did you find convincing, interesting or new? What was missing in the analysis? When possible, you should make comparisons across readings and theoretical approaches. Also provide a few questions or themes to discuss in class. You should read other students posts and are encouraged to write comments and questions on other students' posts. I will provide feedback and responses to posts and the grade will be based upon completion.

Two weeks will require a longer written response (2-3 pages). For Feb. 2 write a critical reflection on the histories of environmental inequality and justice based on the readings for that week. How is environmental inequality related to U.S. history and development? What are different approaches for assessing environmental injustices? In what ways is the environment and nature linked to racism, capitalism and colonialism? Then on March 23 write a review of the novel *Under the Feet of Jesus* and how the novel addresses themes of environmental justice and what is gained by approaching EJ through narrative and storytelling. Post these on the forum and submit document on Moodle assignment. These extended responses will be given letter grades and will account for 40% of your reading response grade. These will be an opportunity for me to give you feedback on writing. I will provide more detail beforehand.

Op/Ed:

You will write an op-ed style opinion paper (600-800 words) about an environmental justice issue of your choosing. This could be a local, national or international issue. In your paper you should write a convincing argument as to why this is an important issue of environmental justice that needs to be addressed and how this inequality is created – what are the relevant social, political and/or economic factors? You should suggest potential solutions or paths to addressing the issue – this could be a policy or social movement tactic. Your goal is to be persuasive and to mobilize support and shift opinions. Thus, your writing should be concise and clear - op-ed pieces are not complicated and the goal is to convincingly make a coherent point that will engage and convince your audience. Also submit a newspaper article about the issue to provide me with context and background on the issue. Example op-eds on Moodle.

Everyone will also post their op/ed on a shared class blog/forum. You are required to then post at least one comment on another student's op-ed by class time on Thursday March 9. Failure to comment will lead to 5% reduction in your grade. I will also provide feedback and students are encouraged to consider revising and submitting to newspapers and blogs for publications.

Group Issue Report and Presentation:

You will work in small groups (4-5) to research an environmental justice issue in Minnesota. I will assign groups and topics. You will write a report (12-15 pages) or create a digital report/blog and give a 25-30 minute presentation during the last week of class. Your goal is to document and explain the problem in ways that would be useful for advocates, the public and policymakers. The report should be written for a public audience and intended to be useful for advocacy organizations. You should provide context about the issue and summarize some of the relevant scholarly research related to the topic (i.e. toxics and brownfields) and theoretical approaches to the issue and its causes. Then provide suggestions for strategies and policies to address the issue – this could be policy, legal or social movement tactics. The class presentations should provide an overview of your issue, your research findings and policy suggestions that you include in the written report. Groups will meet with me at least once before their presentations and I will provide preliminary feedback on report outlines and drafts before the group presentations and final report. More details will be provided.

Final Take-Home Exam:

The final exam will be a take-home essay response. The exam is untimed and open-book, and is intended for you to critically engage with the readings and ideas from the course. The essay should be 5-8 pages long and draw from several themes, topics and theories from the course. You should demonstrate your understanding and engagement with key theories and themes of environmental justice. Essay questions will be distributed at the end of classes and will be due on the scheduled day of the final exam.

All assignments should be turned in electronically via the course Moodle site before class on the due date (except reading responses). Papers should be double-spaced with size 12 Times New Roman font and include citations following an academic citation style – ASA, MLA, APA or Chicago. Using a citation manager such as Endnote, Refworks or Zotero is highly recommended.

I will mark down late papers 10% for each day after the due date and I will consider them late if turned in after the start of class. I will not give credit for reading responses that are late since these are intended to help prepare for class discussion.

Required Texts (all other readings available on Moodle)

- Viramontes, Helena Maria. 1996. *Under the Feet of Jesus*. Plume.

Class guidelines: You should be open to critical engagement and productively and constructively engage in discussion. The classroom should be an open and welcoming space that respects people's different histories, identities and social locations. ***Laptops/tablets can be used during lectures and for specific academic purposes (reviewing article, taking notes) but must be put away during class discussions. If I see you doing other activities (Facebook, email, etc.) I will ask that you put the laptop away. No texting or cellphone use during class.***

Course Schedule

Introduction and Course Overview

Week 1

Th: 1/19

Conceptualizing Environmental Justice and Inequality

Week 2

Tu: 1/24 Defining Environmental Justice

Reading:

- Schlosberg. *Defining Environmental Justice*. Ch. 1.
- Pellow, David Naguib and Robert J. Brulle. 2005. "Power, Justice, and the Environment: Towards Critical Environmental Justice Studies" In *Power, Justice and the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement*. Ch. 1, p. 1-18.

Th: 1/26 Social Science Approaches

Reading:

- Sze, Julie and Jonathan K. London. 2008. "Environmental Justice at the Crossroads." *Sociology Compass* 2(4):1331–54.
- Pulido, Laura. 1996. "A Critical Review of the Methodology of Environmental Racism Research." *Antipode* 28(2): 142–59.

Environmental Histories: Legacies of Slavery, Colonialism and Capitalism

Week 3

Tu: 1/31 Colonialism and Conceptualizations of Nature

Reading:

- Spence, Mark. 1999. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. Intro, Ch. 4.
- DeLuca, Kevin and Anne Demo. 2001. "Imagining Nature and Erasing Class and Race: Carleton Watkins, John Muir, and the Construction of Wilderness." *Environmental History* 6(4):541–60.

Th: 2/2 Slavery and Capitalism

Reading:

- Finney, Carolyn. *Black Faces, White Spaces Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors*. Ch. 2 "Jungle Fever"

- Gould, Kenneth, David N. Pellow and Allan Schnaiberg. 2004. "Interrogating the Treadmill." *Organization and Environment*. Only Pages 296-304
- The Second Contradiction of Capitalism: <http://libcom.org/blog/james-oconnors-second-contradiction-capitalism-25042014>.

Rise of Environmental Justice Movement

Week 4

Tu: 2/7 Beginning of the Movement

Reading:

- Gottlieb, Robert. 1993. *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. Introduction, Chapters 2, 5.

Th: 2/9 Critiques of the Movement

Reading:

- Di Chiro, Giovanna. 1995. "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environmental and Social Justice" in Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature.
- Mock, Brenton. 2013. "Mainstream Green is Still Too White." *Colorlines*. http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/04/message_from_the_grassroots_dont_blow_it_on_climate_change_this_time.html

Environmental Racism and Inequality

Week 5

Tu: 2/14 Racial Formation

Reading:

- Park, Lisa Sun-Hee and David N. Pellow. 2004. "Racial Formation, Environmental Racism, and the Emergence of Silicon Valley." *Ethnicities* 4(3): 403–24.

Th: 2/16 Environmental Privilege

Reading:

- Pulido, Laura. 2000. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90(1):12–40.

The Gendered and Queer Environment

Week 6

Tu: 2/21 Ecofeminism

Reading:

- Verchick, Robert R. M. 2004. "Feminist Theory and Environmental Justice." In *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality and Activism*.
- Kirk, Gwyn. 1998. "Ecofeminism and Chicano Environmental Struggles: Bridges Across Gender and Race." In *Chicano Culture, Ecology, Politics*.

Th: 2/23 Queer Environmentalism

Reading:

- Stein, Rachel. 2002. "Activism as Affirmation: Gender and Environmental Justice in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* and Barbara Neely's *Blanche Cleans Up*." In *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics and Pedagogy*.
- Gaard, Greta. 2004. "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism." In *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality and Activism*.

Toxics, Health and Labor

Week 7

Tu: 2/28 Labor and the Workplace

Reading:

- Smith, Ted, David Allan Sonnenfeld, and David N. Pellow. 2006. *Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry*. Intro. *Groups assigned chapters to read*.
- Blue Green Alliance. *Clean Sweep: How a New Approach to Cleaning Commercial Buildings in the Twin Cities Can Protect Our Health and the Environment*.

Th: 3/2 Politics of Disease and Health

Reading:

- Tarter, Jim. "Some Live More Downstream than Others: Cancer, Gender and Environmental Justice." In *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics and Pedagogy*
- Corburn, Jason. 2005. *Street Science Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapters:

Immigration, Citizenship and the Environment

Week 8

Tu: 3/7 Immigration

Reading:

- Park, Lisa Sun-Hee and David N. Pellow. 2011. *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants vs. the Environment in America's Eden*. Chapters 2, 3, Conclusion
- How the Sierra Club Learned to Love Immigration. Colorlines. http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/05/how_sierra_club_learned_to_stop_wor_rying_and_grew_to_love_immigration.html

Th: 3/9

SPRING BREAK

Injustice and Resistance through Literature

Week 9

Tu: 3/21

Reading:

- Viramontes

Th: 3/23

Reading:

- Viramontes

Food Justice and Extraction

Week 10

Tu: 3/28 Food Justice

Reading:

- Alkon, Alison and Julian Agyeman, eds. 2011. *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class and Sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Chapters 5, 12, 13.
- *Review* example of issue report: Applied Research Center. *The Color of Food*.

Th: 3/30 Extraction and Mining

Reading:

- Scott, Rebecca. 2009. "The Sociology of Coal Hollow: Safety, Othering, and Representations of Inequality." *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 15(1/2):7–25.
- Bell, Shannon Elizabeth. 2013. *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice*. Intro, assigned group chapter.

Indigenous Rights and Land

Week 11

Tu: 4/4 Sacrifice Zones

Reading:

- Churchill, Ward. 2002. *Struggle for the Land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide and Colonization*. Chapter – "Geographies of Sacrifice: The Radioactive Colonization of Native North America."
- Winona, LaDuke. 2001. "Nuclear Waste: Dumping on the Indians" in *All Our Relations*. Ch. 6.

Th: 4/6 Pipeline Resistance

Reading:

- Whyte, Kyle Powys. 2016. "The Dakota Access Pipeline, Environmental Injustice, and U.S. Colonialism." *Red Ink: An International Journal of Indigenous Literature, Arts, & Humanities*.
- Mays, Kyle T. 2016. "From Flint to Standing Rock: The Aligned Struggles of Black and Indigenous People." *Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology*.
<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/1015-from-flint-to-standing-rock-the-aligned-struggles-of-black-and-indigenous-people>
- TallBear, Kim. 2016 "Badass (Indigenous) Women Caretake Relations: #NoDAPL, #IdleNoMore, #BlackLivesMatter." *Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology*.
<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/1019-badass-indigenous-women-caretake-relations-nodapl-idlenomore-blacklivesmatter>
- Montoya, Teresa. 2016. "Violence on the Ground, Violence Below the Ground." *Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology website*. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/1018-violence-on-the-ground-violence-below-the-ground>

Climate Justice

Week 12

Tu: 4/11

Reading:

- Klein, Naomi. 2014. *This Changes Everything*. Ch. 2, 9.

Th: 4/13

Reading:

- Voosen, Paul. "What Trump can—and can't—do all by himself on climate." *Science*. <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/11/what-trump-can-and-cant-do-all-himself-climate>
- Dhillon, Jaskiran. "Indigenous Youth Are Building a Climate Justice Movement by Targeting Colonialism." *Truthout.org*. <http://www.truthout.org/news/item/36482-indigenous-youth-are-building-a-climate-justice-movement-by-targeting-colonialism>
- Pellow, David N. 2016. "Toward a Critical Environmental Studies: Black Lives Matter as an Environmental Justice Challenge." *DuBois Review*.

Natural Disasters and the Future

Week 13

Tu: 4/18 (Un)Natural Disasters

Reading:

- Smith, Neil. 2006. *There's No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster*. <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Smith/>
- Sze, Julie. 2006. *Toxic Soup Redux: Why Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Matter after Katrina*. <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Sze/>
- What Hurricane Sandy Should Teach Us About Climate Justice. *Colorlines*. http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/11/what_hurricane_sandy_should_teach_us_about_climate_justice.html

Th: 4/20 Futures

Reading:

- Bagigalupi, Paolo. 2008. "The Calorie Man." In *Pump Six and Other Stories*.

Group Presentations

Week 14

Tu: 4/25

Th: 4/27

Exam and Study Period

Week 15