

**ENVI 237/HIST 237/AMST 294  
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Macalester College, Fall 2011  
Olin-Rice 241, TR 9:40-11:10

Prof. Chris Wells

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Office hours: Mon 1-2, Wed 3:30-4:30,  
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**Course Description**

Poor and minority populations have historically borne the brunt of environmental inequalities in the United States, suffering disproportionately from the effects of pollution, dispossession of land, resource depletion, dangerous jobs, limited access to common resources, and exposure to environmental hazards. Paying particular attention to the ways that race, ethnicity, class, and gender have shaped the political and economic dimensions of environmental injustices, this course draws on the work of scholars and activists to examine the long history of environmental inequities in the United States, along with more recent political movements—national and local—that seek to rectify environmental injustices and develop new possibilities for understanding the human place in nature.

**Required Readings:**

The following book is available for purchase at the college book store:

Eileen McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism*

**Digital copies of all other readings**, marked with an **X** on the reading schedule, are available to enrolled students only through the course's Moodle website (see below).

**Grading:** Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Book Analysis (presentation)	15%
Group EJ Issue Report/Presentation	25%
Research Paper (8-10 pgs)	30%
Participation	30%

**Assignments**

*The Book Analysis:* Early in the semester, I will circulate a list of books selected to supplement each day's assigned reading, and everyone in the class will sign up for one slot. On the day that your book is listed, you will launch class with a 10-12 minute (timed) presentation that 1) describes the book's argument, evidence, and methodology, 2) discusses its greatest strengths and weaknesses, 3) explains its connections to the day's assigned reading. Following your presentation, you will field questions from the class in a short Q&A session (5-10 minutes).

*The Group Environmental Justice Issue Primer Report and Presentation:* For this group assignment, you will work together to research a major environmental justice issue. (Group 1: Procedural Justice and Public Participation; Group 2: Science and Scientific Authority in Environmental Justice Struggles; Group 3: Asthma as an Environmental Justice Issue; Group 4: Lead Poisoning and Environmental Injustice.) Your job will be 1) to produce a short “primer” that translates major scholarly findings and arguments on your topic in a way that is designed to be accessible and helpful to families who are concerned that they might be experiencing an environmental justice problem; and 2) to make an in-class presentation of your findings (15-20 minutes, followed by Q&A discussion, for a total of 30 minutes). *Each class will also designate one or two of its members to deliver its presentation to the members of the Environmental Justice team at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on Tuesday, April 8, from 11:30-1:30.* Details to follow.

*The Research Paper:* Research papers should be on an environmental justice topic within the United States of your own choosing that intersects with the themes and ideas of this class, and should be 8-10 pages in length. This paper should be based on a mixture of primary and secondary sources, should address historical questions and utilize historical methodologies, and should represent your best efforts to think through the issues involved in polished, carefully edited, thoughtfully considered prose. Due via Moodle on Friday, May 9, by 10:00 am.

*Reading Responses:* For every class with a reading from 1/30 through 5/6, answer the following in 250 words or less by clicking on the day’s Reading Response link in Moodle: 1. As succinctly as possible, what is the main point of the reading? 2. What surprised you? (An acceptable answer is “nothing”); 3. What confused you? (An acceptable answer is “nothing”); 4. Suggest a better question than “What is the main point of this reading?” for discussion. Your best 20 scores will be used to calculate your final reading response grade. Students who complete all 24 reading responses will get extra credit.

**Participation grades** will be based on class attendance, participation in discussions, and regular *Reading Responses* (described above). Discussions are the driving force in this class, so it is particularly important that everyone comes to class prepared to discuss the day’s material. Our project in class meetings will be to explore connections between events, to answer questions, to clear up any confusion, to discuss the major themes of the course, and above all to engage with the readings. For those who are less comfortable than others speaking in class, remember that asking a good question is often as valuable a means of participation as delivering a long-winded oration. If you are having trouble speaking, however, please talk to me outside of class so that we can develop a strategy for improvement. *Laptops may be used during lectures and other presentations, but should not be used during class discussions.*

**Regular attendance** is required in order to receive a passing grade for the course, regardless of how well you do on your written assignments.

**Academic dishonesty** will not be tolerated. All of your written work should reflect your own ideas, and should properly attribute the work of others who you engage. On avoiding plagiarism, see <http://libdata2.macalester.edu/guides/guide.php?id=236>.

**The MAX Center**, located in Kagin Commons, has peer tutors available for assisting students in all stages of their writing. You may drop in for help or call x6121 (daytime) or x6193 (evening) to schedule an appointment. Find them on the web at <http://www.macalester.edu/max/>, and see their writing resources at <http://www.macalester.edu/max/writing/>. *Please also spend some time perusing Prof. Zachary Schrag's extraordinarily helpful advice for doing well in a history course at <http://historyprofessor.org/>.*

**The Alumni Reader Project:** The Macalester Alumni Reader Project (MARP) connects students with alumni who provide substantive feedback on a writing assignment. If you opt in to this project, you will be paired with a Macalester alumnus, who will read a draft copy of your final research paper. You will then meet with your reader, either in person or by Skype/Google Hangout, and get feedback and suggestions on how you might improve your paper. Details to follow.

**Our course's Moodle website** duplicates and supplements the information in this syllabus, including the reading schedule and assignment due dates. It also serves as the distribution system for electronic copies of many assigned readings and provides a place to submit electronic copies of your reading responses and research paper. Go to <http://moodle.macalester.edu/>, and login using your Macalester username and password. After logging in, click on the link to Environmental Justice in the My Courses section. Anything posted to the forums will automatically be emailed to everyone registered for the course.

**Reasonable accommodations** are available for students with documented disabilities. Please meet with the Associate Dean of Students, Lisa Landreman (coordinator for services for students with disabilities) at the beginning of the semester to ensure that your accommodations are approved and in place. She can be reached in the Office of Student Affairs, 119 Weyerhaeuser, at 651-696-6220, or by email [llandrem@macalester.edu](mailto:llandrem@macalester.edu). See also [www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/](http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/).

## Class Schedule

All items on Moodle are marked **X**

### UNIT I: ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

#### WEEK 1: RACIAL INEQUALITY, ACCESS, AND ENCLOSURE (50)

- T 1/28 Introductions  
R 1/30 Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*, 149-98. **X**

#### WEEK 2: DIRTY, DANGEROUS WORK (126)

- T 2/4 Sugrue, “The Meanest and the Dirtiest Jobs,” 91-123. **X**  
R 2/6 Pulido, “The Pesticide Campaign of the UFW Organizing Committee,” 57-124. **X**  
Hurley, “Rats, Roaches, and Smoke,” 111-35. **X**

#### WEEK 3: SEGREGATION AND EXPOSURE (101)

- T 2/11 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 181-258. **X**  
R 2/13 Pulido, “Rethinking Environmental Racism,” 12-34. **X**

#### WEEK 4: GENDER, COLOR, & THE POWER TO DEFINE “ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS” (111)

- T 2/18 Stradling, *Smokestacks and Progressives*, 37-107. **X**  
R 2/20 Gottlieb, “Ethnicity as a Factor: The Quest for Environmental Justice,” 307-46. **X**

### UNIT II: A MOVEMENT IS BORN

#### WEEK 5: ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE (110)

- T 2/25 McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism*, 1-49.  
R 2/27 McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism*, 50-110

#### WEEK 6-1: MATURATION (56)

- T 3/4 McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism*, 111-66.

### UNIT III: ISSUES PRIMERS

#### WEEK 6-2: GROUP PRESENTATIONS I (110)

- R 3/6 **Groups 1 & 2 present in class**  
Cole and Foster, *From the Ground Up*, 54-79 and 103-33. **X**  
Corburn, *Street Science*, 25-77. **X**

#### WEEK 7: GROUP PRESENTATIONS II (35)

- T 3/11 **Groups 3 & 4 present in class**  
Sze, “Childhood Asthma in New York City,” 91-108. **X**  
Drum, “America’s Real Criminal Element,” 1-17. **X**  
R 3/13 NO CLASS

#### WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK (3/18 & 3/20)

### UNIT IV: SACRIFICE ZONES

#### WEEK 9: TOXIC COLONIALISM (38)

- T 3/25 Churchill, Ward, and LaDuke, “Native North America,” 241-62. **X**  
LaDuke, “Nuclear Waste,” 96-111. **X**

CANCER ALLEY (29)

R 3/27 Markowitz and Rosner, "Ol' Man River or Cancer Alley?" 234-62. **X**

WEEK 10: THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF FIRE (36)

T 4/1 Davis, "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn," 1-36. **X**

JUST RECYCLING (60)

R 4/3 Pellow, *Garbage Wars*, 101-60. **X**

WEEK 11: INDUSTRIAL EXPOSURE (57)

T 4/8 Pellow and Park, *The Silicon Valley of Dreams*, 112-68. **X**

**Presentations at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (11:30-1)**

THE UNNATURAL HISTORY OF A "NATURAL" DISASTER (25)

R 4/10 Bullard and Wright, "Race, Place, and the Environment in Post-Katrina New Orleans," 19-43. **X**

UNIT V: NEW DIRECTIONS

WEEK 12: REGULATING JUSTICE (0)

T 4/15 Guest Speaker: Catherine Neuschler, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

TRANSIT JUSTICE (21)

R 4/17 Bullard et al, "Dismantling Transit Racism in Metro Atlanta," 49-69. **X**

WEEK 13: LOST MOUNTAINS (34)

T 4/22 Fox, "Mountain Top Removal Mining in West Virginia," 163-83. **X**  
Fraleay, "Appalachian Stereotypes and Mountain Top Removal," 365-70. **X**  
Reece, "Was It All by Design?" 42-48. **X**

GREEN JOBS (47)

R 4/24 Mirpuri, Feldman, and Roberts, "Antiracism and Environmental Justice in an Age of Neoliberalism," 401-15. **X**  
Jones, *The Green Collar Economy*, 19-33 and 61-77. **X**  
Alumni Reader Project Participants: **Draft of Research Paper Due**

WEEK 14: FOOD JUSTICE (53)

T 4/29 Gottlieb and Joshi, *Food Justice*, 151-76 & 197-238. **X**

THE TRANSNATIONAL TURN (40)

R 5/1 Pellow, "Transnational Movement Networks for Environmental Justice," 73-95. **X**  
Roberts, "Globalizing Environmental Justice," 285-301. **X**

(Thurs 5/1 – Mon 5/5: Alumni Reader Project Participants **Meet with Alumni Readers**)

WEEK 15: CONCLUSIONS (28)

T 5/6 Price, "Remaking American Environmentalism," 536-55. **X**  
Brulle and Pellow, "The Future of Environmental Justice Movements," 293-300. **X**

F 5/9 **Research Paper due via Moodle by 10:00 am.**