

**ENVI 294 02 – Global Environmental Justice  
Fall 2021**

Prof. Sylvia Cifuentes

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:20 - 2:50 pm, Olin-Rice | Room 270  
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Office hours:

Tuesdays 3:00-4:00 pm: At Olin-Rice Rock Garden (weather permitting) or in my office  
& Thursdays 3:00-4:00 pm: on Zoom

**Course description**

From Black Lives Matter and the resistance against Line 3, to policies for forest and biodiversity conservation and Indigenous struggles for self-determination, many of the world's most urgent issues are also environmental justice challenges. This course will thus survey the theoretical questions, concepts, and perspectives on environmental justice at local and global scales.

The first part of the course will apply a global perspective in understanding environmental justice, environmental racism and inequality, and environmentalism. The second part of the course will emphasize on the justice dimensions of the responses to pressing global environmental issues. In the third part of the course, we will focus on attempts to 'decolonize' understandings of environmental (and climate) justice and its drivers, and how those efforts relate to the politics of difference. We will thus analyze the diverse meanings that social movements and collectives around the world give to environmental justice, as well as its intersectional dimensions.



Throughout the semester, students will carry out research about a case study of environmental (in)justice, and will develop a toolkit of concepts that can be applicable to that case and to other instances of research, policy, and activism for environmental justice.

**Learning objectives**

Through attendance of lectures, participation in classroom discussions, and completion of all assignments and group work, students will be able to:

1. Build an interdisciplinary understanding of how global environmental justice, social inequality, and different sources of oppression intersect and shape one another.
2. Develop and apply a 'toolkit' of key concepts and theories for explaining global environmental justice across spatial and temporal scales and locales.
3. Evaluate and critique specific social-environmental problems and the justice implications of the ideas, policies and initiatives that different actors create to address them.
4. Distinguish the ways in which different social movements, collectives, and marginalized communities (and more-than-human beings) experience and define environmental justice, and how they seek to contest injustices.

**\*Pandemic statement:** I recognize that the current pandemic may impact your ability to perform in the course. Please send me an email if you are experiencing unexpected challenges, and stay at home if you are feeling ill—we will find a way to support you through class notes and opportunities to make up for participation. All policies regarding attendance are below.

Mask wearing is about community care, and we don't know what are the particular situations of this course's participants and students and professors across campus, so please wear a mask at all times while you are indoors.

### **Required readings**

There is a course website available through Moodle that will include all required readings. Additionally, I will often post news articles, videos, or website information about the topics that we are analyzing in the course site, some of which we will review in class as part of our discussions. The reading materials and the lectures complement (not substitute) each other.

**Guidance for reading:** *With the case study project and the mid-term in mind, attempt answering three questions after completing each reading: 1) What is the main argument? 2) What concepts does it put forward and/or what theories does it mention or draw from? 3) How does the reading expand or change my understanding of what environmental justice is and how to work towards that goal?*

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

*Submit all assignments (except no. 3) by the end of the day (11:59pm) on Moodle*

Assignment 1	September 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Midterm	October 19 <sup>th</sup>
Assignment 2	November 4 <sup>th</sup>
Assignment 3	November 23 <sup>rd</sup> -- bring to the project meetings
Assignment 4	December 16 <sup>th</sup>

### **CLASS ASSESSMENT**

#### *20% Attendance, Preparation, and Participation*

Your engaged, attentive, imaginative, and informed participation in all class discussions is encouraged. You are invited to bring your interests, experiences, and knowledge to class. Attendance to all classes is expected, see the policies for attendance and lateness below.

*Mid-term Exam 15%*- This mid-term will be based on the readings and lectures. The format will be either a short essay, in response to one question, or one paragraph responses to three questions. This will be a take home exam that you will turn in via Moodle by the end of the day on October 19. More details will be available on Moodle.

#### *65% Environmental Justice Case Study Project*

You will work in pairs (or individually) and select an environmental justice case to study throughout the semester. This project will involve four graded assignments (more details and rubrics will be available on Moodle):

1. Case selection & concepts toolkit 1: Identify a real-world case of environmental (in)justice—preferably based on your personal experience(s), but it can also be one of those included in the EJ Atlas—and carry out preliminary research in the scholarly literature. Discuss how two concepts reviewed in weeks 1-4 relate to your case [15%].
2. Data collection & concepts toolkit 2: Identify additional sources to answer the following questions in relation to your case: How are people (or movements, collectives) working to achieve justice? What does environmental justice mean for them? The source(s) can

be an interview, videos, news releases, field observations, etc., that illustrate the perspectives of those engaged in achieving justice. Based on those sources, identify and discuss two additional concepts reviewed in weeks 1-10 [15%].

3. Sci-fi pitch & concepts toolkit 3: What might the future look like for your case? Write a description of the possible changes that your case might experience, along with a sketch of your plans to communicate a just future in a sci-fi creative piece. Based on that description, identify and discuss two more concepts reviewed in weeks 9-13 [10%].
4. Just futures sci-fi creative piece: In the media of your choice, communicate how a just future would look like in your case, according to the research that you have carried out. This assignment will include annotations and one-page individual reflections [25%].

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

*\*Syllabus subject to change - you will be adequately informed if this happens\**

*\*Readings listed below. All are required\**

<b>Part</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>1- Global Environmental Justice Foundations</b>	1	Sept 2	Introduction	Assignment 1
	2	Sept 7 & 9	A Global Perspective	
	3	Sept 14 & 16	Environmental Racism	
	4	Sept 21 & 23	Environmentalism(s)	
<b>2. Environmental Justice &amp; Environmental Issues</b>	5	Sept 28 & 30	Global Toxics	Mid-term
	6	Oct 5 & 7	Conservation	
	7	Oct 12 & 14	Food Justice	
	8	Oct 19	Mid-term	
<b>3. Decolonizing Environmental Justice &amp; the 'Politics of Difference'</b>	9	Oct 26 & 28	Decolonizing Environmental & Climate Justice	Assignment 2
	10	Nov 2 & 4	Indigenous Politics	
	11	Nov 9 & 11	Justice, Development & Lifeways	
	12	Nov 16 & 18	Ecofeminism, Gender & Sexuality	
	13	Nov 23	Project meetings	
	14	Nov 30 & Dec 2	Multispecies justice & posthumanism	
	15	Dec 7 & 9	The Rights of Nature	
16	December 16	Just futures sci-fi creative piece due online	Assignment 4	

### **Part 1: Global Environmental Justice Foundations**

#### **WEEK 1: Introduction to Global Environmental Justice**

Film screening and discussion: When Two Worlds Collide.  
Syllabus review

## **WEEK 2: A Global Perspective to Environmental Justice**

Pellow, D. N. (2017). What is Critical Environmental Justice? John Wiley & Sons. Chapter 1: Critical Environmental Justice Studies (pp. 7-23).

Chiro, G. D. (2016). Environmental Justice. In J. Adamson, W. A. Gleason, & D. N. Pellow (Eds.), *Keywords for Environmental Studies*.

The Principles of Environmental Justice (EJ). First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, October 24-27, 1991.

## **WEEK 3: (In)justice & Environmental Racism**

In Robert Bullard, ed., *The Quest for Environmental Justice*: Chapter 1: Robert Bullard, "Environmental Justice in the 21st Century."

Pellow, D. N. (2017). What is Critical Environmental Justice? Chapter 2: Black Lives Matter as an Environmental Justice Challenge (pp. 7-27).

## **WEEK 4: Environmental Justice and Environmentalism(s)**

Pulido, L., & Peña, D. (1998). Environmentalism and Positionality: The Early Pesticide Campaign of the United Farm Workers' Organizing Committee, 1965-71. *Race, Gender & Class*, 33-50.

Borgias, S. L., & Braun, Y. A. (2017). From dams to democracy: Framing processes and political opportunities in Chile's Patagonia Without Dams movement. *Interface: A Journal on Social Movements*, 9(2).

Martinez-Alier, J. (2016). Environmentalism(s). In J. Adamson, W. A. Gleason, & D. N. Pellow (Eds.), *Keywords for environmental studies*. New York University Press.

Turn in assignment 1 by the end of the day on Thursday

## **Part II: Environmental Justice & Environmental Issues**

### **WEEK 5: Global Toxics and Political Economy**

Robbins et al. (2014) *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*. Chapter 17 "E-waste"

Pellow, D. N. (2007). Resisting global toxics: Transnational movements for environmental justice. MIT Press. Chapter 3: Transnational Movement Networks for Environmental Justice (pp. 73-95)

Thursday - Film screening (in class): Exporting Harm —Basel Action Network Guiyu, Guangdong, China.

### **WEEK 6: Conservation**

Ybarra, M. (2018). Green wars: Conservation and Decolonization in the Maya forest. University of California Press. Introduction- Conservation and Settler Logics of Elimination (pp. 1-21).

Massarella, K., Sallu, S. M., & Ensor, J. E. (2020). Reproducing injustice: Why recognition matters in conservation project evaluation. *Global Environmental Change*, 65, 102181.

### **WEEK 7: Food Justice**

Martínez-Torres, M. E., & Rosset, P. M. (2014). Diálogo de saberes in La Vía Campesina: food sovereignty and agroecology. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(6), 979-997.

Alkon, A. H., & Norgaard, K. M. (2009). Breaking the food chains: An investigation of food justice activism. *Sociological Inquiry*, 79(3), 289-305.

TBC: Fieldtrip to Frogtown Sustainability and Development.

### **WEEK 8: Turn in your mid-term on Tuesday, October 19 by the end of the day (11:59pm).**

We will not have a class meeting this day so you can focus on the mid-term.

### **Part III: Decolonizing Environmental Justice and the 'Politics of Difference'**

### **WEEK 9: Decolonizing Environmental and Climate Justice**

Introduction, Kothari, A et al. (2019). Pluriverse. A Post-Development Dictionary.

McGregor, D., Whitaker, S., & Sritharan, M. (2020). Indigenous environmental justice and sustainability. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 43, 35-40.

Álvarez, L., & Coolsaet, B. (2020). Decolonizing environmental justice studies: a Latin American perspective. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 31(2), 50-69.

This week: Resistance against Line 3 Guest Speaker (TBC)

### **WEEK 10: Indigenous Politics and Environmental Justice**

Gilio-Whitaker, D. (2019). As long as grass grows: The Indigenous fight for environmental justice, from colonization to Standing Rock. Beacon Press. Chapter 7: Sacred Sites and Environmental Justice.

Cifuentes (2020) Territory, Autonomy and Rights: Indigenous Politics and COVID-19 in the Amazon basin. *Society and Space*. Available at:  
<https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/territory-autonomy-and-rights>

Morales, W. Q., & Conroy, A. (2017). New social movement governance in Bolivia: Contention in a multiethnic democracy. In: *The New Global Politics* (pp. 29-45). Routledge.

TBC: Spotlight on COP 26 – Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change & People's Summit for Climate Justice.

Turn in assignment 2 by the end of the day on Thursday

### **WEEK 11: Justice, Development, & Lifeways**

Escobar, A. & Paulson, S. (2004). 14 The Emergence of Collective Ethnic Identities and Alternative Political Ecologies in the Colombian Pacific Rainforest. In *Political ecology across spaces, scales, and social groups* (pp. 257-278). Rutgers University Press.

Becker, M. (2017). Resource extraction, Sumak Kawsay, and social movement resistance in Ecuador under Rafael Correa. In: *The New Global Politics* (pp. 61-77). Routledge.

In-class readings—In *Pluriverse. A Post-Development Dictionary* (2019):

Botero Gomez, P. Sentipensar. (pp. 302-304).

Chuji, M., et.al. Buen Vivir. (pp. 111-114)

Le Granje, L. Ubuntu. (pp. 323 – 326)

### **WEEK 12: Eco-Feminism, Gender, & Sexuality**

In: Warren, K. J., Warren, K., & Erkal, N. (Eds.). (1997). *Ecofeminism: Women, culture, nature*. Indiana University Press.

Chapter 1: Warren, K.J., Taking Empirical Data Seriously: An Ecofeminist Philosophical Perspective (pp. 3-14)

Chapter 3 (excerpt): Taylor, D.E. Women of Color, Environmental Justice, and Ecofeminism (pp. 58-70).

Gaard, G. (2004). 1 Toward a Queer Ecofeminism (pp. 21-44). Rutgers University Press.

Zaragocin, S., & Caretta, M. A. (2021). Cuerpo-Territorio: A Decolonial Feminist Geographical Method for the Study of Embodiment. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 111(5), 1503-1518.

### **WEEK 13: Project Meetings on Tuesday**

Read before preparing your sci-fi pitch: VanDeCarr (2015) *Storytelling and Social Change* pp. 22-35. Bring your assignment 3 to these meetings.

### **WEEK 14: Post-humanism and multispecies justice**

Celermajer, D., et.al. (2021). Multispecies justice: theories, challenges, and a research agenda for environmental politics. *Environmental Politics*, 30(1-2), 119-140.

Hoogeveen, D. (2016). Fish-hood: Environmental assessment, critical Indigenous studies, and posthumanism at Fish Lake (Teztan Biny), Tsilhqot'in territory. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 34(2), 355-370.

### **WEEK 15: Justice for Nature? The Rights of Nature Debate**

Kauffman, C. & Martin. P. (2016). Can Rights of Nature Make Development More Sustainable? Why Some Ecuadorian Lawsuits Succeed and Others Fail. *World Development* 92: 130–42.

Tănăsescu, M. (2020). Rights of nature, legal personality, and indigenous philosophies. *Transnational environmental law*, 9(3), 429-453.

**WEEK 16: Final Assignment due on Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup> by the end of the day (11:59pm)**

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:** This classroom is meant to be a safe learning environment where we work together to help each other learn throughout the semester. To make this possible I expect students to arrive on time and be prepared to participate actively in discussion. You are actively participating if you contribute often and constructively to group discussions and activities, take notes, ask thoughtful questions, and listen respectfully when others are talking. This class will raise questions about the social and environmental world(s) that can challenge our assumptions. We will all need to be very careful to respect differing points of view and, above all, to respect your classmates and instructor in the same way that you would like to be respected. Here is a list of guidelines to promote productive discussion:

Come to class open-minded – Make sure to come to class ready to discuss the material with an open-mind.

No interruptions – when someone is speaking allow them to finish.

Word Choice – be aware of the way your word choice may affect others.

Step Up, Step Down – If you see a place to contribute, Step Up. If you realize you have been participating heavily, Step Down and let others also contribute.

Refrain from speaking in generalizations – When speaking refrain from generalizations that categorize all people in a certain way.

Ask Your Questions – Every question regarding the course materials is relevant. Speak up about any questions you have so we can all learn.

Active Listening – Don't just wait for your turn to speak. Engage other students and build from their input.

## **POLICIES**

### *Academic Integrity*

Academic dishonesty has no place in this course, as it erodes the basic foundations of higher education: exchange, debate, and the thoughtful consideration of different ideas. Examples of behavior that violates Macalester's Academic Integrity Policy, as well as the process and sanctions involved, can be found on the Academic Programs website, <http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>

### *Office Hours and communication*

You are encouraged to come see me during office hours. You are welcome to bring questions about class material, environmental justice in general, career paths, and other concerns you may have. I will not respond to questions about course material or assignments via email, nor will I respond outside of working hours (esp. on weekends). However, seek out an individual appointment if you wish to discuss a private matter, and please let me know as soon as you can if you are experiencing unexpected difficulties.

Please include "ENVI 294" in the subject line of any email you send to me about this course.

### *Absences and Lateness*

Attendance is very important for this class as discussion will be one of the main learning mechanisms. Because of the challenges that the current pandemic continues to pose, you are allowed up to two absences from class without penalty. For every absence beyond the two, your participation grade will be lowered a full letter grade (10 points out of 100). Again, please let me know soon if you are experiencing unexpected difficulties.

It is disruptive to arrive to class late. I do keep track of tardy arrivals. In this course, three tardy arrivals add up to one absence. You can check your attendance record with me any time to see where you stand.

Late assignments will be reduced 5 points (of 100) for each calendar day late. Please come to see me in advance if you anticipate that you may need an extension.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Disability Services Office**

I am committed to ensuring access to course content for all students, including those with disabilities. I honor academic accommodations as outlined via Disability Services, and in discussion regarding what is reasonable for this course. Students with long or short-term disabilities should schedule an appointment by emailing [disabilityservices@macalester.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@macalester.edu), or calling 651-696-6275.

### **Health and Wellness Center**

Here at Macalester, you are encouraged to make your well-being a priority throughout this semester and your career here. Investing time into taking care of yourself will help you engage more fully in your academic experience. Remember that beyond being a student, you are a human being carrying your own experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identities with you. It is important to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, financial, etc., and how they can have an academic impact. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please reach out to the Laurie Hamre Center for Health & Wellness: Leonard Center Room 53, 651-696-6275 (call to make an appointment). Follow [macalesterhwc](https://www.instagram.com/macalesterhwc) on Instagram. [www.macalester.edu/healthandwellness/](http://www.macalester.edu/healthandwellness/). You can schedule a **Counselling Appointment** there as well. If you press "2" you can be connected to ProtoCall, a free phone counseling service that Macalester provides for students available 24/7

### **Resident Advisor (RA) and Resident Hall Director (RHD)**

- Both RAs and RHDs can serve as a first point of contact and are able to connect you to resources during mental health crises.

### **Other Support Offices**

- Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, (651-696-6298), Weyerhaeuser Chapel
- Office of Student Affairs (651-696-6220), Weyerhaeuser 119

### **The Max Center**

The MAX Center (<https://www.macalester.edu/max/#/0>) is Macalester's academic resource center. I strongly encourage you to take full advantage of any and all of the excellent resources they provide there, as they are committed to supporting all students to succeed at Macalester.