

Sociology 4047: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Professor Jill Harrison

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Spring 2017

Class: Tues/Thurs 9:30-10:45 in ECON 16

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

We require a thick commitment to justice, one that entails questioning fundamental concepts and one that steers clear of righteousness. We need a justice that elevates us at the same time that it keeps us grounded, attentive to the specific “cuts” that our enactments of it make: the lives that are made and lost (Barad 2007). This justice, as Maria Puig de la Bellacasa teaches us, comes not only from victories—from what is gained. It comes also from recognizing the other possible worlds never pursued, as well as those that might still be enacted (Puig de la Bellacasa 2011). “[I]t might have been otherwise,” Leigh Star wisely reminded us (Star 1991, 53). We must stay with both the trouble and the power of that possibility. (Jenny Reardon, 2013, pp. 191-192)

The environmental crisis unfolding throughout the United States and across the world poses grave threats to the health of human beings, other animals, and ecosystems. Yet we do not all share this burden equally. Rather, an extensive body of scholarship on “environmental inequalities” has demonstrated that people living in poverty, people of color, tribal communities, and other marginalized groups are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards, have disproportionately less access to environmental goods like parks and open space, and are disproportionately vulnerable to the harms caused by those environmental conditions. The overarching goals of this course are to (a) identify primary structural factors that uphold these inequalities, and (b) study the efforts of the Environmental Justice (EJ) movement to reduce these inequalities. We will draw on core concepts from environmental sociology, sociology of race and ethnicity, sociology of science, and social movement theory throughout the semester. I approach this course and all of my work with the conviction that scholars, citizens, and governments have an obligation to challenge and reduce inequalities.

I want to be clear from the beginning that this is a theory-driven, reading-intensive course and will require a significant time commitment from each student. Also, the problems we will confront throughout this course are complex and daunting, defying simple, ‘silver bullet’ solutions. You should be prepared to grapple with, struggle with, consider, and deliberate multiple and often conflicting perspectives about the causes of serious environmental problems, as well as equally varied (and inconclusive) debates about how these problems should be solved. I am more concerned with posing difficult questions (and showing why they matter) than with offering definitive answers. I want to help you develop your critical thinking skills, become better equipped to engage in environmental problem solving in a way that takes justice seriously, and become a more compassionate and engaged citizen.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following books are REQUIRED for all students and can be purchased from the campus bookstore:

Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Pellow. 2011. *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants Vs. the Environment in America's Eden*. New York: NYU Press.

Ta-Nehisi Coates. 2015. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

All other readings, some lecture materials, and other key information are listed in this syllabus and are available through Desire2Learn (D2L). Please note that I will periodically assign additional short readings and make other small changes to the syllabus. You should log on to D2L and check your email regularly to stay informed of changes to the schedule and new materials.

ASSIGNMENTS

Your final grade for this course will be based on the following requirements (1000 points total):

1. **Attendance** (60 points; 6% of final grade)

Your attendance is required this semester. You simply cannot do well without being in class and participating with the rest of us. I will use the end-of-class reflections (described below) to keep track of your attendance. You can miss up to three class meetings without penalty. After that, you will lose 5 points for each absence. Arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early will count as an absence. I will waive absences only for *documented* cases of illness, injury, family emergency, etc. If you are having trouble coming to class, please come see me sooner than later. I would be glad to talk with you about it and help you think about how to address the problem.

2. **Participation** (60 points; 6% of final grade)

This course requires active participation. You need not always have something to say, but your consistent and informed participation in class is a course requirement. To get full credit for your participation, you must attend regularly, show up on time, be prepared to discuss required readings, and participate regularly in class discussions and small group discussions. In this course, you are expected to learn a body of sociological thinking about environmental justice, regardless of your own perspectives on the issues. Therefore, I will evaluate your participation based on your engagement with the academic concepts, arguments, and evidence about environmental justice, not on your opinions (either those in agreement or disagreement with mine).

You are required to do all required readings each week before coming to class. "Doing the readings" well means carefully reading, taking notes about the main arguments and evidence, jotting down your questions, and re-reading. Please bring the reading materials, your reading response, and your notes with you to class and be prepared to ask questions and discuss your reactions to the readings. You are expected to spend an average of six hours per week preparing for this course (outside of our time together in the classroom).

End-of-class reflections: In the last five minutes of each class, I will ask you to reflect in writing on your participation in class that day and on any questions that were raised that you'd like me to address in the next class. In doing these, I hope that you will "embrace the art of writing as the art of thinking" (Coates 2015: 51). You will turn these reflections in. Thoughtful reflections help me get to know you and build a better class, and they help you become a better class participant. Also, I will use them to track your attendance. I will read these and return them to you. You must keep them until the end of the semester.

Many absences will affect your participation grade, to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

3. **Reading Responses** (200 points max; 20% of final grade)

Most weeks, you can submit a reading response that addresses the reading questions posted on D2L about that week's readings. These reading responses will help you prepare for class discussions, help you stay on top of the readings, and help me gauge your comprehension of the readings. These are due on Tuesdays before class starts. I will count the highest 10 scores you receive on these. Each is worth up to 20 points. [Exception: In the weeks we discuss an entire book, you are required instead to write a "Book Response" – see below.]

Your reading responses must demonstrate meaningful engagement with the reading(s) and the reading questions. Your responses can be up to 4 pages in length (double-spaced), professionally composed, coherently organized, proofread, typed in 12-point font, and formatted with 1-inch margins. Submit each to that week's dropbox on D2L before class on Tuesday. Submit these as .pdf, .doc, or .docx files. Do not copy and paste your essay into the 'comments' box in D2L; rather, you must upload the document.

Each reading response is worth up to 20 points. I will grade reading responses as follows:

- Full credit (20 points) for responses that demonstrate a "high" level of engagement with the reading(s), address the reading questions posted on D2L, and follow the assignment guidelines.
- Partial credit (10 points) for responses that demonstrate a "medium" level of engagement with the reading(s), address only some of the reading questions posted on D2L, and/or incompletely follow the assignment guidelines
- Zero credit (0 points) for responses that demonstrate little or no engagement with the reading(s), do not answer the reading questions posted on D2L, and/or do not follow the assignment guidelines.

Late policy for reading responses: I will only accept late reading responses for *documented* cases of illness, injury, family emergency, etc.

4. **Book Responses** (80 points; 8% of final grade)

In addition to our other readings, we will read two full-length books this semester. On each of the two weeks I have assigned those books, you are required to submit a book response in which you respond to the reading questions posted on D2L. Each book response must demonstrate meaningful engagement with the book and the reading questions posted on D2L. Your responses must be approximately 3-4 pages in length (double-spaced), professionally composed, coherently organized, proofread, typed in 12-point font, and formatted with 1-inch margins. Submit each to that week's dropbox on D2L before class on Tuesday.

I will grade book responses as follows:

- Full credit (40 points) for responses that demonstrate a "high" level of engagement with the book, address the reading questions posted on D2L, and follow the assignment guidelines.
- Partial credit (20 points) for responses that demonstrate a "medium" level of engagement with the book, address only some of the reading questions posted on D2L, and/or incompletely follow the assignment guidelines
- Zero credit (0 points) for responses that demonstrate little or no engagement with the book, do not answer the reading questions posted on D2L, and/or do not follow the assignment guidelines.

Late policy for book responses: I will only accept late book responses for *documented* cases of illness, injury, family emergency, etc.

5. **Tests** (600 points total; 60% of final grade)

This semester, there will be two tests.

Test #1 (300 points): 3/9 in class

Test #2 (300 points): 5/4 in class

Note: On the day I return the first test in class, I will collect them from you before you leave the room. If you do not return your test to me before you leave the room, you will earn a zero on that test.

Make-up policy for tests: If you miss one of the tests due to a death in your family, a medical emergency, a court date, a religious conflict, or your participation in a university-supported activity in which you are obligated to participate, you must provide me with written documentation of that conflict in order to take the make-up exam. Such documentation must be provided prior to your absence. Or, if the situation is an emergency that prohibits prior notice, you must provide documentation within one week of your absence. I will then allow you to take a make-up exam during the scheduled final exam period. The make-up final exam will be an essay exam that will test your comprehensive understanding of *all* course material.

GRADES

In sum, your final grade will be based on the following:

60 points	Attendance
60 points	Participation
200 points	Reading responses
80 points	Book responses
<u>600 points</u>	<u>Tests</u>
<i>1000 points total</i>	

Your total points earned will correspond to the following final letter grades:

930-1000	A	800-829	B-	670-699	D+
900-929	A-	770-799	C+	630-669	D
870-899	B+	730-769	C	600-629	D-
830-869	B	700-729	C-	0-599	F

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disability accommodations: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that we can figure out how to address your needs. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Their contact information is 303-492-8671 and dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries under Quick Links at Disability Services website (<http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/>) and discuss your needs with me.

CU-Boulder Honor Code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://honorcode.colorado.edu>

Plagiarism is one important aspect of this honor code. All work that you submit for this class must be your own work, and you are required to quote and cite all references properly. Although this mandate appears straightforward, I am well aware of how murky the task can be. Wherever you are unsure about quoting and citing, please come see me to figure out the best strategy. If you want to cite an idea I proposed in lecture, cite it accordingly with an in-text citation such as (lecture 1/31/13). If you want to cite a direct quote from a Powerpoint slide, put it in quotes.

Discrimination and harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://hr.colorado.edu/dh/>

Respectful classroom environment: Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Observance of religious holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, I will make every effort to accommodate all students who have such conflicts with scheduled examinations, assignments, or attending class; students must notify me of such absences by the second week of the semester.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Absences: When you are absent, you are responsible for taking the initiative to find out what you missed. You should obtain notes from a fellow classmate; you may then come ask me about updates to the syllabus and clarifications on specific points that you do not understand. I will not post or otherwise share my slides or lecture notes.

Punctuality: It is very important that you arrive to class on time and stay for the entire class, as arriving late and leaving early are disruptive and distracting. Come see me ASAP if you anticipate that you will regularly be late. If you must leave early, sit near the door and slip out quietly.

D2L troubles: It is your responsibility to make sure that you are able to successfully upload your essays to the appropriate dropbox on D2L. Double-check to make sure that each submission actually gets uploaded to D2L, and keep documentation of each successful submission. If you have troubles with D2L, contact the CU IT Service Center at 303-735-4357. Because D2L could have problems, be sure to download your readings ahead of time, and keep copies of your own essays and course readings on a flash drive or other backup device.

Grades: I will grade your work very carefully and try to be as transparent as possible about my grading decisions. If you want to discuss the grade you received on one of your essays or exams, you must put your concerns into writing, send it to me, and request an appointment to meet in office hours. If you decide to dispute a grade, I reserve the right to alter the grade as I see fit (i.e., either up *or* down).

Laptops, cell phones, and other electronic communication devices: Because the use of laptops, cell phones, and other such devices distracts both the user and other students, I generally do not allow their use in the classroom and require that they be stored out of sight during class. If I see you checking your cell phone, I will ask you to leave. There are two exceptions to the laptop rule. First: If you believe that you must use a laptop during class, please talk to me privately about this, bring documentation from the appropriate authority (e.g., Disability Services, or your doctor) stating that you need to use a laptop every day, and keep in mind that, if I decide to permit you to use it, you may only do so for taking notes. Second: When we are discussing a particular required reading, and you have it available in electronic form instead of in hard copy, you may use your laptop or other electronic communication device to view the required reading.

Classroom behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards will be subject to discipline. If you fall asleep, text, or chat during class, I will ask you to leave. If I have to do so more than once, I will drop you from the course. Such behaviors are disruptive to me and others around you and send a message of disrespect. Save your conversations for after class, and raise your hand to ask me questions when you need clarification or want to comment on course material.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND REQUIRED READINGS

Please note: I may periodically assign additional short readings and make other small changes to the syllabus.

Week 1 (1/17 and 1/19): Introduction to the course and to the environmental justice (EJ) movement

Cole, Luke, and Sheila Foster. 2001. "A History of the Environmental Justice Movement." Pp. 19-33 in *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. New York: NYU Press.

Nixon, Rob. 2014. "The Great Acceleration and the Great Divergence: Vulnerability in the Anthropocene." Modern Language Association of America Presidential Forum. <https://profession.mla.hcommons.org/2014/03/19/the-great-acceleration-and-the-great-divergence-vulnerability-in-the-anthropocene/>

Week 2 (1/24 and 1/26): Introduction to environmental inequalities

Bullard, Robert, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha, and Beverly Wright. 2007. *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty 1987-2007: Grassroots Struggle to Dismantle Environmental Racism in the United States*. Executive Summary. Cleveland, OH: United Church of Christ.

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.

Rice, James. 2016. "Slow Violence and the Challenges of Environmental Inequality." *Environmental Justice* 9(6): 176-180.

Tesh, Sylvia Noble. 2001a. "Environmental Health Research." pp. 24-39 from *Uncertain Hazards: Environmental Activists and Scientific Proof*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Week 3 (1/31 and 2/2): Scientific norms and contested expertise

Brown, Phil. 2000. "Popular Epidemiology and Toxic Waste Contamination: Lay and Professional Ways of Knowing." Pp. 364-383 in *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, ed. Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter. New York: New York University Press.

Tesh, Sylvia Noble. 2001b. "Environmental Science." Pp. 62-80 in *Uncertain Hazards: Environmental Activists and Scientific Proof*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Week 4 (2/7 and 2/9): Environmentalist priorities

Merchant, Carolyn. 2003. "Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History." *Environmental History* 8 (3): just read pp. 381-383.

Solnit, Rebecca. 2014. Selections from *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Cronon, William. 1998. "The Trouble with Wilderness, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." Pp. 471-499 in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Pezzulo, Phaedra C., and Ronald Sandler. 2007. Selections from "Introduction: Revisiting the Environmental Justice Challenge to Environmentalism." Pp. 1-11 in *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Klinsky, Sonja, et al. 2016. "Why Equity is Fundamental in Climate Change Policy Research." *Global Environmental Change* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2016.08.002>.

Week 5 (2/14 and 2/16): Industry malfeasance and agency capture

- Howard, Brian Clark, and Robert Kunzig. 2016. "Five Reasons to Like the EPA." *National Geographic*. December 9. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/12/environmental-protection-agency-epa-history-pruitt/>
- Faber, Daniel. 2008a. "Eroding Environmental Justice: Colonization of the State by the Polluter-Industrial Complex." Pp. 67-118 in *Capitalizing on Environmental Injustice: The Polluter Industrial Complex in the Age of Globalization*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Vollers, Maryanne. 2000. "Libby's Deadly Grace." *Mother Jones*. <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2000/05/libbys-deadly-grace>

Week 6 (2/21 and 2/23): Capitalism and neoliberal ideology

- Bell, Michael Mayerfeld. 2009. Selections from *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. Los Angeles, CA: Pine Forge Press, 58-67.
- Johnson, Allan G. 2013. "If Not Capitalism, What?" <http://www.agjohnson.us/glad/if-not-capitalism-what/>
- Monbiot, George. 2016. "Neoliberalism: The Ideology at the Root of All Our Problems." *The Guardian*. April 15. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot>
- Khan, Shamus. 2014. "The Marriage of Poverty and Inequality." *Al Jazeera America*. Feb 20. <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/2/the-marriage-of-povertyandinequality.html>

Week 7 (2/28 and 3/2): Neoliberal environmentalism

- Faber, Daniel. 2008b. Selections from "Against Our Nature: Neoliberalism and the Crisis of Environmental Justice Policy." Pp. 119-133 in *Capitalizing on Environmental Injustice: The Polluter Industrial Complex in the Age of Globalization*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Maniates, Michael F. 2001. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" *Global Environmental Politics* 1(3): 31-52.
- Downey, Liam. 2015. "Popular Explanations of the Environmental Crisis." Pp. 15-40 in *Inequality, Democracy, and the Environment*. New York: NYU Press.

Week 8 (3/7 and 3/9): Water contamination Flint, Michigan... and test #1

Readings to be announced.

****Thursday 3/9: Test #1 in class****

Week 9 (3/14 and 3/16): White privilege, segregation, and the possessive investment in whiteness

- 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.
- Lipsitz, George. 2006. "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness." Pp. 1-23 in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2015. Selection from *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

Week 10 (3/21 and 3/23): Racist violence

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Week of March 27th: Spring break

Week 11 (4/4 and 4/6): Nativist environmentalism

Park, Lisa Sun-Hee, and David Pellow. 2011. *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants Vs. the Environment in America's Eden*. New York: NYU Press.

Week 12 (4/11 and 4/13): Dominant ideas of justice in environmental politics

Low, Nicholas, and Brendan Gleeson. 1998a. "Utilitarianism." Pp. 73-78 in *Justice, Society, and Nature: An Exploration of Political Ecology*. London: Routledge.

Bryner, Gary C. 2002. Selections from "Assessing claims of environmental justice: conceptual frameworks." Pp. 40-42 in *Justice and Natural Resources: Concepts, Strategies, and Applications*, ed. Kathryn M. Mutz, Gary C. Bryner, and Douglas S. Kenney. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Low, Nicholas, and Brendan Gleeson. 1998b. "Entitlement." Pp. 79-84 in *Justice, Society, and Nature: An Exploration of Political Ecology*. London: Routledge.

Swift, Adam. 2001c. "Nozick: Justice as Entitlement." Pp. 30-39 in *Political Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide for Students and Politicians*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Week 13 (4/18 and 4/20): The EJ movement's ideas of justice

Walker, Gordon. 2012. Selections from *Environmental Justice: Concepts, Evidence, and Politics*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Harrison, Jill Lindsey. 2014. "Neoliberal Environmental Justice: Mainstream Ideas of Justice in Political Conflict over Agricultural Pesticides in the United States." *Environmental Politics* 23(4): 650-669.

Week 14 (4/25 and 4/27): Internal colonialism and sacrifice zones

****Tuesday 4/25: No class.** Instead, watch "The Return of Navajo Boy" on your own. Available for online streaming through D2L: click on "Content", then "Films".

Sandlos, John, and Arn Keeling. 2013. "Zombie Mines and the (Over)burden of History." *Solutions: For a Sustainable and Desirable Future* 4(3): 80-83.

Macmillan, Leslie. 2012. "Uranium Mines Dot Navajo Land, Neglected and Still Perilous." *New York Times*. March 31. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/01/us/uranium-mines-dot-navajo-land-neglected-and-still-perilous.html?_r=2&hp

Kuletz, Valerie. 1998. "Introduction" and "Tragedy at the Center of the Universe." Pp. 3-37 from *The Tainted Desert: Environmental and Social Ruin in the American West*. New York: Routledge.

Week 15 (5/2 and 5/4): The fight for sovereignty at Standing Rock ... and test #2

Petrella, Christopher F., and Ameer Loggins. 2016. "Standing Rock, Flint, and the Color of Water." *Black Perspectives*. November 2. http://www.aaihs.org/standing-rock-flint-and-the-color-of-water/?utm_content=bufferf074f

Hayes, Kelly. 2016. "How to Talk about #NoDAPL: A Native Perspective." *Truthout*. October 28. <http://www.truthout.org/opinion/item/38165-how-to-talk-about-nodapl-a-native-perspective>

NoiseCat, Julian Brave, and Anne Spice. 2016. "A History and Future of Resistance." *Jacobin*. September 8. <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/09/standing-rock-dakota-access-pipeline-protest/>

****Thursday 5/4: Test #2 in class****