

## 450:211 ENVIRONMENT, SOCIETY, AND JUSTICE

Spring 2020

Mon/Thurs 12:35PM-1:55PM

204 Ruth Adam Building, Douglass-Cook Campus

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:30-4:30PM. Book online:  
<https://marston-office-hours.youcanbook.me>  
Course webs: <https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/38468>  
<https://app.tophat.com/e/641975>

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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The effects of hurricane Sandy in New Jersey, wildfires in California, water contamination in Flint, Michigan, and drought in Cape Town, South Africa are among many recent environmental events that have received extensive public and media attention. Each of these examples also illustrates how environmental stresses and environmental exposures often have uneven impacts across communities, households, and social groups.

This course introduces foundational and contemporary modes of thinking about the relations between environment, society, and justice. Situating environmental issues and challenges within the context of a highly unequal and rapidly changing world, the course demonstrates how dynamic political, economic, and technological contexts can amplify environmental inequalities yet also present opportunities for transformative responses.

In the first section, we will explore “classical” approaches to thinking about the relationship between nature and society, with a focus on the social inequalities and environmental degradation generated by such approaches. In the second section, we will examine alternative approaches ranging from 20<sup>th</sup> century environmentalism to critical political economy to environmental justice frameworks. Finally, in the third section we will consider the interwoven problems of waste management, resource extraction, and climate change.

By the end of the course, you should be able to explain both the historical origins of complex environmental justice issues and employ various conceptual tools to interpret these issues. In addition to gaining specific knowledge about the relationship between environmental crisis and social justice, you will also improve critical reading, research, and writing skills.



There are **two required books** for this course, both of which are available in the bookstore:

- Robbins, P., Hintz, J., & Moore, S.A. (2014). *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Wiley Blackwell.
- Sze, J. (2020). *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*. Berkeley/LA: U of California Press.

All other readings for the course are either linked in this syllabus or posted on TopHat (see Course Mechanics below).

**Core Curriculum:** This course satisfies a **Historical Analysis [HST]** requirement in the SAS Core Curriculum. By the end of this course, students will be able to explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science. This course also satisfies a **Social Analysis [SCL]** requirement in the SAS Core Curriculum. By the end of this course, students will be able to apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### Requirements and Percentage of Grade Associated with Each Requirement

1. Participation	15 percent
2. Reading Quizzes	10 percent
3. First midterm	15 percent
4. Second midterm	15 percent
5. Final exam	20 percent
6. Environmental Justice Proposal	5 percent
7. Environmental Justice Google Earth Tour	20 percent

### Participation

Participation is based on **attendance, participation in TopHat questions (during lectures), and thoughtful contributions to classroom discussion**. I will provide many opportunities for you to speak in both small and large group discussions.

Students should attend all classes. Please use the TopHat attendance system to check in at the beginning of class. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence-reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. I will automatically receive an email from this system.

### Reading Quizzes

In addition to thoughtfully reading everything assigned, you will be expected to take short surveys about the readings. There will be ten surveys in total, assigned randomly over the course of the semester at the beginning of lecture. Each survey is worth 1% of your course grade.

## Exams

There will be two midterms and a final exam, all of which will be based on: 1) material discussed in class, and 2) required readings. *Make-up exams will only be given in the event of religious observance, documented illness, documented family emergency, or documented Rutgers team event.*

## Environmental Justice (EJ) Assignment

The research assignment has two parts: a proposal and a Google Earth Tour. To begin, you will identify and research a case – from anywhere and anytime in world history – in which environmental justice concerns are at play. Topics and issues for the EJ assignment might include, for example, lead exposure, land-use conflicts, nuclear waste, Brownfields redevelopment, or green gentrification. You will conduct independent research about this topic, drawing on primarily academic resources (journal articles and books).

### *Proposal*

Early on in the semester, you will write a short proposal (300-500 words) that 1) explains your chosen issue, 2) identifies the main places and people/entities (e.g. businesses) involved in the issues, and 3) lists at least five references, at least three of which must be academic sources. These proposals are due on Canvas by 9AM on **Monday March 30**. Please also print and bring your proposals to class, as we will be discussing them collectively.

### *Google Earth Tour*

You will use Google Earth's Tour Builder platform to create an interactive digital tour of your EJ issue. Using as many of the platform's features as you want, tour me through the case, using photographs, videos, or audio as needed. Your tour should show evidence of academic research – i.e. write at least a paragraph for each “stop” along the tour – and should engage the conceptual issues explored in class. You should share your tour with me at my google account - [ajm469@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:ajm469@scarletmail.rutgers.edu) – by 9PM on Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Grading

Below is the standard undergraduate grade scale. Note that I will give grades as percentages, but they will appear as letter grades in your final report. All grades will be posted on TopHat.

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>
A	90-100	4.0
B+	85-89	3.5
B	80-84	3.0
C+	75-79	2.5
C	70-74	2.0
D	60-69	1.0
F	Below 60	0.0

## Key Dates

- **Thursday, February 27:** First Midterm Exam
- **Monday, March 30:** EJ proposal due (on Canvas by 9AM, also print & bring to class)
- **Monday, April 6:** Second Midterm Exam
- **Friday April 24:** EJ Google Earth Tour due (share with me at [ajm469@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:ajm469@scarletmail.rutgers.edu) by 9PM)
- **TBA – Final Exam**

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## CLASSROOM POLICIES, MECHANICS, AND SUPPORT

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**Communication:** If you have a quick question that I can answer in 1-2 sentences, please email me at [andrea.marston@rutgers.edu](mailto:andrea.marston@rutgers.edu). I will do my best to respond within 24 hours, except on weekends. If you have any other questions or concerns, I encourage you to sign up for my office hours, which are on Thursdays between 2pm and 4pm. Please book online: <https://marston-office-hours.youcanbook.me>. If your schedule does not permit you to meet during office hours, email me to schedule another meeting time.

**TopHat:** We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. Top Hat costs \$20 per semester, regardless of how many classes you are taking at Rutgers. This is a required expense for the course.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/641975>

**Note: our Course Join Code is 641975.**

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

**Safe Space:** I am committed to creating a safe space for everyone to discuss, debate and grapple with the complex and potentially sensitive ideas and issues presented in this class. I expect you to respect each other and the diversity of opinions in the classroom. Disruptive behavior, offensive comments, and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

**Academic Honesty:** This course has a zero-tolerance policy for cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Any evidence of academic dishonesty will be grounds for failing the assignment and, under certain conditions, the course. I will discuss appropriate citation practices in

class before you submit your research project. **However, if you have any questions about how or what you should cite, please do not hesitate to ask.** I would much rather help you cite appropriately than penalize you for doing it wrong. Generally, please follow these rules:

1. If the ideas are not yours, CITE them.
2. If the words are not yours, QUOTE and CITE them.
3. When in doubt, QUOTE and CITE.

You can also visit **Rutgers Academic Integrity** site for more information and citation guides (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students/>) or you can visit the **Rutgers Learning Center** for more general writing assistance (<https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>).

### **Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS):**

University is stressful, particularly when you are juggling many courses, jobs, and family responsibilities. Please let me know if you are struggling in any of these areas. CAPS can also help support your academic success. <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

**Special Accommodations:** If you have any special circumstances that may affect with your work in this course, please come see me as soon as possible. If something unforeseen happens during the semester, let me know right away. I can be much more helpful if you talk to me well in advance of assignment deadlines.

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## **COURSE AGENDA**

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### **PART 1: INTRODUCING NATURE & SOCIETY**

#### **Week 1: Introduction to course**

- Thu, Jan 23
  - o No readings

#### **Week 2: A Many-Headed Crisis**

- Mon, Jan 27: Nature, Society, & Anthropocene
  - o Kolbert, E. (2014). The Mastodon's Molars. Chapter 2 of *The Sixth Extinction*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, pp. 23-46.
  - o Zalasiewicz, J., Williams, M., Smith, A., Barry, T. L., Coe, A. L., Bown, P. R., ... & Gregory, F. J. (2008). Are we now living in the Anthropocene? *GSA Today* 18(2), 4-8.
- Thu, Jan 30: Reframing the Crisis
  - o Pulido, L. (2018) "Racism and the Anthropocene" in *Future Remains: A Cabinet of Curiosities for the Anthropocene*, edited by Mitman, G., Emmett, R., and Armiero, M. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, pp. 116-128.
  - o Vergès, F (2017) "Racial Capitalocene," in *Futures of Black Radicalism*, edited by Johnson, G.T. and Lubin, A. New York: Verso. Read online: <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3376-racial-capitalocene>

#### **Week 3: Nature as External**

- Mon, Feb 3: Naturalizing Nature
  - o *Environment and Society*, chapter 1
  - o Williams, R. (1980). Ideas of nature. *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London: Verso, pp. 67-85
- Thu, Feb 6: Science and Nature
  - o Pratt, M. L. (1992). Science, planetary consciousness, interiors. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge, pp. 15-36.
  - o Haraway, Donna. 1991. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, 183-201. New York: Routledge.

#### **Week 4: Nature as Property and Resource**

- Mon, Feb 10: Property and Labor
  - o Locke, J. (1690). "Of Property," *Second Treatise on Government*, Chapter 5. Available online: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm>
  - o Quiggin, J. (2015) "John Locke Against Freedom." *Jacobin*. Online: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/06/locke-treatise-slavery-private-property/>
- Thu, Feb 13: Population and Scarcity
  - o *Environment and Society*, chapter 2
  - o Malthus, T. R. (1872). *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Chapter 1

#### **Week 5: Nature as Commodity and Commons**

- Mon, Feb 17: Markets and Commodities
  - o *Environment and Society*, chapter 3
  - o Schabas, M. (2005). "Smith's Debt to Nature." Chapter 5 of *The Natural Origins of Economics*. Chicago: U Chicago Press, pp. 79-101.
- Thu, Feb 20: Institutions and Commons
  - o *Environment and Society*, chapter 4
  - o Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*, 162(3859), 1243-1248.

#### **Week 6: End of Part 1**

- Mon, Feb 24: Review/Catch up
- **Thu, Feb 27: FIRST MIDTERM EXAM**

## **PART 2: SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

#### **Week 7: Rethinking Environmentalism**

- Mon, Mar 2: Conservation and Preservation
  - o *Environment and Society*, Chapter 5
- Thu, Mar 5: Challenging Wilderness
  - o Finney, C. (2014). Chapters 1 & 2 of *Black Faces, White Spaces* (pp.21-50). Chapel Hill: UNC Press
  - o Cronon, W. (1996). The trouble with wilderness. *Environmental history*, 1(1), 20-25.

#### **Week 8: Denaturalizing Economics**

- Mon, Mar 9: Political Economy



- *Environment and Society*, Chapter 7
- Thu, Mar 12: Risks, Hazards, & Political Ecology
  - *Environment and Society*, Chapter 6

## SPRING RECESS: NO CLASSES MEETINGS MARCH 16 OR 19

### Week 9: Critical Natures

- Mon, Mar 23: Social Construction of nature
  - *Environment and Society*, Chapter 8
- Thu, Mar 26: Rise of EJ Movement
  - Cole, L.W. & Foster, S.R. (2000). "A History of the Environmental Justice Movement." Chapter 1 in *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement* (19-33). New York: NYU Press.
  - *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*, Chapter 1

### Week 10: Environmental Justice

- Mon, Mar 30: Environmental Racism
  - **EJ PROPOSAL DUE BY 9AM – be sure to also print & bring to class**
  - Pulido, L. (2017) "Environmental Racism." In *The International Encyclopedia of Geography* (1-13). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Thu, Apr 2: Intersectional Environmental Justice
  - CRC (2017[1977]) "The Combahee River Collective Statement." In *How We Get Free* (edited by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor). Chicago: Haymarket Books, pp. 15-28.
  - *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*, Chapter 2

### Week 11: End of Part 2

- **Mon, Apr 6: SECOND MIDTERM EXAM**
- Thu, Apr 9: No class; independent research for final project.

## PART 3: KEY ISSUES

### Week 12: Toxins and Trash

- Mon, Apr 13: E-Waste
  - *Environment and Society*, Chapter 17
- Thu, Apr 17: Wasted Places
  - Dillon, L. (2014). Race, waste, and space: Brownfield redevelopment and environmental justice at the Hunters Point Shipyard. *Antipode*, 46(5), 1205-1221.

### Week 13: Climate Justice

- Mon, Apr 20: Oil and Climate
  - Schlosberg, D., & Collins, L. B. (2014). From environmental to climate justice: climate change and the discourse of environmental justice. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 5(3), 359-374.
  - Whyte, K. P. (2016). Why the Native American pipeline resistance in North Dakota is about climate justice. *The Conversation*. Online: <https://theconversation.com/why->

[the-native-american-pipeline-resistance-in-north-dakota-is-about-climate-justice-64714](#)

- Thu, Apr 23: “Green” Technology
  - o Revette, A. C. (2017). This time it’s different: lithium extraction, cultural politics and development in Bolivia. *Third World Quarterly*, 38(1), 149-168.

**FINAL PROJECT DUE: Share your Google Earth Tour with me at [ajm469@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:ajm469@scarletmail.rutgers.edu) by 9PM on Friday, April 24.**

**Week 14: Protest and Change**

- Mon, Apr 27:
  - o *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*. Chapter 3 & Conclusion
- Thu, Apr 30: Review (No Reading)

**FINAL EXAM: TBA**