

Soci 199, Environmental Inequality

Syllabus v. 3

Fall, 2015

Instructor: Tracy Perkins
tracy.perkins@howard.edu (provided for reference only – please e-mail me through our Blackboard course site for all matters related to class)

Class: Monday/Wednesday/Friday: 3:30-4:40
Douglass Hall room 240

Office hours: Fridays 10:30-1:30
Douglass Hall 210C

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

- *Antonio Gramsci*

The aims of this course are to:

- Learn about the problems of environmental inequality and how different social actors are trying to solve them.
- Improve critical reading, analysis, writing and discussion skills.
- Learn basic principles of public communication and improve media literacy.
- 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 through the lens of race, class and gender.
- 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 in domestic and international settings.
- Create basic websites.

Required Readings

The following texts will be available for purchase at the Howard Barnes and Noble. All other texts will be available on the course Blackboard site.

- *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining The Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors*, by Carolyn Finney (2014)
- *Failed Promises: Evaluating the Federal Government's Responses to Environmental Justice*, edited by David M. Konisky (2015)

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:

- Please do not use laptops or other digital devices unless you have requested permission from me ahead of time.
- Come to class prepared by having done all the assigned reading and taking notes on it.
- Bring your readings and notes to class every day, we will sometimes refer to them in small-group work.

Names and Gender Pronouns in the Classroom

We will provide an opportunity in class for every student to share their preferred name and gender pronoun (he, she, they, zie, 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, and feel free to inform me if you would like to change it partway through the course. Please make every effort to call your peers by their preferred gender pronouns for the duration of the semester.

Grading

	Due date	% of course grade
Participation	n/a	10%
Discussion Facilitation	We will sign up for dates in class	5%
Reading Responses	Midnight of the day prior to when the readings are due	30%
Multi-media essay & Website		
- Mini-proposal	Sept. 14 th	5%
- Draft list of readings	Sept. 28 th	5%
- Create skeleton website (no written content)	Oct. 5 th	5%
- Draft argument	Oct. 19 th	5%
- Draft website (with written content)	Nov. 9 th	10%
- Final website (with written content)	On day of your presentation	15%
- Presentation	Last day of class and during scheduled final	10%

Discussion Facilitation

Each student will sign up for two class sessions in which you will facilitate discussion and other learning activities of your choice. You will have 30 minutes of class time to work with. You will be provided with a list of ideas, and tips on how to facilitate effective discussions.

Reading Responses

You are responsible for writing one reading response for the readings covered for each class session. The response should cover all of the readings assigned for that day. These will be uploaded into the “assignments” section of our class website Blackboard. Each reading response should be 300-400 words long, and should include:

- 1) a brief description of the key points made in that day’s readings
- 2) your analysis of the readings
- 3) any questions you may have

Over the course of the semester you will write reading responses for every day of class except the first day of class and the last day of class (between, and including, Aug. 26 and Nov. 30).

You may upload your responses until midnight of the day prior to when the readings are due, when Blackboard will close the assignment. Late responses will not be accepted. You may miss three reading responses without penalty. If you complete readings responses for all of the readings, you will receive 2 extra credit points towards your final grade.

Website and Multimedia Essay

For this project, you will select a case study of environmental inequality about which to educate the public. Assignment prompts will be passed out to help you complete the project as the semester progresses. This project will involve three main tasks, none of which require prior technical skills:

- 1) Using your research skills to investigate and present your case study. What happened? How was the event shaped by broader social and political trends? Why should your reader know about it?
- 2) Presenting your argument in a visual, user-friendly way through a curated list of YouTube videos and other online content, which you will integrate into your own writing. This content will be featured on a Google website that you will build yourself. The website will also contain other content of your own creation, which will be outlined in class.

Attendance, Late Policies and Missed Exams

- All students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. It is especially important to attend the FIRST meeting of each class. It is there that you will receive much of the information critical to your success in the class – syllabi, handouts, names of textbooks, instructor contact information, class format, etc. If you are absent from classes, you are still responsible for the work missed.
- Late assignments (in this class, the website assignments) can be turned in anytime between the end of the class in which they are due and 48 hours after the end of class for reduced credit of one full letter grade. You do not need to ask my permission to take advantage of this opportunity. Late assignments will not be accepted after this 48-hour period.
- There are no make-ups for reading responses.

Communications

- Please do not e-mail me directly. Instead, sign into our class Blackboard site and contact me there. That way I will be sure to see your e-mail. If you e-mail me directly, your e-mail may get lost in the flood of daily e-mails I receive.
- 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. These are best asked in class or office hours.
- I will use your Howard e-mail account for any outside of class communication with you. You are responsible for checking this account regularly. If you do not check it daily, I suggest you set your Howard account to forward to the account that you do check daily

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>

Writing

Writing is an essential tool for thinking and communicating in virtually every discipline and profession. Therefore, in this course I expect you to produce writing that is not only thoughtful and accurate, but also organized, clear, grammatical, and consistent with the conventions of the field. If your writing does not meet these standards, I may deduct points or ask you to revise. For assistance with your writing, go to the student section of the Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) website, <http://www.cetla.howard.edu/wac/students.aspx>.

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 for General Education classes <http://undergraduatestudies.howard.edu/cae/tutor-clearinghouse>
- Writing tutoring for any class: <http://www.coas.howard.edu/writingcenter/>
- How to get tested for a learning disability: <https://www.howard.edu/specialstudentservices/DisabledStudents.htm>
- Howard University Counseling Service <https://www.howard.edu/services/counseling/nav%20links/services.html>
- Academic counseling and choosing a major <http://undergraduatestudies.howard.edu/cae/>
- For your questions about using Blackboard https://itsupport.howard.edu/sims/helpcenter/common/layout/SelfHelpHome.seam?inst_name=howard
- For help finding information, ask a librarian! <http://library.howard.edu/content.php?pid=485081&sid=3987279#14737326>
- Tips on how to study effectively <http://www.howtostudy.org/index.php>

Class Schedule

I. Introduction

Aug. 24:

- No readings

Aug. 26:

- Perkins, Tracy and Julie Sze. 2011. "Images from the Central Valley." *Boom: A Journal of California* 1(1):70-80.

Aug. 28: 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.

II. Understanding Environmental Inequality

August 31: Toxic distribution

- Bullard, Robert, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha and Beverly Wright. 2007. A Current Appraisal of Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States – 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.

September 2: 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.

September 4: Accidents

- Harrison, Jill. 2006. "'Accidents' and Invisibilities: Scaled Discourse and the Naturalization of Regulatory Neglect in California's Pesticide Drift Conflict." *Political Geography*, 25(5), 506-529.

Sept. 7: Labor Day, no class

September 9: 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/>)
- Zaitchik, Alexander. 2015. "After the Deluge: Building Climate Justice From the Wreckage of Hurricane Katrina." June 26. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015

<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/122131/after-deluge-building-climate-justice-wreckage-katrina>)

September 11: International equity

- McLaren, Duncan. 2003. "Environmental Space, Equity and the Ecological Debt." Pp. 19-37 in *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*, edited by J. Agyeman, R. D. Bullard, and B. Evans. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

September 14: Inequitable political participation

- Cole, Luke and Sheila Foster. 2001. "Processes of Struggle: Grassroots Resistance and the Structure of Environmental Decision-Making." Pp. 1-9 in *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*." New York: New York University Press.

September 16: Slow violence

- Nixon, Rob. 2011. "Introduction." Pp. 1-44 in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

September 18: Diversity in the Environmental Movement

- 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)

III. What Causes Environmental Inequality?

September 21: Regulations, the market, social capital and discrimination

- 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.

September 23: Regulatory Failure

- Bernstein, M. 1955. *Regulating Business by Independent Commission*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pgs. 74-95.
- Rechtschaffen, Clifford, Eileen Gauna and Catherine A. O'Neill. 2009. *Environmental Justice: Law, Policy and Regulation*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
 - Ch. 5: Regulation and the Administrative State, pgs. 140-143

September 25: Colonialism

- 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

September 28: Capitalism

- Faber, Daniel. 2008. "Not All People Are Polluted Equal: The Environmental Injustices of American Capitalism." Pp. 15-65 in *Capitalizing on Environmental Injustice: The Polluter-Industrial Complex in the Age of Globalization*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

IV. What is being done?

September 30: Community Organizing

- Cole, Luke and Sheila Foster. 2001. "Preface: We Speak for Ourselves: The Struggle of Kettleman City." Pp. 1-9 in *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. New York: New York University Press.

October 2: Community Organizing cont.

- Perkins, Tracy, ed. 2015. *In Her Own Words: Remembering Teresa De Anda, Pesticides Activist, 1959-2014*. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (<http://www.rememberingteresa.org>)

October 5: Women and advocacy

- Wallace, Aubrey. 1993. "Mrs. Gibbs Goes to Washington." Pp. 167-190 in *Eco-Heroes: Twelve Tales of Environmental Victory*. San Francisco, CA: Mercury House.

October 7: Women and advocacy cont.

- Perkins, Tracy. 2012. "Women's Pathways Into Activism: Rethinking the Women's Environmental Justice Narrative in California's San Joaquin Valley." *Organization & Environment* 25(1):76-94.

October 9: Policy advocacy and electoral politics

- 2015. *Green Zones: Transforming Toxic Hotspots into Healthy Hoods*. California Environmental Justice Alliance. Retrieved October 1, 2015 (<http://caleja.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/GREENZONES.2015.30MB.pdf>)
- Cervas, Strela. 2015. Legislature Should Stand Up for Environmental Justice. *Sacramento Bee*, January 27. Accessed October 1, 2015 (<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/soapbox/article8413050.html>)

October 12: Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day – No Class

October 14: The Courts

- Gross, Elizabeth and Paul Stretesky. 2015. "Environmental Justice in the Courts." Pp. 205-231 in *Failed Promises: Evaluating the Federal Government's Response to Environmental Justice*, edited by D. M. Konisky. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

October 16: Transnational advocacy

- Pellow, David. 2007. “Transnational Movement Networks for Environmental Justice.” Pp. 73-95 in *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

October 19: Action Research

- Cable, Sherry, Tamara Mix, and Donald Hastings. 2005. “Mission Impossible? Environmental Justice Activists’ Collaborations with Professional Environmentalists and with Academics.” Pp. 55-75 in *Power, Justice and the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement*, edited by D. Pellow, D. Naguib and R. J. Brulle. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

October 21: Federal Government Responses

- Konisky, David M. 2015. “The Federal Government’s Response to Environmental Inequality.” Pp. 29-56 in *Failed Promises: Evaluating the Federal Government’s Response to Environmental Justice*, edited by D. M. Konisky. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

October 23: Enforcing the law

Guest speakers: Howard Energy and Environment Law Society

- Konisky, David. M. and Christopher Reenock. 2015. “Evaluating Fairness in Environmental Regulatory Enforcement.” Pp. 173-203 in *Failed Promises: Evaluating the Federal Government’s Response to Environmental Justice*, edited by David M. Konisky. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

October 26: 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 Riley E. Dunlap and Robert J. Brulle. New York: Oxford University Press

October 28: Intra-Environmental Conflict

- Perkins, Tracy and Aaron Soto-Karlin. “Climate Politics from California to Chiapas: Carbon Offsets and Environmental Justice Activism.” Under contract for *Situating Sustainability: Sciences/Humanities/Societies, Scales and Social Justice* edited by J. Sze. New York: NYU Press.

October 30: Cross-movement organizing

- Perkins, Tracy. 2015. “The Environmental Justice Legacy of the United Farm Workers of America: Stories from the Birthplace of Industrial Agriculture.” *Tales of Hope and Caution in Environmental Justice*. The Consortium for Humanities Centers and Institutes, Humanities for the Environment, August 10. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (<http://hfe-observatories.org/projects/the-environmental-justice-legacy-of-the-united-farm-workers-of-america-stories-from-the-birthplace-of-industrial-agriculture/>)

V. Broadening the Lens

November 2: Renewable, or not so renewable, resources

- Perkins, Tracy and Lindsey Dillon. 2015. "Gonzales." In *Critical Sustainabilities: Competing Discourses of Urban Development in California*, August 1. Edited by Miriam Greenberg. Retrieved Aug. 23, 2015 (<https://critical-sustainabilities.ucsc.edu/gonzales-ca/>)

November 4: Immigration and the environment

- 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.

November 6: 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.

November 9: Access to Land

- Kosek, Jake. 2006. "Smokey Bear is a White Racist Pig." Pp. 183-334 in *Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

November 11: Veteran's Day, no classes

November 13: Parks and Outdoor Recreation

- Finney, Preface and Introduction
- Finney, Ch. 1: Bamboozled

November 16:

Guest speaker: Leslie Fields, Sierra Club

- Finney, Ch. 2: Jungle Fever
- Finney, Ch. 3: Forty Acres and a Mule

November 18:

- Finney, Ch. 4: Black Faces
- Finney, Ch. 5: It's Not Easy Being Green

November 20:

- Finney, Ch. 6: The Sanctified Church *How Sweet it Is* AND Epilogue

VI. Looking Back, Looking Forward

November 23:

Guest speaker: Mike Ewall, Energy Justice Network

- Bullard, Robert, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha and Beverly Wright. 2007. *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.

- Ch. 2: Environmental Justice Timeline – Milestones 1987-2007

November 25:

- Konisky, David. M. “Federal Environmental Justice Policy: Lessons Learned.” Pp. 233-257 in *Failed Promises: Evaluating the Federal Government’s Response to Environmental Justice*, edited by D. M. Konisky. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Nov. 27: Thanksgiving Holiday, no class

November 30:

- Solnit, Rebecca. 2000. *Hope in the Dark*. New York: Verso.
 - Ch. 1: Looking into Darkness
 - Ch. 10: Changing the Imagination of Change
 - Ch. 12: The Angel of Alternate History
 - Ch. 14: Getting the Hell Out of Paradise

December 2: Class presentations

Wed. Dec. 9, 2-4 (finals period): Class presentations