

Soc 571, Health, Environment, and Society

16:920:571

Fall 2022

Tues 10:20am-1:20pm

Davison Hall. Room 128 (Seminar Room)

Dr. Norah MacKendrick
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-3pm, Room 107

Zoom meeting / office hours link (only if meeting virtually):

<https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/8846874963?pwd=RVRsZm9GQjlnYkVROWxGOUZMakhXUT09>

Meeting ID: 884 687 4963

Password: 271194

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

In this graduate course, we will apply a sociological perspective to environmental health. Readings and class activities will examine how environmental degradation and food environments reflect and reproduce structural inequalities such as poverty, racism, labor injustices, reproductive inequalities, and chronic illness and disease. We will also study how individuals, communities, and organizations at multiple scales have resisted, challenged and organized against these inequalities.

This class follows a collaborative model where students and the instructor develop part of the syllabus, staying more or less within the boundaries of this broad and interdisciplinary topic area. This course will be relevant to students with an interest in social justice, environmental sociology; medical sociology; food studies; geography; anthropology, policy sciences, 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. These books should all be available as e-books through the library.

Alkon, Alison Hope, & Agyeman, Julian (Eds.). (2011). *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*. Cambridge: MIT 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 (10%) (Post as a discussion on Canvas on Sunday before class)
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 academic articles or an academic book. Aim for about 2,000 words) Due Oct 28th. (20%)
6. Final Essay (5,000-6,000 words) Due Dec 16th. (40%)

Memos will be due via Canvas by 11:59pm on the *Sunday* before class. Find the discussion post for the class (see discussion title for the date) and reply with your memo. By using the discussion feature memos will be visible to all in the class, which I hope will encourage discussion. 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, or connections / contrasts between readings. Each memo should include at least one question you'd like to discuss in class.

Other assignments will also be submitted via Canvas.

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

Use your device for reading our class materials but not to the extent that you are 'buried' behind a screen or fail to regularly engage with classmates. If you need to call or text, or just need a break, step outside the classroom and return when you're ready.

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, we 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 Canvas)

DATE		TOPIC & READINGS
Tues	6-Sep	Environmental Health and Environmental Justice (*)Ducre, Kishi Animashaun. (2018) The Black feminist spatial imagination and an intersectional environmental justice, <i>Environmental Sociology</i> , 4:1, 22-35. (*)McGregor, D., Whitaker, S., & Sritharan, M. (2020). Indigenous environmental justice and sustainability. <i>Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability</i> , 43, 35-40. [No memo for this week]

- Tues 13-Sep **Environmental Inequalities**
 (*) Bullard, R. D. (1990). Ecological Inequities and the New South: Black Communities under Siege. *The Journal of Ethnic Studies*. 17(4):101-115.
- (*) Szasz, A. (1994). Ecopopulism: Toxic waste and the movement for environmental justice. U of Minnesota Press. (Chapters 1 & 4)
- (*) Pulido L. 2017. Geographies of race and ethnicity II: Environmental racism, racial capitalism and state-sanctioned violence. *Progress in Human Geography*. 41(4):524-533.
- (*) Pellow, D. (2016). Toward a Critical Environmental Justice Studies: Black Lives Matter as an Environmental Justice Challenge. *DuBois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 13(2), 221-236.
- Tues 20-Sep **Environmental Health Social Movements**
 Brown, Phil. (2007). Toxic exposures: contested illnesses and the environmental health movement. New York: Columbia University Press. (Especially chapters 1, and 3-7)
- Tues 27-Sep **Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice**
 Pellow, D. N. (2007). *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Tues 4-Oct **Toxic Exposures as Slow Violence**
 (*) Nixon, Rob. 2011. Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press. (Intro and Chpt 4)
- (*) Davies T. Slow violence and toxic geographies: ‘Out of sight’ to whom? *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. 2022;40(2):409-427. doi:[10.1177/2399654419841063](https://doi.org/10.1177/2399654419841063)
- Tues 11-Oct **Contamination as Colonialism**
 (*) Murphy, M. (2017). Afterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations.” *Cultural Anthropology*, 32(4), 494-503.
- Liboiron, Max. 2021. Pollution Is Colonialism. Duke University Press (Introduction & Chpt 2) [see Rutgers library link on Canvas]
- (*) Scott, D.N. (2009). “Gender-benders”: Sex and Law in the Constitution of Polluted Bodies. *Feminist Legal Studies*, 17, 241-265.

Tues	18-Oct	Resistance in Indigenous Communities Hoover, Elizabeth. (2017). <i>The River is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community</i> . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Focus on the intro, 3-5, & conclusion)
Tues	25-Oct	Food Justice Alkon, Alison Hope, & Agyeman, Julian (Eds.). (2011). <i>Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability</i> . Cambridge: MIT Press. (Chapters 1 through 6) Essay 1 due Friday October 28th on Canvas
Tues	1-Nov	Reese, Ashanté. 2019. <i>Black Food Geographies</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press
Tues	8-Nov	Topics & Readings TBA
Tues	15-Nov	Topics & Readings TBA
Tues	22-Nov	No Class. Change in Designation of Class Days
Tues	29-Nov	Topics & Readings TBA
Tues	6-Dec	Topics & Readings TBA
Tues	13-Dec	Student presentations of final essay topics/findings
Friday	16-Dec	**Final Essay Due by 11:55pm**