

## **Environmental Racism**

**Instructor:** Dr. Nadeen Kharputly

**Office hours:** Mondays 12:10pm-2pm (and by appointment) in Social Sciences Building 252

**E-mail:** [nkharput@ucsd.edu](mailto:nkharput@ucsd.edu)

Any changes to this syllabus will be announced in class and via e-mail.

### **Course description:**

This class will provide the opportunity to read, think, and talk about issues relating to race, space, and the environment. We will broaden our concept of the environment and consider the ways in which the effects of racism have both institutional and individual dimensions, ranging from the health hazards associated with segregation to the phenomenon of arresting “trespassers” in predominantly white spaces.

### **Ground rules:**

We are discussing complex, difficult, and very necessary topics, and while differences in opinion are expected and welcome, please be sure to voice your responses generously. This is a space where every student has the opportunity to learn in an open and supportive environment, and in order to maintain this co-operative space, everyone in this class is expected to be as open-minded and gracious as possible. Personal attacks and hate speech will not be tolerated. Please go over the Principles of Community to ensure that you adhere by the expected guidelines:

(<https://ucsd.edu/about/principles.html>)

### **Learning outcomes:**

By the end of this class you will be able to:

- Identify central arguments in the texts we read and examine them from multiple angles
- Take and defend a particular position while considering the viability of other positions
- Talk about the issues presented in this class in an academic manner and engage in thoughtful, sensitive debate with peers
- Apply the concepts and readings we discuss to everyday examples

### **Class readings and other requirements:**

Bring the readings of the day with you to each class. You will not be asked to purchase any texts.

All required readings – PDFs and links to articles – will be available online on TritonEd. Please access links listed on the syllabus via TritonEd as they may have changed in the meantime.

Bring writing tools with you to class – pen and notebook, laptop, or tablet (no cell phones) – you will be asked to undertake in-class writing exercises throughout the quarter.

### **Class etiquette:**

Please devote the 50 minutes of class to listening attentively to everyone in this space. We are covering difficult topics so your full attention is required.

Be mindful of the space you take up – make sure you respond to the questions posed during our discussions directly and efficiently, and do not forget that your classmates need to be able to participate as well.

Laptops are permitted for referring to the texts and taking notes only. Any distracting behavior – attempting to text discreetly, browsing through social media, etc. - will be cited, and you will be marked as absent for the class. Fiddling with technology is rude and distracting, both to me and your peers. If you are dealing with an emergency that requires you to be on your phone, please do not come to class. When you are not taking notes, please have your laptop screens down to fully engage in our space and listen to your peers with respect.

### **Communication:**

I encourage you to attend office hours whenever you need to talk through ideas and issues, even early on in the quarter. Please check your e-mail at least once a day to keep up to date with any possible changes to our schedule. Expect responses to your e-mails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours over the weekend. Courteous correspondence is expected—e-mails must begin with a salutation (“Dear>Hello Dr. Kharputly”) and end with your signature (Sincerely/Thanks, [your name]”).

Make sure you read over the syllabus and any instructions I have shared via e-mail or TritonEd carefully before you ask any questions. I will not respond to e-mails asking me what my office hours are, for example, or looking for any information that is readily available on the syllabus.

### **Course requirements and percentage of final grade:**

#### 20% Participation and attendance

This includes *regular attendance* and *active participation* in class. A large portion of your grade relies on participation and attendance, so any absences can quickly take a toll. Please check in with me **immediately** if you anticipate any difficulties with regular attendance. This is not a class where you can come in and check out – your participation and critical engagement will be assessed carefully.

You may have two unexcused absences, no questions asked. Additional unexcused absences will affect the attendance portion of your grade. Please make the arrangements to procure necessary documentation for medical issues and/or disabilities as soon as possible.

Perpetual tardiness will also affect your attendance. One or two late arrivals is of course understandable, but a consistent inability to arrive to class on time will affect the attendance portion of your grade.

It is your responsibility to make up for your absences: reach out to a classmate to see what you missed. If you have additional questions after you have caught up, you’re welcome to reach out to me. E-mailing me to ask if you “missed anything in class” serves no purpose; the answer is always yes, and it is your duty to catch up.

#### 20% Weekly photo share

By midnight at the end of each week (Sunday) you will share a photograph relating to the theme of the week. Additional instructions will be provided ahead of time. These will be graded pass/half/fail.

20% Midquarter self-evaluation (due 10/28 by 11:59pm)

A 3-5 page assignment that will allow you to reflect on your progress in this class. Further instructions will be sent ahead of time. You will receive a letter grade for this assignment.

30% Take-home final (due 12/12 by 11:59pm)

A take-home exam. Further instructions will be sent ahead of time. You will receive a letter grade for this exam.

10% Self-evaluation (due 12/12 by 11:59pm)

At the end of the course, you will be asked to complete a short evaluation of your learning outcomes. This will be graded pass/fail, and instructions will be sent ahead of time.

*All assignments must be turned in in order to pass this class. This includes the weekly shares and self-evaluations.*

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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Week 0: Course introduction

**Friday, September 28**

Introduction

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Week 1: Understanding Environmental Racism

**Monday, October 1**

“Environmental Racism Explained,” *AJ+*, January 29, 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrbeuJRPM0o>

Vann R. Newkirk II, “Trump’s EPA Concludes Environmental Racism Is Real,” *The Atlantic*, February 28, 2018

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/02/the-trump-administration-finds-that-environmental-racism-is-real/554315/>

**Wednesday, October 3**

Watch in class: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story,” TED Talk, July 2009

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript)

In-class community building exercises

**Friday, October 5**

Laura Pulido, “Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* Vol. 90, No. 1 (2000), pp. 12-40

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## Week 2: Theorizing race and Space

### **Monday, October 8**

George Lipsitz, "The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race: Theorizing the Hidden Architecture of Landscape," *Landscape Journal*, Vol. 26, No.1 (2007), pp. 10-23.

### **Wednesday October 10**

Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 8 No. 4 (2006), pp. 387-409.

### **Friday October 12**

Lipsitz and Wolfe continued  
In-class writing exercises

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## Week 3: Segregation

### **Monday October 15**

Nancy Denton and Douglas Massey, "The Construction of the Ghetto," from *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, 1993

### **Wednesday October 17**

Denton and Massey continued

### **Friday October 19**

In-class viewing: Majora Carter, "Greening the Ghetto," TED Talk, February 2006.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/majora\\_carter\\_s\\_tale\\_of\\_urban\\_renewal](https://www.ted.com/talks/majora_carter_s_tale_of_urban_renewal)

In-class writing exercises

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## Week 4: Segregation continued

### **Monday October 22**

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*, June 2014

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

### **Wednesday October 24**

Coates continued

### **Friday October 26**

In-class exercises for mid-quarter evaluation

*Recommended reading:* Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Segregation Now," *ProPublica*, April 16 2014

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/05/segregation-now/359813/>

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Week 5: Segregation and its hazards

**Monday October 29**

Dorceta Taylor, "The Rise of Racial Zoning: Residential Segregation," from *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility* (2014)

**Wednesday October 31**

Taylor continued

**Friday November 2**

Cheryl Katz, "People in Poor Neighborhoods Breathe More Hazardous Particles," *Scientific American*, November 1, 2012

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/people-poor-neighborhoods-breathe-more-hazardous-particles/>

Jamie Smith Hopkins, "Nearly 8,000 U.S. public schools are plagued by toxic air," *Grist*, February 20, 2017

<https://grist.org/article/nearly-8000-u-s-public-schools-are-plagued-by-toxic-air/>

Oliver Milman, "Air pollution: black, Hispanic and poor students most at risk from toxins," *The Guardian*, February 1, 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/feb/01/schools-across-the-us-exposed-to-air-pollution-children-are-facing-risks>

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Week 6: Race and environmental disasters: Hurricanes Katrina and Maria

**Monday November 5**

Julie Sze, "Toxic Soup Redux: Why Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Matter after Katrina," Social Sciences Research Council, June 11, 2006

<http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Sze/>

**Wednesday November 7**

Alexa S. Dietrich, Adriana María Garriga-López and Claudia Sofía Garriga-López, "Hurricane Maria Exposes Puerto Rico's Stark Environmental and Health Inequalities," Social Sciences Research Council, October 3, 2017

<https://items.ssrc.org/hurricane-maria-exposes-puerto-ricos-stark-environmental-and-health-inequalities/>

**Friday November 9**

NO CLASS – Dr. Kharputly away at the American Studies Association conference

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Week 7: Disasters continued: Flint, Michigan

**Monday November 12**

NO CLASS – Veteran’s day

**Wednesday November 14**

Laura Pulido, “Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol. 27 No. 3 (2016), pp. 1-16

**Friday November 16**

Pulido continued

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Week 8: Disaster and displacement: Standing Rock and #NODAPL

**Monday November 19**

Jaskiran Dhilon, “What Standing Rock Teaches Us About Environmental Justice,” Social Sciences Research Council, December 5, 2017

<https://items.ssrc.org/what-standing-rock-teaches-us-about-environmental-justice/>

**Wednesday November 21**

Dhilon continued

**Friday November 23**

NO CLASS – Thanksgiving holiday

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Week 9: Trespassing white space

**Monday November 26**

Elijah Anderson, “The White Space,” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (2015), pp. 10–21

**Wednesday November 28**

Laila Lalami, “The Public Shaming of Racists is Working,” *The Nation*, May 24, 2018

**Friday November 30**

Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, Vol. 3 No. 3 (2011), pp. 54-70

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Week 10: Conclusion

**Monday December 3**

Trespassing discussion continued

## **Wednesday December 5**

Q&A session about final take-home exam

## **Friday December 7**

Conclusions

### **Additional information:**

The university's statement on academic integrity must be reviewed before turning in any assignments: <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>. Plagiarism consists of but is not limited to the following: presenting another person's ideas or language as if they were your own, copying (words AND ideas) from the Internet, and failure to acknowledge and properly cite the sources of the ideas presented. Re-using language from a paper you have previously written for another class is unacceptable. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please check in with me ahead of time. It is your responsibility to be aware of all of this; lack of awareness is no excuse.

*Any instances of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment (and possibly the class) and a referral to the Academic Integrity Office.*

Please let me know as soon as possible if you need accommodation for disability purposes or religious reasons so that we may make alternate arrangements ahead of time. It is best to get accommodation from the Office for Students with Disabilities (located behind Center Hall, 858-534-4382) as soon as possible so that we can work together to ensure that your needs are met in the event of an emergency.

### **Majoring or minoring in Ethnic Studies:**

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a university or college requirement. Students have taken three or four classes out of *interest* yet have no information about the major or minor and don't realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, education, public health, social work, non-profit work and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Monica Rodriguez, Ethnic Studies Program Advisor, via email at [ethnicstudies@ucsd.edu](mailto:ethnicstudies@ucsd.edu)