

**ETHN 103: Environmental Racism
Fall 2016 Syllabus
Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:50
Room: Mande B-150, UCSD**

Instructor: Mattie M. Harper
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Office hours: Wednesdays, 2-3pm; Fridays, noon-2 & by appointment



This course examines challenges and controversies associated with the unequal distribution of environmental hazards across communities. Students will explore the social, industrial, and government forces that create inequitable burdens of environmental pollution as well as movements to reduce such burdens. We will assess the strategies that activists have pursued for challenging environmental injustice at the local, national, and international levels. While a majority of the course focuses on the United States, readings include cases from around the world.

The format of this course centers on student discussion and group work with a lecture component. This means that a majority of your grade is dependent on work produced during classes. Class sessions will largely be devoted to student-led discussions, student presentations, and in-class exercises and assignments. I hope that the design will foster a collaborative, collegial environment and active learning.

Course Objectives

Through participation in the course students will:

- Develop an understanding of environmental justice and be able to identify factors that contribute to the existence of disparities in environmental outcomes.
- Learn about a variety of approaches to analyzing environmental justice from multiple disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.
- Explore a case study of environmental justice in-depth through a research project.
- Develop an understanding of how systems of racial/colonial/gender/sexual/class power and inequality are constructed, reinforced, and challenged.

Grading

Participation (15%)

Leading class discussion in a group (20%) [sign up]

News item presentation (5%) [sign up]

Two in-class exams (30%) [Thur. Oct 13, week 3 & Thur. Nov 10, week 7]

Group research project (20%) [sign up]

Final essay (10%)

Assignments

Participation (15%): Students are expected to attend all classes, to keep up with the readings for each class, and to actively engage in discussions. Engaging in group discussion is an important element of the learning process for this course. There will also be weekly in-class writing assignments for credit. *By 7am on each Thursday (but on Tuesday for weeks 9 and 10), students are required to post at least one clarifying question or discussion question based on the weekly readings to the TritonEd course site. Submit via Weekly Blog on the course site.*

Student-Led Class Discussion (20%): Executed in groups of five students and will last approximately 40-60 minutes. Discussions will be based on the daily assigned readings. Student groups must meet at least once outside of class prior to their presentation to prepare for the class discussion they will be leading. Students should assign roles in the group, such as researcher, compiler of handout, PowerPoint organizer, etc. The group must submit a summary to the professor on the day of the assignment. This should describe the roles of the group members and both list and summarize the readings presented and include a bibliography of the sources utilized for the presentation. The group will receive one collective grade. This assignment is divided into two parts on presentation day, each 20-30 minutes:

1. **Presentation:** Students must present the material to the class and integrate material from one to three other sources, including books, reports, article, videos, etc. Prepare a visual aid (PowerPoint) and post a study guide handout on TritonEd of key terms, concepts, and events. Study guide should be no more than one page and can be posted after class.
2. **Discussion:** Use a variety of methods for running the class discussion. Students may assign, for example, writing exercises, small group work, large group discussion, etc.

Environmental Justice News Item Response (5%): Each student will select an environmental justice-related newspaper article once during the quarter and write a 1-page response paper. Students will sign up for a date to turn it in at the beginning of class. Summarize the article and describe what you found most interesting and what question(s) the news item raised for you.

Either attach a hard copy of the article or include a link. To select a date, please sign up on the TritonEd course site. Look for the blog “News Item Presentation” and enter your name in the “comment” section of the date you prefer. See Weeks 1 and 2 for examples.

Two in-class exams (30%): The in-class exams will be based on the readings and class discussions. Each will include a few short-answer identifications and an essay. Some concepts and terms will be selected from the study guides submitted by student discussion groups.

Group Research Project: (20%) This research/presentation project is done in teams of five students. Professor Harper will provide a list of 10 topics or case studies and students will sign up for a topic online. There will be several class sessions devoted to working on this project. For the research, students must locate/research 3-6 sources. On presentation day, the group must turn in: (1) a bibliography, The in-class presentation should be about 20 minutes with a PowerPoint. More information on this assignment will be forthcoming in class.

Final Essay (10%): In the place of a final exam each student will be required to complete a 2-3 page take home essay that is a summary of their topic/case study, including a bibliography. It will be due on finals day and must be submitted to the TritonEd course site.

Policies

Electronics Policy: It’s very important to bring a pen/pencil and paper to class both for taking notes and for in-class writing assignments/activities. No computers in class. Generally speaking, electronic devices are banned. This includes laptops, cell phones, e-readers, and anything else that has been recently invented. If you would like to know why I’ve implemented this policy, see the two articles I have posted on TritonEd under “Electronics Policy.”

E-mail Policy: I welcome emails from students, although I would encourage everyone to consider visiting me in person during my office hours if you have questions about class. In any case, it may take me some time to get back to you, as I check email only once per day and never in the evening or on weekends, during breaks, etc. If you ask a question already answered in this syllabus, I will not respond. So check here first.

Attendance Policy: The format of the course will make it difficult to earn credit if absences occur so it is important to attend every session you can. However, please do not come to class sick. You are given two “free” sick days this quarter that will not be counted against you, but you are responsible for getting caught up on what you missed. Make a friend in the course and agree to share notes if one of you misses a class. Each missed class beyond those two results in a reduction of your final letter grade unless you have official documentation (i.e., a doctor’s note).

Texts

Required Book: David Naguib Pellow (2002). *Garbage Wars: The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

Readings listed next to the date should be read before attending class that day.

Week 0: September 22

Thursday Introductions and review of syllabus

Week 1: September 27 & 29

INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Tuesday 1. In class writing assignment

Readings Pellow and Brulle, "Poisoning the Planet" (PDF); Brulle and Pellow "Environmental Justice" (PDF); Bullard, "Environmental Justice For All" (PDF); and Geiser and Waneck, "PCBs and Warren County" (PDF)

Thursday 1. **Student questions due 7am**

Readings Bullard, "Anatomy of Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement" (PDF); Wright, "Coping with Poisons in Cancer Alley" (PDF); Birnbaum, "From Endocrine Disruptors to Nanomaterials" (PDF); Morello-Frosch, "Understanding the Cumulative Impacts of Inequalities in Environmental Health" (PDF)

Week 2: October 4 & 6

Tuesday THE BIRTH OF MODERN ENVIRONMENTALISM

1. In class writing assignment
Readings Szasz, "Routine Regulatory Failure" (PDF) and "'Toxic Waste' as Icon" (PDF); Cole and Foster, "We Speak for Ourselves" (PDF)

Thursday THE RISE OF ACTIVISM AND RESEARCH

1. **Student questions due 7am**
2. Student Led Discussion (1)
Readings Taylor, "Environmental Justice Claims," (PDF) "Toxic Exposure" (PDF) and "Disproportionate Siting" (PDF)

Week 3: October 11 & 13

Tuesday ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Student Led Discussion (2)
2. In class writing assignment
Readings Pellow, *Garbage Wars* – Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Thursday CASE STUDIES: ACTIVISM & RECYCLING IN CHICAGO

IN CLASS EXAM #1

- 1. **Student questions due 7am**
 - 2. Student Led Discussion (3)
- Readings Pellow, *Garbage Wars* – Chapters 4 and 5
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Week 4: October 18 & 20

AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

Tuesday No class

Readings Pellow, *Garbage Wars* – Chapters 6 & 7

Thursday No class

- 1. **Student questions due 7am**
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Week 5: October 25 & 27

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

Tuesday 1. Student Led Discussion (4)

- 2. In class writing assignment

Readings Taylor, “Internal Colonialism” (PDF); LaDuke, “Nuclear Waste: Dumping on the Indians” (PDF); Cole and Foster, “In Defense of Mother Earth” (PDF)

Thursday 1. **Student questions due 7am**

- 2. Student Led Discussion (5)
- 3. Group work in class on final presentations

Readings Clark, “The Indigenous Environmental Movement in the United States” (PDF); Goodall, “Indigenous Peoples, Colonialism, and Memories of Environmental Injustice” (PDF)

Week 6: November 1 & 3

Tuesday POLITICS AND SCIENCE

- 1. Student Led Discussion (6)
- 2. In class writing assignment

Readings Davis, “Zones of Incomprehension” (PDF); Freudenburg, “Scientific Certainty Argumentation Methods (SCAMs): Science and the Politics of Doubt.” (PDF)

Thursday RACE/CLASS/SPACE AND THE LAW

- 1. **Student questions due 7am**
- 2. Student Led Discussion (7)
- 3. Group work on final presentations

Readings Taylor, “Market Dynamics” (PDF); “Enforcing Environmental Protections” (PDF)

Week 7: November 8 (election day) & 10

Tuesday THE GLOBALIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM
1. Student Led Discussion (8)
2. Group work on final presentations
Readings Pellow, "Electronic Waste: The "Clean Industry" Exports Its Trash" (PDF); Frey, "The Hazardous Waste Stream in the World-System" (PDF)

Thursday FARMWORKERS AND PESTICIDES **IN CLASS EXAM #2**
1. **Student questions due 7am**
2. Student Led Discussion (9)
Readings Pulido, "Environmentalism and Positionality" (PDF); Arcury, "Pesticide Safety Among Farmworkers" (PDF); Ribeiro, "Occupational Safety and Health Practices Among Flower Greenhouses Workers from Alto Tiete Region (Brazil)" (PDF)

Week 8: November 15 & 17

Tuesday ACTIVISM IN CALIFORNIA
1. Student Led Discussion (10)
2. Group work on final presentations
Readings Harrison, "Abandoned Bodies and Spaces of Sacrifice" (PDF); Harrison, "Neoliberal Environmental Justice" (PDF)

Thursday THE FUTURE & FINAL PRESENTATIONS
1. **Student questions due 7am**
2. Final presentations (2)
Readings Agyeman, "Toward a 'Just' Sustainability?"

Week 9: November 22

Tuesday FINAL PRESENTATIONS
1. **Student questions due 7am**
2. Final presentations (3)

Thursday No class

Week 10: November 29 & December 1

FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday 1. **Student questions due 7am**
2. Final presentations (3)

Thursday 1. Final presentations (2)
2. Course Review

Final essay due on finals day, post on TritonED