



Politics of Environmental Justice

POLI 323 A02 | Fall 2015

Department of Political Science

Course Date, Time and Location:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30-5:50pm – Cornett B135

Professor: Dr. Sarah Marie Wiebe

E-mail: swiebe@uvic.ca (Please note: I rarely answer emails on evenings and weekends, so please plan your inquiries via email accordingly. I prefer to meet in-person during office hours)

Office: David Turpin A334

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00, Thursdays 3:00-4:00 and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives:

Situated across international and intimate spheres, this course explores the relationship between slow violence and struggles for environmental justice from a multi-layered approach. In numerous sites around the world, citizens express concern about the impact of resource industries on their landscapes and livelihoods. This course raises and addresses questions such as: What modes of expression and activities do citizens enact to make their claims? How do public officials respond? What structural and discursive forces shape and constrain avenues for justice? Focusing on both theoretical and applied procedural, distributive and discursive dimensions of environmental justice, we will examine analytical approaches to the problem of environmental injustice, apply these to specific sites and focus on creative avenues for change.

Addressing environmental injustices requires an understanding of the social, economic and political systems in which we live: their histories, how they function, and their effects as well as their limitations. While this may appear obvious, all too often policies are recommended or implemented without such an understanding, with the consequence that they address symptoms rather than the causes of environmental problems, or address one aspect of the problem while worsening others. Developing the necessary understanding is difficult, precisely because of the complexity of our social, economic and political systems.

Overall, this course aims to introduce you to important contexts and tools for analyzing and responding to environmental problems. Particular learning objectives include:

- *Introducing* students to scholarly and activist conceptions and critiques of environmental in/justice;
- *Promoting* critical thinking regarding human relations to the nonhuman natural world, the creation and maintenance of social inequalities, and the synthesis of environmentalism and social justice;
- *Deepening* students' understanding of the historical, economic, political, and cultural particularities of our own place and situation;

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- *Developing* students' ability to read and write critically and analytically, and communicate effectively;
 - *Encouraging* personal reflection on core ideas in the course;
 - *Enhancing* student's ability to strategically and creatively enhance environmental justice.

Course Requirements:

This course is reading and writing intensive. You should be prepared to do both every week. It is university policy that students should expect to do two hours of preparation for each hour of class time. We have almost 3 hours of class every day of the week. **This means you should be expecting to spend about 10 hours a week on this course, including class time.** Be sure to give yourself an hour per assigned reading and an additional 30 minutes per article for your personal notes. This will ensure that you are well-prepared for exams and written assignments.

Assignment Due Dates:

*Midterm Exam: **Thursday October 29th** (in class) – 20%

Research Paper: **Tuesday November 17th (due by 4:30pm via CourseSpaces) – 30%

Zine or Reflection Paper: **Thursday December 3rd** (due by 4:30pm via CourseSpaces) – 10%

Final Exam: **December** exact date TBA - During exam period – 40%

ALWAYS KEEP A COPY OF ANY WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

*Course Exams: The two exams are not traditional as you will get the questions at least one week prior to the exam. The exams are opportunities to practice your critical reading and writing, and to bring together course concepts and readings in new ways. They are also opportunities to work through course themes with your classmates. Collective studying is strongly encouraged. The final exam will be comprehensive, inclusive of all course themes and topics.

**Papers: Detailed guidelines for the research and zine/reflection papers will be distributed in class within the first month and posted on CourseSpaces. The research paper must be approximately 3,000 words (8-10pages), 12 point font, Times New Roman, and provide an in-depth analysis of one contemporary site of environmental in/justice. You must reference course material in addition to at least 3 peer-reviewed academic references (i.e. journal articles, books and book chapters). APA, Chicago or Harvard Business citation formats are recommend, although any citation system is fine as long as it is applied correctly and consistently.

Policy on Late Assignments:

Late papers are strongly discouraged and are penalized at 5% per day. Nonetheless, at times situations do arise where they are unavoidable. Given that you know due dates well ahead of time, simply running out of time or having a lot of work due at the same time is not an adequate excuse. Unless you provide me with reasonable documentation of the reason for its lateness, the paper will be penalized. If you anticipate you may have difficulty meeting a due date, let me know as far ahead of time as possible, preferably by e-mail, and indicate when you think you can have the paper completed.

Course Readings:

It is important that you do the required reading before class, as the lectures will build on the information contained in the readings. The lectures are also your opportunity to ask questions about anything you find confusing, problematic, or difficult to understand in the readings for the week. You will understand the lectures better, and be able to ask better questions, if you've done the readings.

Course Texts:

Julian Agyeman et al. (2010). *Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada*.
Vancouver: UBC Press.

Steve Lerner (2010). *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Rob Nixon (2011). *Slow Violence and Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Other readings will be available on CourseSpaces.

Lecture Schedule

**IMPORTANT - This schedule is subject to change; be sure to pay attention to announcements during classes, log into CourseSpaces regularly for announcements, and keep up with your UVic e-mail account.*

Part 1: Approaching Environmental Justice: Concepts, Theories and Tools

To understand the structural dynamics shaping our present environmental climate, and constraining efforts to live otherwise, it is necessary to develop an analysis of our social, economic and political systems. The first part of the course does through various analytical lenses: *slow violence*, *sacrifice zones*, *intersectionality*, *ecofeminism* and *decolonization*. Each lens will integrate a discussion of *distributive*, *procedural* and *discursive* dimensions of justice.

Week 1:	<u>Thursday September 10 – Course Introduction</u>
Week 2:	<p><u>Tuesday September 15 – What is Environmental Justice?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sacrifice Zones</i>, Ch 1 • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 1 <p><u>Thursday September 17 – The Geopolitical Context of Slow Violence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Slow Violence</i>, Ch 1 • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 8
Week 3:	<p><u>Tuesday September 22 – Distributive and Procedural Justice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 5 • Klein, N. (2011). “Capitalism vs. the climate”, <i>The Nation</i> November 28, 2011. http://www.thenation.com/article/164497/capitalism-vs-climate Plus a follow-up interview: http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/07/naomi-kleins-inconvenient-climate-conclusions/?src=tp <p><u>Thursday September 24 – Discursive Justice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 10 • Schlosberg, D. (2013). “Theorizing Environmental Justice: The Expanding Sphere of a Discourse”, <i>Environmental Politics</i>. 22(1): 37-55.
Week 4:	<p><u>Tuesday September 29 – Intersectionality and Ecofeminism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Slow Violence</i>, Ch 4 • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 4 • Gaard, G. (2001). “Women, water, energy: an ecofeminist approach”, <i>Organization & Environment</i> 14(2): 157-172. <p><u>Thursday October 1 – Decolonization</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 2, Ch 4 • Guha, R. (1997). The environmentalism of the poor. In <i>Varieties of environmentalism: essays North and South</i>. (London: Earthscan) pp. 3-21

Part 2: Applying Environmental Justice: Selected Sites

Bearing in mind the approaches to environmental justice covered in Part 1, this course next applies these lenses to situated sites in Canada and the U.S.

Week 5:	<p><u>Tuesday October 6 – Canada’s Chemical Valley: A ‘Sacrifice Zone’?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FILM: <i>Indian Givers</i> – Available on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pot411GJzdM • Mackenzie et. al. (2005). “Declining Sex Ratio in a First Nation Community”, <i>Environmental Health Perspectives</i>. 113(10): 1295-1298. • Wiebe, S. & E. Koonsmo. (2014). “Indigenous Body as Contaminated Site? Examining Struggles for Reproductive Justice in Aamjiwnaang”, in <i>Fertile Ground: Exploring Reproduction in Canada</i>, S. Paterson, F. Scala, & M. Sokolon eds. McGill-Queen’s University Press. <p><u>Thursday October 8 – Slow Violence and States of Emergency: Situating Attawapiskat</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Alanis Obomsawin Film (2012), <i>People of the Kattawapiskak River</i>. • Louise Bernice Halfe and Larry Towell (2014). “In Attawapiskat”, <i>the Walrus</i>. Available online: http://thewalrus.ca/in-attawapiskat/. • Jonathan Kay (2013). “You gotta know how to do things yourself up here’: For modern reserves, success is in balancing tradition and capitalism”, <i>National Post</i>. Available online: http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/for-modern-reserves-success-is-in-balancing-tradition-and-capitalism. • Chris Rands (2012) “Chief Spence Exclusive Interview, <i>CBC</i>. December 18. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UQ4vMoeD2s.
Week 6:	<p><u>Tuesday October 13 – Deliberative Justice? Pipeline Politics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter, J. (2013). “Economic factors mean B.C. government unlikely to oppose Kinder Morgan bid”. See: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/economic-factors-mean-bc-government-unlikely-to-oppose-kinder-morgan-bid/article15978528/ • Harris, C. (2004). “How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire”, <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i>. 94(1): 165-182. <p><u>Thursday October 15 – Comparing Environmental Justice Movements: Canada and the U.S.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sacrifice Zones</i>, Ch 2, 3
Week 7:	<p><u>Tuesday October 20 – Contamination Clusters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sacrifice Zones</i>, Ch 12 • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 7 <p><u>Thursday October 22 – Postcolonial Pathways</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Slow Violence</i>, Ch 8 • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Prologue <p style="text-align: center;">Note: ‘Carnival of Resistance’ October 23-25</p>
Week 8:	<p><u>Tuesday October 27 – Food Systems and Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sacrifice zones</i>, Ch 10 • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 11

Thursday October 29 – MID-TERM (in class)

Part 3: Towards Justice? Activism, Law, Practice and Policy

This part of this course focuses on some of the ways contemporary developments and challenges invite a rethinking of environmental concepts, systems, policies and structures. We will examine how environmental issues are being addressed and also reformulated in contemporary contexts. In this section, we will assess available avenues for pursuing change and their possibilities and limitations. What environmentalism do we need in order to develop healthy human and non-human relations?

Week 9:	<p><u>Tuesday November 3 – Systems and Structures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mansfield, B. (2007). "Privatization: Property and the Remaking of Nature-Society Relations", <i>Antipode</i>. 39(3): 393-405. • Harvey, D. <i>The crisis of capitalism</i>. Video - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOP2V_np2c0 <p><u>Thursday November 5 – Mapping out the Legal Terrain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 6 • Borrows, J. (2002). "Living Between Water and Rocks: The Environment, First Nations, and Democracy", pp. 29-55, <i>Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law</i>. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Week 10:	<p><u>Tuesday November 10 – NO CLASS, Reading Break</u></p> <p><u>Thursday November 12 – The Arts of Engagement, Guest Speaker: Holly Pattison, Environmental Law Centre</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Etmanski, "Creating the Learning Space: Teaching the Arts in CBR", 2014 • Tremblay, C., & Jayme, B. (2015), " Co-creating community knowledge through Participatory Video", <i>Action Research</i>.
Week 11:	<p><u>Tuesday November 17 – Citizen Mobilization – Papers DUE (before class)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film: <i>Trick or Treaty</i> • Coulthard, G. http://nationsrising.org/for-our-nations-to-live-capitalism-must-die/ • Simpson, L. http://nationsrising.org/i-am-not-a-nation-state/ <p><u>Thursday November 19 – Zine Workshop, Guest Speaker/Facilitator: Dr. Carly Bagelman, Experiential Learning Curriculum Designer, Co-operative Education, University of Victoria</u></p>
Week 12:	<p><u>Tuesday November 24 – Resistance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sacrifice Zones</i>, Conclusion • Simpson, L and N Klein. 2013. Dancing the World into Being. Yes March 5, 2013. Available at: http://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson • Harrison, D. (2009). "Modern Enclosure: Salmon Aquaculture and First Nations Resistance in British Columbia", pp. 51-68, in <i>Environmental Conflict and Democracy in Canada</i>, L. Adkin, ed. Vancouver: UBC Press. <p><u>Thursday November 26 – Environmental In/Security and Climate Migration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Slow Violence</i>, Ch 5, 7 • Pasternak, S. and Russel Diablo, "First Nations Under Surveillance." In <i>The Media Co-op</i> (June 7, 2011). Available at: http://www.mediacoop.ca/story/first-nations-under-surveillance/7434 • Meili, R. "Will climate refugees in Canada finally spur action on climate change"? <i>Hill Times</i> (July 21, 2015). Available at: http://www.hilltimes.com/opinion-piece/legislation/2015/07/21/will-climate-refugees-in-canada-finally-spur-action-on-climate/42883

Week 13:	Tuesday December 1 – Revisiting Justice – Final Assignments DUE (before class) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Speaking for Ourselves</i>, Ch 12 Thursday December 3 – Course Summary and Review
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December 7-21: Final exam to be held during examination period

General Guidelines and Criteria for Evaluation of Written Work:
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Research Scope: Does the paper tackle a subject that is appropriate to its length, or does it try to cover too much, rendering the argument too vague, imprecise, or general to be persuasive?

Focus: Does the paper forward a well-developed and focused argument? By the conclusion of the paper, is it clear what the author intended to convince the reader of?

Quality of Argument: Is the argument persuasive? Is it well organized and supported by appropriate evidence and explanation? Is it attentive to the complexity of the issues involved, and does it qualify its claims to match the quality of evidence presented in support of them?

Representation of Texts/arguments: Does the paper accurately represent the texts or positions in question? Does it provide effective and convincing support (textual reference and analysis) for its position? Is the reading of the texts a plausible one? (In other words, it is NOT enough just to throw in a bunch of page numbers or quotations, you need to analyze these references and show how they support the particular analysis you are making of a text.)

Writing: Is the paper as clearly and effectively written as possible? Is it written so that it is accessible to its intended audience? Don't get tangled up in language! The most consistent problem in student writing is that the student assumes that the reader knows more about the subject than s/he does, and so leaves out crucial details or parts of the argument. Your reader may know more about the text or issue than you do, but s/he cannot read your mind, so you need to explain your own thoughts, ideas and analysis of the author(s) you are writing about as clearly as possible. You should assume that your audience is intelligent but not necessarily an expert in what you are writing about. Say things as clearly and as simply as you can -- you can't hide confused thoughts in big words, you'll only confuse yourself and your reader further.

Assignment of Grades:

"A" paper: An "A" paper displays a mastery of the topic and its theoretical context. It contains original thought and is written with no significant stylistic or grammatical errors. The argument is sound, substantive, organized; sources are used and cited appropriately.

"B" paper: A "B" paper demonstrates a good understanding of the topic, is well-written with no serious presentation or grammatical flaws. The argument is above-average in organization and analysis; it competently meets the objective of the assignment, but may not contain much original thought.

"C" paper: Writer has a reasonable grasp of the material and the paper is logically organized. The paper is descriptive rather than analytical and the ideas expressed are superficial and undeveloped. Some important themes may be overlooked.

"D" paper: Writer has a familiarity but not an understanding of the subject. Paper is disorganized, lacks structure and ideas are undeveloped and superficial. There are serious grammatical and presentation flaws.

Failing grades: Poor writing skills, grammar and spelling errors dominate. There is a lack of organization and the ideas are unrelated to the subject. Fails to meet the requirements of the assignment.

UVic Percentage Grading Scale

Undergraduate Grading Scale			
Passing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
A+	9	90 – 100	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
A	8	85 – 89	
A-	7	80 – 84	
B+	6	77 – 79	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
B	5	73 – 76	
B-	4	70 – 72	
C+	3	65 – 69	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
C	2	60 – 64	
D	1	50 – 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
COM	Excluded Grade	N/A	Complete (pass). Used only for 0-unit courses and those credit courses designated by the Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings.
CTN	Excluded Grade	N/A	Continuing . Denotes the first half of a full-year course.
Failing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description
E	0	0 – 49	Conditional supplemental. Supplemental examinations are not offered by all departments and the allowable percentage may vary by program (e.g. 35-49). Students will be advised whether supplemental will be offered and if the percentage range varies when assessment techniques are announced at the beginning of the course.
F	0	0 – 49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.
N	0	0 – 49	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.
N/X	Excluded Grade	N/A	Did not complete course requirements by the end of the term; no supplemental. Used only for Co-op work terms and for courses designated by Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. The grade is EXCLUDED from the calculation of all grade point averages.
F/X	Excluded Grade	N/A	Unsatisfactory performance. Completed course requirements; no supplemental. Used only for Co-op work terms and for courses designated by Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. The grade is EXCLUDED from the calculation of all grade point averages.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The responsibility of the institution - Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The responsibility of the student - Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student's transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University's policy on academic integrity, which can be found on pages 32-34 of the undergraduate calendar.

Any problems regarding the academic integrity of submitted assignments will be referred directly to the appropriate Department Chair and University policy will be followed.

For more information, see: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2015-09/GRAD/FARe/PoAcI.html>

The UVic Library has useful information on the appropriate use of sources and avoiding plagiarism at: <http://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/>

Be sure to consult the Centre for Academic Communication (formerly the Writing Centre): <http://www.uvic.ca/library/locations/home/learning/cac.php>

For more good advice about how to avoid plagiarism, see: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Accessibility

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSD – <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>) as soon as possible. The RCSD staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving our learning goals in this course.

Attendance, Assignments, and Grading:

The UVic Academic Calendar states: *“Students are expected to attend all classes in which they are enrolled.”* Any student who attends fewer than 70 percent of scheduled class sessions may be assigned a grade of “N” for the course. Students must complete all assignments (see Course Requirements) in order to get credit for the course.

Recording

If you prefer to record lectures or class exercises, or use any sort of device for images in the classroom, please ensure you follow the principles of prior, informed consent with the instructors and fellow students.

Course Experience Survey (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete a confidential course experience survey (CES) regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. When it is time for you to complete the survey, you will receive an email inviting you to do so. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to <http://ces.uvic.ca>. You will need to use your UVic NetLink ID to access the survey, which can be done on your laptop, tablet or mobile device. I will remind you nearer the time, but please be thinking about this important activity, especially the following three questions, during the course:

1. What strengths did your **instructor** demonstrate that helped you learn in this course?
2. Please provide specific suggestions as to how the **instructor** could have helped you learn more effectively.
3. Please provide specific suggestions as to how this **course** could be improved.

The Learning Environment:

The UVic Academic Calendar notes: *“The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to experience and the responsibility to help create such an environment.”* Students and have diverse views on the issues discussed in this course, and my role as an instructor is to create an environment in which all perspectives – including those of the instructor – can be analyzed critically in a respectful fashion.