

ENST 295:
Power, Privilege, and the Environment

People's Climate March
September 21, 2014 ★ New York City
www.peoplesclimatemarch.org



Spring 2015 ◆ CRN 26527 ◆ Professor Sarah Jaquette Ray
Time: TR 11-12:50 ◆ Location: SH 002
Office Hours: Thursday, 1-4pm, or by appointment
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Course Description

Among environmentalists and ENST students, I often hear variations on the comment: *“who cares about social justice (or women’s rights, or land sovereignty, or civil liberties, or you fill in the blank) if we don’t have a planet?”* This question helps us frame a debate within the environmental movement: is social justice necessary for environmental sustainability, or does it detract from solving environmental problems? Is environmentalism a politics of the privileged? Should environmentalism address issues of gender, race, sexuality, disability, geographical agency, religion, socio-economic class, ethnicity, colonial status, and age? What good are social theories about power and privilege to the environmental movement, much less to solving our gravest environmental problems? These questions will underlie our inquiries in this course. We will explore these questions through readings, discussion, films, skype visits from experts, Sherman Alexie’s lecture, and written and oral assignments. If you are taking this course to progress in the ENST major, a C- is required.

Course Objectives

Students who take this course will be able to:

- Competently discuss the relationship between issues about identity, power, privilege, and environmental concerns

- Critically evaluate environmental claims in terms of the implications of their relative benefits and burdens
- Evaluate the relationship between theory and practice in environmental justice
- Gain awareness of their own powers and privileges—and lack thereof—in their environmental orientations
- Familiarity with some of the debates within environmental justice scholarship

ENST Program Objectives that this Course Introduces and Develops

- analyze the interrelationships among social, political, geographic, economic, and cultural aspects of environmental issues and determine the effects of power and privilege on these relationships
- interpret and communicate complex ideas effectively
- engage in civic and public issues informed by normative and ethical inquiry

Readings

I will provide readings as needed on Moodle. You are expected to print, read, annotate, and use them in class discussion. Please do purchase Alexie's book (#1 below). It would also be great if you have the means to purchase some of the others, but manageable if not. I will provide copies of the readings in PDF form (please print them).

1. Alexie, Sherman. *War Dances*.
2. Alkon, Alison Hope and Julian Agyeman. *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability*.
3. Guthman, Julie. *Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism*.
4. Hartmann, Betsy, Banu Subramaniam, and Charles Zerner. *Making Threats: Biofears and Environmental Anxieties*.
5. Holmes, Seth. *Fresh Fruit/Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*.
6. Pellow, David Naguib. *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*.

Required Work:

A Note on Format: Unless the work is in-class, please submit it typed, double-spaced, and well-edited. Shock of all shocks, I do grade for writing, presentation, and craft. That's because written communication is central to the program and university mission, not to mention my own. If your work is hard to read and comment on, it isn't doing its job to show me that you're grasping the assignment.

1. Knapsack Exercise (5%): Read handout on "Privilege in the Environmental Movement," and answer "yes" or "no" to all the questions. Then, respond to the reading and the

checklist in a 2-3-page reflection. Do you take issue with any of the statements? Which statements exposed your own privilege (or lack thereof) in ways you had never thought about before? In what other ways does privilege get expressed in environmental values, ideas, arguments, the movement, etc? Do you agree that environmentalism is a privileged movement and set of sensibilities? Use these questions as a launching board; do not feel you need to answer them all.

Favianna Rodríguez's "Migration is Natural" Artwork



2. Report (10%): With a partner, sign up to report on one of days scheduled for reports. These reports should last about 20 minutes, and must be accompanied by a slideshow. Assignment guidelines and an evaluation rubric are included at the end of this syllabus.

3. In-Class Thought Questions (50%). Come to class having done the reading for that day, and respond to a question in writing that I ask about the reading. This isn't a "test", but rather a way to open a discussion about the reading. It reflects your thoughtful engagement with the reading and earnest attempt to grapple with my question, though this assessment also serves as evidence to me that you did in fact do the reading. *There will be an unknown number of thought questions, and they will be unannounced.* Any day you are assigned reading is game (marked by asterisks in the schedule below). Thought questions cannot be made up. I will drop the lowest grade. Please note that this is the bulk of your grade, which illustrates how important I think daily preparation for discussion is. A seminar-style approach to learning is superior to lecture for treating students like bearers of knowledge, not just receptacles for an instructor's expertise, as well as for practicing critical analysis. If I don't assess your preparation, discussions may come to a halt, which would lead to modes of instruction I don't agree with, such as exams and lecturing. Help me help you, people. We are so lucky to have a small class where we can learn through discussion, but it only works if you do the reading.

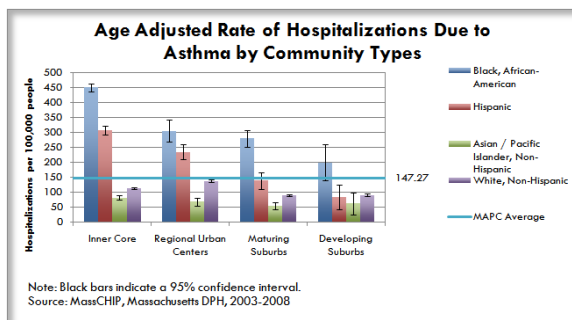
4. Discussion Questions (5 x 2% each = 10%): On each of the five days that we have either a Skyped-in speaker or a film discussion, you will compose two discussion questions based on the readings and/or film, which we will use to generate discussion, either with the speaker or about the film in class, depending on the schedule. Each question should be a substantial paragraph long. They should refer to readings/films/course ideas, find parallels

or contradictions, and pose a non-leading question that doesn't necessarily have clear answers. They should make us think, and not lean on obvious or cliché notions. The art of composing a good discussion question is not as easy as you may think. So, for the first assignment, you'll get full credit for just doing it, and we'll use this "practice" to establish norms. A sample is appended at the end of this syllabus. This assignment cannot be made up, as it is designed to generate class discussion on that day.

5. ENST 295 Bring It! Summit (7%): Review all your thought questions, notes from reports, and assignments. Come to class prepared to discuss the most important issues, concepts, and insights you learned throughout the course of the semester. Prepared to propose directions you'd like to learn more about, approaches you'd like to continue pursuing, or topics you wish we had covered. More detailed guidelines will be provided. A written assignment will be due, but the day will be discussion-centered. I call it the "Bring It! Summit" because you'll be expected to show off everything you've learned, engage in lively discussion about the class, and point to future directions for you, my design of the course, and the planet. The results of this Summit—aka "deliverables" or "outcomes"—will be decided by you as a group. So tell me, what's next, oh wise souls?

6. Students' Choice Final Project (20%): Because we all can perform well but perhaps under various circumstances, I want you to choose your own direction for a final assessment: 1) **Activist Analysis.** If you lead or participate in any activist or workshop event (Climate March in Oakland, Social Justice Summit at HSU, Earth Day), or work on a project with Paradise Martinez Graff (co-director of CCAT) on issues of inclusivity and environmentalism on campus, or some other activist event, then a report on that event or project can meet the requirement. 2) **Synthesizing Paper:** If a particular topic we covered really compels you, you can use this paper to bring together the ideas of the course to analyze that topic. This paper should draw entirely on the readings, Skype talks, reports, or films in the course. No research is necessary. I want to see synthesis here; how do some of the materials speak to each other? What new lines of inquiry do they open up for you? 3) **Students' Design.** What else is there? Group Research Projects? Some kind of report on the "Bring It Summit" (see below)? A film review? Be creative and do your own thing.

Each student will arrange criteria for evaluation, expectations, and deadlines with me. You should be thinking about what kind of project you want to do and you will propose it for approval early in the semester. I will need to approve your choice by the date indicated in the schedule below or there will be a grade deducted from the project's final grade.



*Fast and Slow Violence against Black America =
Spatialized Racism + Police Brutality + Environmental Injustice*

Grading Schema: 95=A, 92=A-, 87=B+, 85=B, 82=B-, 77=C+, 75=C, 72=C-, etc.

Expectations and Resources

Technology in the Classroom: If technological devices enhance your ability to achieve course objectives, they are by all means welcome. Please consult me for permission. However, devices such as iPhones and iPads in classrooms inhibit learning. If you use cell phones or computers in class, I will ask you to put them away.

“Prepared Presence” (aka Attendance and Late Work): Consistent with the above comment on technology in the classroom, prepared presence also requires timely submission of work, alertness in class, taking notes, and bringing your annotated readings to aid in discussion. Late work undermines your preparation for class time, but the most important thing is that you are in class so you can benefit from being present. Therefore, late work is permitted, but with the consequence of reduced credit. Each absence removes a half percentage point on your final grade. If you provide official documentation explaining your absence and/or late work, I will excuse it. No matter what, though, if you find yourself behind on work or attendance, COME TALK TO ME so we can arrange a revised evaluation plan for you. I always prefer you succeed sloppily than to get discouraged by getting behind, but **communication with me** is essential.

Email: HSU requires that each student use his or her HSU-assigned email to communicate with faculty and administrators. If you have a non-HSU address that you prefer to use, you need to forward all the email from your HSU account to that address. For non-urgent issues, please meet me in office hours. I prefer face-to-face contact whenever possible.

Access/Ability: I am committed to making success in my classes possible for all students. If at any point in the semester you find that success is a challenge for you—because of my teaching style, the arrangement of the class, life constraints, technology issues, or a disability—please talk to me. HSU’s policy on disability is that disability-related accommodations are required by law, and resources for ensuring access can be found at the Student Disability Resource Center in House 71, 826-4678, or 826-5392 (TDD).

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is a funny thing. On the one hand, college teaches you that ideas develop in concert with others, and so how can any one person “own” an idea? On the other hand, recognizing—to the best of your ability—how your ideas build on others’ is part of this insight. Proper citation is a formal way of acknowledging that we are developing our ideas in conversation with others, and documenting the genealogy of those ideas. Furthermore, in this information-saturated age, it’s hard to know where you got ideas, or to know the conventions for citing the ideas you’re steeped in. However, there are significant ethical problems with deliberately gaining by the unacknowledged use of another’s ideas. This is where plagiarism and the academic honesty codes of the University come in. Don’t plagiarize; it undermines the foundation of a liberal society and the marketplace of ideas. If

you have a question about how to avoid plagiarizing, ask me! If I detect deliberate plagiarism—from a website, from another student, or from any other source—I will fail you in the class and you may be subject to discipline by the University. For more information, go to http://www.humboldt.edu/studentrights/academic_honesty.php.

SCHEDULE (subject to change with fair notice)

Color Key

	Unit Title
	Skype Visits with Experts
	Major Assignment Due
	Relevant Event Occurring Outside of Class Time
	Report Day
	Discussion Questions Due
*	Possible Thought Question Day



Calendar of Readings & Assignments

Date	Readings & Activities	Work Due
T 1/20:	First Day of Class, Introductions	
	<i>Unit 1: INTRODUCTION TO POWER/PRIVILEGE/ENVIRONMENT: "I Can't Breathe"</i>	
R 1/22:	Introduction to Environmental Justice: Does Privilege Matter?; Difficult Dialogue Guidelines	Knapsack Exercise
T 1/27:	Read Al-Sareh and Arefin, "Doing Environmental Studies During Times of Racialized Violence" and Bennett, "Manufacturing the Ghetto" (in-class: Mock, "Why Environmentalists Should Support #BlackLivesMatter")	Sign up for reports; Practice Thought Question
R 1/29:	Read Solnit, "Everything's Coming Together..." and Mock, "How EJ Fared in 2014"; view Julian Agyeman 2010 AASHE YouTube talk; Paradise Martinez Graff Visit	Practice Discussion Questions
M 2/2:	Social Justice Summit Proposal Deadline	
	<i>UNIT 2: CLIMATE ACTIVISM and INDIGENOUS RIGHTS in the AGE OF OIL</i>	
T 2/3:	Read Naomi Klein and Bill McKibben's "Foreword" and editors' "Introduction" to <i>A Line in the Tarsands: Struggles for Environmental Justice</i> .	Reports *
R 2/5:	<i>Tipping Point: The End of Oil</i> film screening and discussion Read Coats, "What Does it Mean to Be a Movement?:"	*

	Proposal for an Indigenous-Led Movement”	
S 2/7:	Climate March in Oakland	

T 2/10:	Read Awasis, “Pipelines and Resistance across Turtle Island” Skype Visit with Dr. Janet Fiskio on Tarsands Activism	Discussion Questions for Dr. Fiskio
	<i>Unit 3: COERCIVE CONSERVATION</i>	
R 2/12:	Read Kosek, “Purity and Pollution” and Wohlforth, “Conservation and Eugenics”	Report *
T 2/17:	Read Robbins, et al, “Population and Scarcity”	*
R 2/19:	Read Dowie, “Conservation Refugees” and Slater, “Amazonia as Edenic Narrative”	Report *
T 2/24:	Read Smith, “Rape of the Land” and Shiva, “The Greening of Global Reach”	Report *
	<i>Unit 4: SHERMAN ALEXIE IS COMING, OMG!; or, Colonialism is Environmental Injustice</i>	
R 2/26:	Read Sherman Alexie’s <i>War Dances</i> , first third	*
T 3/3:	Read Sherman Alexie’s <i>War Dances</i> , complete	Report *
R 3/5:	Read Voyles article Skype with Dr. Traci Brynne Voyles on environmental injustice on native lands	Discussion Questions for Dr. Voyles
3/5:	REQUIRED LECTURE: SHERMAN ALEXIE 7pm	
3/6-7:	Social Justice Summit	
	<i>Unit 5: FOOD JUSTICE</i>	
T 3/10:	Read Alkon and Agymean, “The Food Movement as Polyculture” and Mares and Peña, “Environmental and Food Justice: Toward Local, Slow, and Deep Food Systems”; <i>Debrief</i> Alexie lecture; Film: <i>The Garden</i>	*
R 3/12:	Read Wald, “Visible Farmers, Invisible Workers” Discussion of <i>The Garden</i> Skype Talk with Dr. Sarah Wald	Discussion Questions for Dr. Wald
T 3/17- R 3/19	(Spring Break)	
T 3/24:	Read Guthman, <i>Weighing In</i> , Introduction, Ch. 4 & 6-9	Reports *
R 3/26:	Read Guthman, “If They Only Knew: The Unbearable Whiteness of the Alternative Food Movement” and	Report *

	Stanesco, “Green Eggs and Ham?”	
T 3/31:	Cesar Chavez Day, NO CLASS	
R 4/2:	Read Holmes, <i>Fresh Fruit/Broken Bodies</i> Ch. 1-2	*

T 4/7:	Read Holmes, <i>FF/BB</i> Chapter 6 and Conclusion	Reports *
		Students’ Choice Final Project Proposal DUE
	<i>Unit 6: EXPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE</i>	
R 4/9:	Read Robbins et al, “Political Economy”; Film: <i>Bhopali</i> (2011 documentary) or <i>Bhopal: A Prayer for Rain</i> (2014 Hollywood)- student vote	*
T 4/14:	Discussion of Bhopal film; Read Pellow, “Environment, Modernity, Inequality” and “The Global Village Dump”	Discussion Questions
R 4/16:	Read Pellow, “Electronic Waste: The ‘Clean’ Industry Exports its Trash”	Report *
T 4/21:	Screen and discuss Climate Debt and Warsaw	
W 4/22:	Earth Day	
R 4/23:	Read Nixon, <i>Slow Violence</i> , Introduction & “Ecologies of the Aftermath”	Report *
	<i>Unit 7: FEAR and RISK</i>	
T 4/28:	Read Robbins et al, “Risks and Hazards” and Hartmann et al, “Making Threats: Biofears and Environmental Anxieties”	
R 4/30:	Read & Hartmann and Hendrixson, “Pernicious Peasants and Angry Young Men” and Hartmann et al, “Unraveling Fear”	Reports *
	<i>Unit 8: HOPE IN A DARK WORLD?</i>	
T 5/5:	Read Solnit, “Acts of Hope”	*
R 5/7:	Last Day of Class: Bring It! Summit	Bring It! Summit Assignment
F 5/15:	Finals Week	FINAL PROJECT DUE by 5pm

University Policies that Apply to this Course

Add/Drop policy: Students are responsible for knowing the University policy, procedures, and schedule for dropping or adding classes.

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~reg/regulations/schedadjust.html>

Academic honesty: Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding academic honesty:

http://www.humboldt.edu/studentrights/academic_honesty.php or

<http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/catalog/>

Emergency evacuation: Please review the evacuation plan for the classroom (posted on the orange signs), and review

http://www.humboldt.edu/emergencymgmtprogram/evacuation_procedures.php for information on campus Emergency Procedures. During an emergency, information can be found campus conditions at: **826-INFO** or www.humboldt.edu/emergency

Attendance and disruptive behavior: Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding attendance and disruptive behavior:

http://www.humboldt.edu/studentrights/attendance_behavior.php

Sample Discussion Question

1. The environmental justice movement in the US has achieved so much success because it has pushed for environmental laws that decrease pollution and waste in some vulnerable American communities. As David Naguib Pellow contends, though, this pollution and waste has not reduced; it's merely moved abroad. The new global trade in waste (both trash and pollution) typically places it on the doorsteps of disenfranchised countries and communities, where laws and movements are not in place to protect the lands and people who trade long-term health in for immediate, often minimal, financial gain. If environmental justice here means environmental injustice elsewhere, what should a globally-minded environmental justice movement demand, work toward, organize for? How do we resolve this conflict of agendas for environmental justice?

Does this question:

- ✓ Address the reading/text/film/speaker?
- ✓ Summarize a tension or contradiction?
- ✓ Articulate a problem?
- ✓ Lead to a not obvious or cliché, debatable answer?
- ✓ Make us think beyond the text?
- ✓ Show student analysis of the text?

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Report Guidelines and Evaluation Rubric

With a partner, you will present on the author/text for which you have signed up. The **purpose** of the report is for you to be a bit of an “expert” on, and explore more fully, the topics/author/reading than the other students in the class, thereby **deepening their knowledge**. This assignment provides an opportunity for you to engage more intensely with an author’s approach to power/privilege/environment, and to learn more about something you find interesting than what we’re covering in class.

Presentation Content: Pick a couple of themes or issues from the book about which you still want to know more, research it, and teach us about it, while keeping the report engaged with the general framework of the text. For example, let’s say you’re assigned Tarsands activism. Perhaps you’re interested in the current status of the Idle No More movement. Research this issue and update us on what’s happening, what are the debates and current concerns, what’s being done, etc. *But*, keep us engaged in the content of the readings! This is NOT an opportunity to go off on a tangent; it is an opportunity to use the course as a lens into an interest that is related to the course material but not fully addressed within it. Refer to the reading(s) and tie in the additional information in your own analysis, rather than just regurgitate some news report you read. We can all google Idle No More and read the Wikipedia entry. Dazzle us a bit more with how what you found ties into the concerns of our class. This will be key to your report’s success.

Evaluated Components

Slideshow (~25%): Use visuals to augment your report. Do not use slides as textual cues for your report. Text-heavy slides will reduce your grade *because they are not helpful* in this kind of report. Your rule of thumb should be “does this visual add to or illustrate our ideas well?”

Presentation (~70%): The presentation should last no longer than 20 minutes. You can read from notes or speak extemporaneously—whatever works for you. You can share the speaking, or designate one of you to do all the speaking. Do a few practice runs so you know your cues and don’t go over-time. The presentation will be evaluated for both delivery and content.

Self-Evaluation (5%): Submit a confidential, typed summary of: 1) what you contributed to the report preparation, 2) how the process of working with the partner went, 3) what you most enjoyed about the process.