

ANTH 4001: Special Topics: Environmental Justice Course Syllabus

Instructor: Emma Banks

Land Recognition

The United States of America was built on stolen land. In Tennessee, the government rounded up and forcibly removed indigenous peoples during the Trail of Tears. Despite centuries of repression and removal, indigenous people in Tennessee are fighting for recognition and reparations today. The land we stand on in Nashville is claimed by multiple indigenous nations including the Aniyvwiya/□□□□□ (Cherokee, currently governed by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians), the Shawano (Shawnee, governed by the Eastern Shawnee Tribe), and the Tsoyaha (Yushi). The land we call Nashville is part of the Cession 3 Treaty.

To look up more about native land, languages, and treaties, check out Native Land at <https://native-land.ca>

Course Description

Environmental conflicts are always embedded within social justice issues. Environmental Justice began as a movement in the United States to document how and why marginalized communities bear the burdens of environmental hazards. Today, Environmental Justice has become a global concept; activists and researchers use this lens to unpack how race, class, gender, and other social structures condition how people experience the environment. This class will focus on the environmental aspects of contemporary issues such as migration, indigenous activism against pipelines and mining, and water conflicts. We will examine how power relations condition the different ways groups of people experience the environment. We will explore these issues locally and internationally, with guest speakers, readings, and documentaries, devoting a significant part of the course to learning from activists around the world about their proposals for change.

This course will be split into five parts of units: Introduction to Environmental Justice, Environmental and Human Health, Development and Extractivism, Climate Change and Disasters, and Alternatives and Activism.

Goals of this course:

- 1) Understand the history and evolution of Environmental Justice movements across the globe
- 2) Learn to use social theories to analyze and interpret Environmental Justice struggles
- 3) Analyze how social inequalities create winners and losers in environmental struggles
- 4) Develop your own definition and framework for Environmental Justice
- 5) Become a producer of knowledge on Environmental Justice

In the “classroom” (Zoom and discussion forums):

- 1) Speak up! Your voice matters and has an important role to play in this class. Learning is a collaborative process and we all learn more when we each contribute our unique experiences.
- 2) Be respectful.
- 3) Don't be afraid to be wrong, or what I like to call "productively wrong"- incorrect in your first attempt but able to learn from your error.
- 4) Embrace discomfort. Many of the topics we will discuss will challenge you to think outside of your worldview which can be uncomfortable. If this occurs, challenge yourself to assess your discomfort-from where does it stem? What can it teach you?
- 5) Take care of yourself.

Course Assignments:

Mini research assignments: Every week (other than exam and readings weeks), I will post a mini research assignment related to the topics we are covering in class that week. You will post your response to the class discussion board. These research assignments will help you delve into the concepts by applying them to specific examples. I also hope you will use these to explore your own areas of interest within Environmental Justice. These mini research assignments will also help you build toward your final paper or project. You do not have to complete every assignment. Only **5 assignments** will count toward your final grade. If you do more than 5, I will drop your lowest grades.

Comments on research assignments: To encourage active discussion, I will ask you to comment on the posts other students make to present their research . You can offer your perspective, a new source for them to consider, or anything else that generates discussion. These responses can be just a few sentences (or longer if you have more to say!). I will grade **3 responses** but if you do more than 3, I will consider the extra responses as bonus points toward your final participation grade.

Midterm take home exam: You will chose one of three essay topics for a midterm take home exam. This exam will test how well you are able to connect the readings and materials from class to form a big picture.

Final project: In lieu of a final exam, I will ask you to produce either a media project or a final research paper. You will have deadlines throughout the semester to turn in an outline and bibliography. I will have a separate handout about the final project, but here is a brief summary of the two options:

- 1) **A media project** that explores and analyzes a specific case of Environmental Justice. The media project can be a podcast, blog, website, social media account, video, or other medium (please run other ideas by me first). This project is your chance to create and share your knowledge about an Environmental Justice struggle. You will also write a short (2-3 page) essay about your project to demonstrate how your case fits into the key concepts from class. Throughout the semester, I will ask you to turn in storyboards and drafts for feedback before the final due date.

- 2) **A research paper** that explores a case study that illuminates your own definition of Environmental Justice. You will use the mini research assignments to build toward this final project. This paper will be 4-6 pages. You will need to include some new sources, but can also use the readings from class. I will ask you to pay close attention to the worldviews of the actors involved in the environmental struggle by researching them through interviews, articles, and videos.

Participation is key to your learning in this class. I recognize that participating during Zoom lectures can be challenging. I will count any communication with me as participation. So you can send me an e-mail or text, come to my office hours, or raise your hand in class. I expect you to demonstrate participation once a week.

Discussion posts and responses: 30 %
 Midterm: 20 %
 Final project: 30 %
 Participation: 20 %

Required Texts

Bullard, Robert, ed. 2005. *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*. Sierra Club Books.
 Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. *The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community*. U of Minnesota Press.

Part I: Introduction and concepts (2 weeks)

Goals

- Understand and define Environmental Justice
- Apply a social justice lens to environmental issues
- Begin to understand how race, class, gender impact the experience of the environment

Week 1 Jan 26 th & 28 th	Jan 26: Introduction to the class and syllabus (no readings) Jan 28: What is Environmental Justice? Bullard, Robert, ed. 2005. <i>The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution</i> . Sierra Club Books. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface, introduction, Introduction to part I, Chapter 1 (also look at appendices A and B)
Mini research assignment #1 due Jan 27 th by midnight	
Week 2: Feb 2 nd & 4 th	Feb 2 nd : Diving into Environmental Justice Bullard, <i>The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2

	<p>Sierra Club, History of Environmental Justice, https://www.sierraclub.org/environmental-justice/history-environmental-justice</p> <p>In class we will watch: “The Story of Stuff” on YouTube youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroigqM</p> <p>Feb 4th: Race, gender, class Bullard, <i>The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3
	Mini research assignment #2 due 3 rd by midnight

Part II: Environmental and Human Health (4 weeks)

Goals

- Link gender, race, and class to health disparities and toxic exposures
- Understand how people exposed to environmental toxins think about their bodies and health
- Know the details of our extended case study on a Mohawk Community. Link that case to broader themes of health disparities and toxic exposures

<p>Week 3 Feb 9th & 11th</p>	<p>Feb 9th: Toxic Exposures Bullard, <i>The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Part II, Chapters 4 and 5 <p>Feb 11th: Take a break from Zoom lectures and watch <i>Bhopail</i> on your own time. You can rent the full film on YouTube https://youtu.be/0NP3AE1zA-A or Amazon https://tinyurl.com/y6kogb7k</p>
	Mini research assignment #3 due Feb 10 th by midnight
<p>Week 4 Feb 16th & 18th</p>	<p>Feb 16th: Toxics in a Mohawk Community and in Bhopal Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. <i>The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community</i>. U of Minnesota Press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and chapter one <p>Feb 18th: The Politics of Health Research Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. <i>The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community</i>. U of Minnesota Press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 2 and 3
	Mini research assignment #4 due Feb 17 th by midnight
<p>Week 5: Feb 23rd & 25th</p>	<p>Feb 23rd: Changing Bodies</p>

	<p>Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. <i>The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community</i>. U of Minnesota Press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 4 and 5 <p>Feb 25th: Reasons For Hope</p> <p>Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. <i>The River Is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community</i>. U of Minnesota Press.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion <p>Carrigan, Anthony, and Clare Barker. 2014. “Bhopal: How Activists and Artists Kept This Ongoing Disaster in the Public Eye.” <i>The Conversation</i>.</p> <p>http://theconversation.com/bhopal-how-activists-and-artists-kept-this-ongoing-disaster-in-the-public-eye-34998.</p>
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Part III: Development, Extractivism, and Climate Change (3 weeks)

Goals:

- Question conventional meanings of development and modernization
- Consider alternative approaches to development through indigenous, Black, and feminist lenses
- Analyze changes of energy production and consumption, and use that understanding to evaluate solutions to our energy crisis
- Analyze how poverty, racism, and gender discrimination influence who loses and wins in climate change

<p>Week 6: March 2nd and 4th</p>	<p>March 2nd: What is development?</p> <p>Bullard, <i>The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 <p>Martinez-Alier, Joan. 2014. "The Environmentalism of the Poor." <i>Geoforum</i> 54: 239–241.</p> <p>March 4th: Coal Mining in Colombia</p> <p>Banks, Emma. 2016. "'We Are Victims Too': Incorporating Communities Displaced by Natural Resource Extraction in Colombia's Post-Conflict Agenda." <i>NACLA</i>. August 31, 2016. /news/2016/08/31/we-are-victims-too.</p> <p>Ortiz, Angelica. 2017. "Indigenous Resistance: My Fight for Land and Life in Colombia." <i>The Ecologist</i> (blog). https://theecologist.org/2017/oct/12/indigenous-resistance-my-fight-land-and-life-colombia.</p>
<p>Week 7 March 9th and 11th</p>	<p>March 9: Review for midterm</p> <p>March 11: Take home midterm</p>
<p>Week 8 March 16th</p>	<p>March 16th : Coal Mining in Colombia, Part II</p> <p>Take a well-deserved break from Zoom and watch the film <i>La Buena Vida (The Good Life)</i>. We will discuss it next week, so take notes !s</p> <p>March 18th: Enjoy your spring break!</p>
	<p>Assignment?</p>
<p>Week 9 March 23rd and 25th</p>	<p>March 23rd: Struggles for Justice in Colombia</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Either Angelica Ortiz from La Fuerza de Mujeres Wayúu or Jairo Fuentes from Tamaquito II</p> <p>March 25th: Climate Change and Social Change</p> <p>Social Implications of Climate Change</p>

	<p>McDonnel, Tim. 2018 “The Refugees The World Barely Pays Attention To.” NPR.Org.. https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/06/20/621782275/the-refugees-that-the-world-barely-pays-attention-to.</p> <p>Ahmed, Osub. 2020. “Integrating a Reproductive Justice Framework in Climate Research.” Center for American Progress https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2020/03/06/481359/integrating-reproductive-justice-framework-climate-research/.</p>
Week 10	<p>March 30th: The Politics of Conservation No class today, Watch Lifting the Green Screen: https://vimeo.com/380129281 Read: Kashwan, Prakash. 2020.. “American Environmentalism’s Racist Roots Have Shaped Global Thinking about Conservation.” The Conversation. http://theconversation.com/american-environmentalisms-racist-roots-have-shaped-global-thinking-about-conservation-143783</p>
March 30 th and April 2 nd	<p>April 2nd: The Politics of Conservation Part II Guest speaker: Dr. Clate Korsant, filmmaker</p>

Part IV: Alternatives and Activism

Week 11	<p>April 7th: Grassroots Defense Bullard, <i>The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10 </p> <p>Demby, Samantha. 2019. “On the Coast of Oaxaca, Afro and Indigenous Tribes Fight for Water Autonomy.” <i>NACLA</i> (blog). 2019. https://nacla.org/news/2019/05/30/coast-oaxaca-afro-and-indigenous-tribes-fight-water-autonomy.</p>
April 7 th and 9 th	<p>April 9th: Structural Change Paulson, Susan, Giacomo D’Alisa, Federico Demaria, and Giorgios Kallis. 2021. “From Pandemic towards Care-Full Degrowth.” <i>Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements</i> 12 (1): 1–8.</p> <p>“The Green Path: A Just Transition.” Honor The Earth. http://www.honorearth.org/green-newdeal.</p>

	Recommended, but not required: Watch this lecture by Ozzie Zehner (or at least part of it) https://youtu.be/v6uVnyjTb58
	Research: Idle no more protests
Week 12 April 14 th and 16 th	Student presentations and wrap up