

**SOC 570**  
**THE SOCIOLOGY OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**  
16:920:507  
Fall 2018  
Mondays 9:30am-12:10pm  
Davison Hall, Room 128 (Seminar Room)

Professor Norah MacKendrick  
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**Office Hours:** Mondays: 2:30-3:30\* (appointment preferred)

**DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE**

In this course, we will apply a sociological perspective to environmental health. Our first objective will be to consider how environmental degradation and food environments reflect and reproduce structural inequalities such as poverty, racism, labor injustices, and chronic illness and disease. These readings will introduce us to the latest scholarship in food justice, environmental justice and reproductive justice, with attention to areas of overlaps among these three “justices.” Our second objective will be to study how individuals, communities, and organizations at multiple scales have *resisted, challenged and or organized against* these inequalities.

The instructor and students will work together to construct a syllabus that reflects the interests of students in the course, staying more or less within the boundaries of this broad topic area. Students will look for specific case studies of resistance—novel social arrangements meant to activate structural or social change. This course will be relevant to students with an interest in one or more areas, including social justice, environmental sociology; medical sociology; food studies; and gender, race and reproduction.

**DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

## LEARNING GOALS

These learning goals will guide our course:

1. Synthesis of academic readings to form arguments and positions, and develop new research questions and theories
2. Application of multiple theories and concepts to complex case studies
3. Effective writing, theorizing, and argumentation
4. Constructive peer review
5. Application of ideas to policy or community contexts

## REQUIRED BOOKS

All books will be on reserve at the Douglass library and we will focus on specific chapters.

Alkon, Alison Hope, & Agyeman, Julian (Eds.). (2011). *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Broad, Garrett. (2016). *More than just food: Food justice and community change*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Brown, Phil. (2007). *Toxic exposures: contested illnesses and the environmental health movement*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hoover, Elizabeth. (2017). *The River is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Pellow, D. N. (2007). *Resisting global toxics: Transnational movements for environmental justice*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance and Participation (10%)
2. Ten weekly memos (20%)
3. Moderate a class discussion (instructor assigned readings) (10%)
4. Present and lead discussion of a reading (student-choice readings) (10%)
5. Review of scholarly work. (Synthesis and review of 4 academic articles or an academic book. Maximum 3,000 words) (20%)
6. Final Essay (Maximum 4,000 words) (30%)

Memos will be due via Sakai Blogs by 6pm on the *Sunday* before class. Your memos should be one page (300-500 words) and constitute a response to the assigned articles or book chapters that highlights aspects of the reading(s) that were of interest to you, gaps that you wish the author had addressed, connections / contrasts between readings. Each memo should include at least one question you'd like to discuss in class.

All other assignments will be submitted via Sakai.

## **CONTACTING ME**

My office hours are listed above. If you are not able to make these hours, please contact me and we can arrange to meet at another time. The best way to reach me is by email. I check email throughout the week (not on weekends), and I will do my best to respond within 24 hours.

## **KEEPING UP WITH CLASS MATERIAL**

Active participation and attendance are vital to learning the course material. Audio or video recording of the lectures is *not* permitted. Students with a documented disability must have special permission to record any of our meetings.

## **MISSING A CLASS OR MULTIPLE LATE ARRIVALS**

Missing a graduate class (or frequent tardiness) is equivalent to missing a week's worth of learning material. I therefore take absences and lateness very seriously. You must have a valid reason for missing class. If you are struggling to keep up with material in this course because of factors outside of your control (e.g. chronic illness, financial aid, food or housing insecurity, personal problems, commuting trouble), please talk to me as soon as possible. We can work out a plan and, if necessary, I can direct you to services at the University that can assist you.

## **PHONES AND LAPTOPS**

Unfortunately, in my last four years of teaching graduate classes, I have found that students are increasingly "multitasking" on their laptops or phones to the point of interfering with active participation. I consider this behavior disruptive and disrespectful.

Here is my policy:

- If you bring a laptop, use it for note taking and reading *only*. If you'd like to look something up related to a reading, let me know and make it part of your contribution to the discussion.
- Do not text or check email during class. We will have a break where you can check email and respond to texts. If you need access to your phone or email during class because of a unique circumstance, let me know and we can work out plan.

## **DISCUSSIONS AND RESPECT**

Graduate classes involve a lot of reading, critique and discussion. We will likely encounter disrespectful or harmful comments, assumptions and ideas in the material we're reading or in our class discussions or in conversations we have with one another. These situations shouldn't be dismissed or ignored, and likewise, fear of offending our colleagues should not silence us. Therefore, starting on the first day of class, will work *collectively* to develop a system for handling such moments so we can all feel welcome in the classroom, participate openly and respectfully, and learn from one another's histories, perspectives and backgrounds.

## TOPIC AND READING SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

(\* Available on Sakai

All others are at library / student responsibility

DATE	TOPIC & READING
	<b>Environmental Health and Environmental Justice</b>
	(* Ducre, Kishi Animashaun. (2018) The Black feminist spatial imagination and an intersectional environmental justice, <i>Environmental Sociology</i> , 4:1, 22-35.
Monday	10-Sep (* Liboiron, Max, Manuel Tironi, and Nerea Calvillo. (2018). "Toxic politics: Acting in a permanently polluted world." <i>Social Studies of Science</i> 48.3 (2018): 331-349.
	(* McCormick, Sabrina, Brown, Phil, & Zavestoski, Stephen. (2003). The Personal Is Scientific, the Scientific Is Political: The Public Paradigm of the Environmental Breast Cancer Movement. <i>Sociological Forum</i> , 18(4), 545-576.
	<b>**Meet in Dept Library, next door to seminar room**</b>
	<b>Environmental Justice: A very brief survey of the literature</b>
	(* Bullard, R. D. (1990). Ecological Inequities and the New South: Black Communities under Siege. <i>The Journal of Ethnic Studies</i> . 17(4):101-115.
Monday	17-Sep (* Capek, Stella M. (1993). The "Environmental Justice" Frame: A Conceptual Discussion and an Application. <i>Social problems</i> , 40(1), 5-24.
	(* Szasz, A. (1994). <i>Ecopopulism: Toxic waste and the movement for environmental justice</i> . U of Minnesota Press. (Chapters 1, 3, 4)
	(* Nygren, Anja and Gutu Wayessa (2018) At the intersections of multiple marginalisations: displacements and environmental justice in Mexico and Ethiopia, <i>Environmental Sociology</i> , 4:1, 148-161.
Monday	24-Sep <b>Health Social Movements</b> Brown, Phil. (2007). <i>Toxic exposures: contested illnesses and the environmental health movement</i> . New York: Columbia University Press. (Selected chapters)

		<b>Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice</b>
Monday	1-Oct	Pellow, D. N. (2007). <i>Resisting global toxics: Transnational movements for environmental justice</i> . Cambridge: MIT Press. (Selected chapters)
		<b>Resistance in Indigenous Communities</b>
		(*) Murphy, M. (2017). Afterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations. <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> , 32(4), 494-503.
Monday	8-Oct	(*) Rudel, T. K. (2018). The Extractive Imperative in Populous Indigenous Territories: The Shuar, Copper Mining, and Environmental Injustices in the Ecuadorian Amazon. <i>Human Ecology</i> , 1-8.
		<b>Resistance in Indigenous Communities</b>
Monday	15-Oct	Hoover, Elizabeth. (2017). <i>The River is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community</i> . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Selected chapters)
		<b>Food Justice</b>
Monday	22-Oct	Alkon, Alison Hope, & Agyeman, Julian (Eds.). (2011). <i>Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability</i> . Cambridge: MIT Press. (Selected chapters)
		<b>**BOOK REVIEW DUE on Wednesday October 24**</b>
Monday	29-Oct	Alkon, Alison Hope, & Agyeman, Julian (Eds.). (2011). <i>Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability</i> . Cambridge: MIT Press. (Selected chapters)
		(*) Reading TBA
Monday	5-Nov	Broad, Garrett. (2016). <i>More than just food: Food justice and community change</i> . Oakland, CA: University of California Press. (Selected chapters)
		<b>Reproductive Justice</b>
Monday	12-Nov	(*) Luna, Z. (2009). From rights to justice: Women of color changing the face of US reproductive rights organizing. <i>Societies Without Borders</i> , 4(3), 343-365.
		(*)Silliman, J., Fried, M. G., Ross, L., & Gutiérrez, E. (2016). <i>Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organizing for Reproductive Justice</i> . Haymarket Books. (Selected chapters)

Monday	19-Nov	Topics & Readings TBA
Monday	26-Nov	Topics & Readings TBA
Monday	3-Dec	Topics & Readings TBA
Monday	10-Dec	Student presentations of final essay topics/findings
Friday	14-Dec	<b>**Final Essay Due**</b>