

Environmental Inequality (last updated April 21)

17315, Soci 199-01, Spring 2019

Instructor: Dr. Perkins
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Class: 3:40-5pm
Business School, 300a

Office hours: Wednesdays 2-5
Sociology and Criminology Office, Downing Hall suite 1123

“The challenge of modernity is to live without illusions and without becoming disillusioned.”

- *Antonio Gramsci*

The aims of this course are to:

- Learn about social inequality as it relates to the environment throughout US history
- Improve critical reading, analysis, writing and discussion skills.
- Create a productive, respectful and creative learning environment and intellectual community.

On completion of this course students should be able to:

- Analyze societal experiences of the environment as they intersect with social inequality
- Analyze multiple theories of what causes environmental inequality.
- Analyze environmental justice as both a theoretical lens and an advocacy arena.
- Analyze U.S. government, non-profit and social-movement responses to environmental inequalities.
- Engage real cases of environmental inequalities and environmental justice advocacy

Required Readings

All texts will be available on the course Blackboard site.

Note: Please consider the syllabus on Blackboard as the master syllabus, as it will be regularly updated.

Class Time

Our class time will take a variety of formats, including lecture, large group discussion, small group discussion, film, class activities, and time for individual written reflection. I encourage you to ask questions during lectures. A few guidelines:

- Come to class prepared by having done all the assigned reading and taking notes on it.
- Bring your readings (hard-copies are preferable) and notes to class every day, you will often need them for small-group work.

Names and Gender Pronouns in the Classroom

I will provide an opportunity in class for every student to share their preferred name and gender pronoun (he, she, they, etc.). For example, I will ask you to call me Dr. Perkins, and to reference my gender with the words “she” or “her.” Share whatever pronoun you feel most comfortable with in a classroom setting. Please make every effort to call your peers by their preferred gender pronouns for the duration of the semester.

Keep in mind the following campus statement on federal Title IX law:

“Howard University reaffirms its commitment to provide students with educational opportunities free from sexual harassment and discrimination based upon gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, or marital status. In furtherance of this commitment, the University strives to maintain an environment in which all members of the University Community are: (a) judged and rewarded solely on the basis of ability, experience, effort, and performance; and (b) provided conditions for educational pursuits that are free from gender-based coercion, intimidation, or exploitation.”

Grading

	Due date	% of course grade
Attendance and Participation	n/a	10%
Reading Responses	Midnight of each Monday	30%
Midterm Exam	March 7	30%
Final Exam	May 7	30%

Reading Responses

You are responsible for writing one reading response each week that covers all the readings assigned for that week. These will be due on Monday nights before our first class of the week on Tuesday. You will upload them into the “Reading Responses” section of our class website on Blackboard as PDFs or Word documents. If you use any of the author’s words in your response, be sure to use appropriate parenthetical/in-text reference information (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/02/>). Each reading response should be 500-800 words long, and should include:

- 1) A brief description of the key points made in each reading
- 2) A comparison of the assigned readings
- 3) Your analysis of the readings
- 4) Any questions you may have

These should be short but polished piece of writing, with correct spelling and grammar used to support thoughtful content. The only exception to the above timeline is for the first week of class, when you will turn in your reading response on Wednesday January 16th (covering only the reading assigned for January 17th). You may upload your responses until 11:59 pm of the day the reading responses are due, when Blackboard will close the assignment. Late responses will not be accepted. You may miss three reading responses without penalty. These three "passes" are designed to accommodate disruptions to your studies that are outside your control such as illness, deaths in the family, and other emergencies. If you complete readings responses for all of the readings, you will receive 2 extra credit points towards your final grade.

How to Annotate a Reading

Annotation is more than highlighting and underlining. It means making written notes **as you read** to identify key terms and concepts, to flag questions that you have, and to assist you in following the arguments of the authors. This is usually done on the page of the text using underlining and circling of text and making notes in the margins. One advantage of working with printouts is that if you only print them on one side you can make more extensive notes on the blank side. Annotation helps you focus on the reading, improves comprehension, and helps you to better remember the content of the reading.

Annotation is kind of like having a conversation with a text while you read it. Some basic annotation techniques are:

- Identifying and underling key terms, concepts and passages.
- Circling definitions.
- Writing definitions in the margins.
- Writing questions that you have in response to the text.
- Writing opinions you have about particular passages.
- Summarizing the main points of sections as you finish them.

An especially useful technique is to make an outline of the whole reading on back of the last page, dividing it up into sections and sub-sections in order to see the overall structure of the argument being made. Annotation is crucial to making a close reading of any difficult text.

Attendance

- All students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. Class announcements related to schedule changes and grading will be made at the beginning of each class session.
- Attendance will be taken in this class. I expect you to attend class regularly, but do not need to know your reasons for any missed days. If you are absent from classes, you are still responsible for the work missed and the announcements made.

Communications

- The less time I spend responding to individual e-mails, the more time I have to prepare for leading a high-quality class. To that end, before you send me a question via e-mail, first check my syllabus to see if the information you want is listed there. Also, I will not respond to questions about the *concepts* covered in class via e-mail. Conceptual

questions typically require lengthy responses and discussion, and are therefore best asked in class or office hours.

- I will use Blackboard to send periodic class announcements via e-mail. You may set your Blackboard account to whatever e-mail account you use most frequently. Plan on checking this account daily.
- Please turn your cell phone off and leave it in your bag for the duration of class.

Plagiarism

- Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating or plagiarizing on exams, is a serious violation of the University's norms of conduct. Students who plagiarize or cheat on assignments or exams receive an F in the course and will be reported to the Dean of the College of Arts and Science for further sanctions, including possible suspension from the University. Read the Academic Code of Student Conduct for more information:
<https://www.howard.edu/policy/academic/student-conduct.htm>

Disability

Howard University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students who need accommodations because of a disability should contact the Dean for Special Student Services (202-238-2420) as soon as possible after admission to the University or at the beginning of each semester. Please document and discuss your disability with me during the first week of classes. Find more information about how to get academic accommodations here <http://www.howard.edu/specialstudentservices/>.

Resources

- Tutoring at Howard: <https://ous.howard.edu/tlss-tutoring-schedule>
- How to get tested for a learning disability:
<https://www.howard.edu/specialstudentservices/DisabledStudents.htm>
- Howard University Counseling Service <https://counselingservice.howard.edu/>
- For your questions about using Blackboard
 - <http://www.howard.edu/technology/services/applications.html>
 - https://help.blackboard.com/Filter/Student/College_or_University
- For help finding information, ask a librarian!
<https://library.howard.edu/friendly.php?s=library/contactus#s-lib-ctab-8716879-2>
- Tips on how to study effectively
<http://www.howtostudy.org/index.php>

Class Schedule

I. Introduction

January 15: Conceptualizing the environment and environmentalism

- Gottlieb, Robert. 1993. "Where We Live, Work and Play." Pp. 3-11 in *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

January 17: The Long View

- Williams, Brett. 2001. "A River Runs Through Us." *American Anthropologist* 103(2):409-431.

II. Colonization, Slavery and Westward Expansion

January 22: Slavery

- Stewart, Mart. A. 2006. "Slavery and the origins of African American Environmentalism." Pp. 9-20 in *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*, edited by Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

January 24: Survival

- Grant, Richard. 2016. "Deep in the Swamps, Archaeologists Are Finding How Fugitive Slaves Kept Their Freedom." *Smithsonian Magazine*. September. Accessed July 27, 2017 (<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/deep-swamps-archaeologists-fugitive-slaves-kept-freedom-180960122/>)
- National Park Foundation. Preserving African American History with the Underground Railroad. Accessed July 27, 2017 (<https://www.nationalparks.org/our-work/programs/african-american-experience-fund/underground-railroad-preservation>)

January 29: Westward Expansion 1

- Solnit, Rebecca. 1994. *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 - Pgs. 218-228
 - Pgs. 268-293

January 31: Westward Expansion 2

Guest speakers: Eleanor King, Howard University Department of Sociology and Criminology and the Greater Washington DC Chapter of the 9th & 10th (Horse) Cavalry Association (Buffalo Soldiers)

- Field, Kendra T. 2018. "'Turn Our Faces to the West': Refugees, Pioneers, and the Roots of 'All-Black' Oklahoma." Pp. 115-127 in *Freedom's Racial Frontier: African*

Americans in the Twentieth-Century West, edited by Herbert G. Ruffin II, and Dwayne A Mack. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

- Patton, Tracey Owens. 2018. "Obscured Collaboration: African American Presence in the Myth of the White West." Pp. 320-336 in *Freedom's Racial Frontier: African Americans in the Twentieth-Century West*, edited by Herbert G. Ruffin II, and Dwayne A Mack. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

III. Jim Crow, Civil Rights and the Environmental Movement

February 5: Parks and Recreation

- Kahrl, Andrew W. 2012. "Surviving the Summer." Pp. 115-154 in *The Land Was Ours: How Black Beaches Became White Wealth in the Coastal South*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

February 7: Pests, Nature and Social Inequality

- Biehler, Dawn. 2016. "The Ecology of Injustice: Rats in the Civil Rights Era." Pp. 149-176 in *Pests in the City: Flies, Bedbugs, Cockroaches, and Rats*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

February 12: Earth Day

- Washington, Sylvia. 2009. "Ball of Confusion: Public Health, African Americans and Earth Day 1970." In *Natural Protest: Essays on the History of American Environmentalism*, edited by Michael Egan and Jeff Crane, 205–21. New York: Routledge.

IV. The Environmental Justice Movement and Beyond

February 14: Warren County

- Burwell, Dollie and Luke Cole. 2007. "Environmental Justice Comes Full Circle: Warren County Before and After." *Golden Gate University Environmental Law Journal* 1(4):9-40.

February 19: Toxic distribution

- Bullard, Robert, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha and Beverly Wright. 2007. "A Current Appraisal of Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States 1987– 2007." Pp. 49-83 in *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2007: Grassroots Struggles to Dismantle Environmental Racism in the United States*. Cleveland, OH: United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries.

February 21: Cumulative impacts of toxic exposure

- Morello Frosch, Rachel, Miriam Zuk, Michael Jerrett, Bhavna Shamasunder, and Amy D. Kyle. 2011. "Understanding the Cumulative Impacts of Inequalities in Environmental Health: Implications for Policy." *Health Affairs* 30(5):879-887.

February 26: Causes of environmental inequality I

- Rechtschaffen, Clifford, Eileen Gauna and Catherine A. O'Neill. 2009. "Theories of Causation." Pp. 73-106 in *Environmental Justice: Law, Policy and Regulation*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

February 28: Causes of environmental inequality II

Class does not meet, Dr. Perkins at American Association for the Advancement of Science

- Pulido, Laura. 2016. "Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism." *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 27(3):1-16.

March 5: Disasters

- Smith, Neil. 2006. "There's No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster." *Understanding Katrina: Perspectives from the Social Sciences*. June 11. Retrieved September 4, 2015 (<http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Smith/>)

March 7: Midterm Exam

March 12 and 14: No classes (Spring Break)

March 19: Climate Justice

- Harlan, Sharon L., David N. Pellow, and J. Timmons with Shannon Elizabeth Bell, William G. Holt and Joane Nagel. 2015. "Climate Justice and Inequality." Pp. 127-163 in *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*, edited by R. E. Dunlap and R. J. Brulle. New York: Oxford University Press
- Perkins, Tracy and Aaron Soto-Karlin. "Climate Conflict from California to Latin America: Situating Global Policies within Local Realities." Under contract for *Situating Sustainability: Sciences/Humanities/Societies, Scales and Social Justice* edited by J. Sze. New York: NYU Press.

March 21: Environmental Privilege

- Park, Lisa Sun-Hee and David Naguib Pellow. 2011. "Environmental Privilege in the Rocky Mountains." Pp. 1-27 *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants vs. the Environment in America's Eden*. New York: New York University Press.

March 26: Environmental Gentrification

- Melissa Checker. 2007. "Wiped Out by the Greenwave: Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability." *City & Society* 23(2):210-229.
- Gould, Kenneth A. and Tammy L. Lewis. 2016. "Making Urban Greening Sustainable." Pp. 151-176 in *Green Gentrification: Urban Sustainability and the Struggle for Environmental Justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

March 28: Racism in Environmental Careers

- Taylor, Dorceta. 2014. *The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations: Mainstream NGOs, Foundations, Government Agencies*. Green 2.0 Working Group, July.

Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (http://diversegreen.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/07/FullReport_Green2.0_FINAL.pdf)

- Executive Summary, (pgs. 1-7)
- Ch. 8: Reflections from Environmental Practitioners (pgs. 140-171)

April 2: Environmental Justice and Police Power

- Pellow, David Naguib. 2018. "Black Lives Matter as an Environmental Justice Challenge." Pgs. 34-66 in *What is Critical Environmental Justice?* Medford, MA: Policy Press.

April 4: Class at the American Association of Geographers' Annual Meeting

April 9: Storytelling

- Houston, Donna. 2013. "Environmental Justice Storytelling: Angels and Isotopes at Yucca Mountain, Nevada." *Antipode* 45(2):417-435.

VI. Book-in-Progress

April 11: *Movement Matters: Protest, Policy and Three Decades of Environmental Justice Activism* by Dr. Perkins

- Introduction
- Ch. 1: Origin Stories

April 16: *Movement Matters: Protest, Policy and Three Decades of Environmental Justice Activism* by Dr. Perkins

- Ch. 2: Organizing Structures and Tactics
- Ch. 3: The Evolution of Environmental Justice Activism

April 18: *Movement Matters: Protest, Policy and Three Decades of Environmental Justice Activism* by Dr. Perkins

- Ch. 4: Activism in a Changing World
- Ch. 5: Community Organizing at the West's Largest Hazardous Waste Landfill

April 23: *Movement Matters: Protest, Policy and Three Decades of Environmental Justice Activism* by Dr. Perkins

- Ch. 6: Policy Advocacy: Intervening in California Climate Policy
- Ch. 7: Dilemmas of Contemporary Environmental Justice Activism

VII. Concluding Thoughts

April 25: Final (in class)