

**ENVI 237/HIST 237/AMST 294
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Macalester College, Fall 2011
Olin-Rice 241, TR 9:40-11:10

Prof. Chris Wells

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Course Description

Poor and minority populations have historically borne the brunt of environmental inequalities in the United States, suffering disproportionately from the effects of pollution, dispossession of land, resource depletion, dangerous jobs, limited access to common resources, and exposure to environmental hazards. Paying particular attention to the ways that race, ethnicity, class, and gender have shaped the political and economic dimensions of environmental injustices, this course draws on the work of scholars and activists to examine the long history of environmental inequities in the United States, along with more recent political movements—national and local—that seek to rectify environmental injustices and develop new possibilities for understanding the human place in nature.

Required Readings:

The following book is available for purchase at the college book store and at the library reserve desk:

Luke Cole and Sheila Foster, *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement*

Digital copies of all other readings, marked with an **X** on the reading schedule, are available to enrolled students only through the course's Moodle website (see below).

Grading: Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Book Analysis (presentation)	20%
Group Virtual Toxic Tour	20%
Research Paper	30%
Participation	30%

Assignments

The Book Analysis: Early in the semester, I will circulate a list of books selected to supplement each day's assigned reading, and everyone in the class will sign up for one slot. On the day that your book is listed, you will launch class with a 10-12 minute (timed) presentation that 1) describes the book's argument, evidence, and methodology, and 2) discusses its greatest strengths and weaknesses. Following your presentation, you will field questions from the class in a short Q&A session (5-10 minutes).

The Group Toxic Tour: As one form of activism, many environmental justice groups put together toxic tours that examine the environmental inequalities and disproportionate environmental burdens confronting marginalized communities. For this group assignment, you will work together with your group to research a site in the Twin Cities and to assemble a *virtual toxic tour*. For more information, see the guidelines posted on our course Moodle site.

The Research Paper: Research papers should be on an environmental justice topic of your own choosing that intersects with the themes and ideas of this class, and should be 8-10 pages in length. This paper should be based on a mixture of primary and secondary sources, should address historical questions and utilize historical methodologies, and should represent your best efforts to think through the issues involved in polished, carefully edited, thoughtfully considered prose. Due via Moodle on Friday, Dec. 16, by 10:00 am.

Reading Responses: For every class from Week 2 through Week 13, answer the following in 250 words or less by clicking on the day's Reading Response link in Moodle: 1. As succinctly as possible, what is the main point of the reading? 2. What surprised you? (An acceptable answer is "nothing"); 3. What confused you? (An acceptable answer is "nothing"); 4. Suggest a better question than "What is the main point of this reading?" for discussion.

Participation grades will be based on class attendance, participation in discussions, and regular *Reading Responses* (described above). Discussions are the driving force in this class, so it is particularly important that everyone comes to class prepared to discuss the day's material. Our project in class meetings will be to explore connections between events, to answer questions, to clear up any confusion, to discuss the major themes of the course, and above all to engage with the readings. For those who are less comfortable than others speaking in class, remember that asking a good question is often as valuable a means of participation as delivering a long-winded oration. If you are having trouble speaking, however, please talk to me outside of class so that we can develop a strategy for improvement. *Laptops may be used during lectures, but should not be used during class discussions.*

Regular attendance is required in order to receive a passing grade for the course, regardless of how well you do on your written assignments.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. All of your written work should reflect your own ideas, and should properly attribute the work of others who you engage. On avoiding plagiarism, see <http://www.macalester.edu/max/writinghandbook/plagiarism.html>.

The MAX Center offers drop-in consultancy on writing projects, and can provide helpful feedback and advice on your work before it is due. The center is located on the first floor of Kagin Commons, and is open for tutoring Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and from Sunday through Thursday from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. Find them on the web at <http://www.macalester.edu/max/>, and be sure to check out the writing handbook at <http://www.macalester.edu/max/writinghandbook/index.html>. I strongly encourage all of you to make use of the Max Center's wonderful resources.

Our course's Moodle website duplicates and supplements the information in this syllabus, including the reading schedule and assignment due dates. It also serves as the distribution system for electronic copies of many assigned readings and provides a place to submit electronic copies of your reading responses and research paper. Go to <http://moodle.macalester.edu/>, and login using your Macalester username and password. After logging in, click on the link to Environmental Justice in the My Courses section. Anything posted to the forums will automatically be emailed to everyone registered for the course.

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please meet with the Associate Dean of Students, Lisa Landreman (coordinator for services for students with disabilities) at the beginning of the semester to ensure that your accommodations are approved and in place. She can be reached in the Office of Student Affairs, 119 Weyerhaeuser, at 651-696-6220, or by email llandrem@macalester.edu. See also www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/.

Class Schedule

All items on Moodle are marked X

UNIT I: ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS

R 9/8 Introductions

WEEK 2: TELLING STORIES ABOUT NATURE AND RACE (98)

T 9/13 Cronon, "A Place for Stories," 1347-76. X
Delgado, "Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others," 2411-41. X

R 9/15 Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones*, 1-15. X
Cole and Foster, *From the Ground Up*, 1-9. X
Melosi, "Environmental Justice, Ecoracism, and Environmental History," 120-32. X

WEEK 3: RACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE PLANTATION SOUTH (62)

T 9/20 Kirby, "Plantation Traditions," 75-112. X
Ochiai, "The Port Royal Experiment Revisited," 94-117. X

R 9/22 NO CLASS

WEEK 4: INEQUALITY, ACCESS, AND ENCLOSURE (115)

T 9/27 White, *The Roots of Dependency*, 147-211. X

R 9/29 Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*, 149-98. X

WEEK 5: SEGREGATED LANDSCAPES (119)

T 10/4 Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 190-230. X

R 10/6 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 181-258. X

WEEK 6: GENDER, COLOR, & THE POWER TO DEFINE "ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS" (111)

T 10/11 Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 37-107. X

R 10/13 Gottlieb, "Ethnicity as a Factor: The Quest for Environmental Justice," 307-346. X

UNIT II: A MOVEMENT IS BORN

WEEK 7: ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE (93)

T 10/18 Cole and Foster, *From the Ground Up*, 10-53.

R 10/20 Cole and Foster, *From the Ground Up*, 54-102.

WEEK 8: THE POLITICS OF TRANSFORMATION (63)

T 10/25 Cole and Foster, *From the Ground Up*, 103-65.

R 10/27 NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

UNIT III: SACRIFICE ZONES

WEEK 9: PESTICIDES AND POSITIONALITY (68)

T 11/1 Pulido, "The Pesticide Campaign of the UFW Organizing Committee, 1965-71," 57-124. X

TOXIC COLONIALISM (37)

R 11/3 Churchill, Ward, and LaDuke, "Native North America," 241-62. X

LaDuke, "Nuclear Waste," 96-111. X

WEEK 10: TOXIC TOURS (43)

- T 11/8 Pezzullo, "Toxic Tours," 235-54. **X**
Cronon, "Kennecott Journey," 28-51. **X**

LOST MOUNTAINS (34)

- R 11/10 Fox, "Mountain Top Removal Mining in West Virginia," 163-83. **X**
Fraley, "Appalachian Stereotypes and Mountain Top Removal," 365-70. **X**
Reece, "Was It All by Design?" 42-48. **X**

WEEK 11: UNNATURAL HISTORIES OF "NATURAL" DISASTER (38)

- T 11/15 Steinberg, "Do-It-Yourself Deathscape," 414-38. **X**
Hirsch, "(Almost) A Closer Walk with Thee," 614-26. **X**

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF FIRE (36)

- R 11/17 Davis, "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn," 1-36. **X**

WEEK 12: INDUSTRIAL EXPOSURE (57)

- T 11/22 Pellow and Park, *The Silicon Valley of Dreams*, 112-68. **X**
R 11/24 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 13: CANCER ALLEY (29)

- T 11/29 Markowitz and Rosner, "Ol' Man River or Cancer Alley?" 234-62. **X**

GREEN JOBS (47)

- R 12/1 Mirpuri, Feldman, and Roberts, "Antiracism and Environmental Justice in an Age of Neoliberalism," 401-15. **X**
Jones, *The Green Collar Economy*, 19-33 and 61-77. **X**

UNIT IV: PULLING IT TOGETHER

WEEK 14: TOXIC TOURS

- T 12/6 **Toxic tour presentations—no reading.**
R 12/8 **Toxic tour presentations—no reading.**

WEEK 15: CONCLUSIONS (28)

- T 12/13 Price, "Remaking American Environmentalism," 536-55. **X**
Brulle and Pellow, "The Future of Environmental Justice Movements," 293-300. **X**

- F 12/16 Research Papers due via Moodle by 10 am.**