

## ETHN 103: Environmental Racism

In-person Class: Tuesday 9:30-10:50am

Remote Lectures: Thursdays by 10am

Location:

Professor: Christopher Perreira

Email: [chperreira@ucsd.edu](mailto:chperreira@ucsd.edu)

Zoom Office Hours: TH 12-2pm or by appt:

### Course Description

This course offers a dynamic examination of what scholars and activists have called environmental racism. We will begin by working to define what this concept is meant to represent, how it is connected to but also different from other forms of racism and systems of oppression. From there, we'll look closely at the social and cultural movements, narratives, and theories that have emerged in response to environmental racism, including environmental justice (EJ), the environmental humanities, anti-colonial and Indigenous sciences, activism in relation to speculative fiction, graphic novels, and more. In this course, we'll have the opportunity to read, think, and talk about issues relating to race, space, and the environment, to take seriously the ways imagination and futurist thought are crucial to building better worlds, and to use that knowledge in and beyond the classroom. We will also work to broaden the concept of "the environment" to consider the ways in which the effects of racism have institutional and individual dimensions, ranging from health hazards associated with power and politics, economic disenfranchisement, the distribution of toxicity and pollution in the places of living, playing, and working, and how gentrification is connected to environmental health. Finally, we will explore the ways that cultural narratives engage various forms of environmental racism, and at the same time envision the conditions for resisting, challenging, and transforming them.

### Required Purchases

Sánchez, Rosaura & Beatrice Pita, *Keep Me Posted: Logins from Tomorrow*. Floricanto Press, 2020

### Optional Purchases (available as e-books via UCSD Library)

Butler, Octavia E., et al. *Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation*. New York: Abrams Comicarts, 2020.

Liboiron, Max. *Pollution is Colonialism*. Durham: Duke UP, 2021

Pellow, David Naguib. *What Is Critical Environmental Justice?* Polity Press, 2017.

Streeby, Shelley. *Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making through Science Fiction and Activism*. Berkeley: U California P, 2020

Sze, Julie, *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*. Berkeley: U California P, 2020

Wald, Sarah, et al. *Latinx Environmentalisms: Place, Justice, and the Decolonial*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2019

### Class Format

This is primarily an in-person class; however, to limit the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 and other contagious viruses, we will also follow UCSD's remote policy: "The current policy allows for up to 49 percent of instruction of non-R courses, not including office hours, to be taught remotely." (Return to Learn). For all in-person meetings, appropriate masks are required; you will be asked to

leave the classroom if you do not wear an appropriate mask. CDC and UCSD recommend the use of N-95 and KN-95 masks. Please review UCSD's Return to Learn [Masking and Operations](#) guidelines for more details. The course calendar below designates our in-person and remote courses, but the general pattern of meeting is as follows: **Tuesdays we will meet in-person in Peterson 102; Thursdays will be remote lectures.** Unless otherwise noted, recorded lectures will be uploaded to Canvas on Thursdays by 10am. In-person classes are on Tuesdays at the listed time: 9:30-10:50am.

### Discussion & Participation Formats

Our course is modeled on the “flipped classroom,” where even the order of operations is turned upside down. Each week you will attend in-person class on Tuesday and watch a related remote lecture on (or after) the following Thursday.

**Tuesdays:** Come to class having covered the assigned texts, identified concepts in need of clarification, and prepared for small groups to raise issues in need of further explanation. Group work will provide that space. In the last 20 minutes of class, **you will post in Canvas an exit reflection (50-100 words)**--a well-crafted question or problem for the entire class to consider, which I may address in the following lecture. Your reflections should demonstrate that you have read the texts in the form of specific details, problems, citations, page numbers, etc., and it should gesture to that day's group discussions. **Four exit reflection posts are required for full credit; you choose which weeks to post (no late posts accepted!).**

**Thursdays:** Watch the recorded remote lecture when it is posted (or before Friday by 5pm). In Canvas starting Week 3, respond to the prompts presented in the lecture (full instructions will be provided in Week 3). **Four lecture responses are required for full credit; you choose which weeks to respond to (no responses accepted once the week is over!).**

### Course Readings & Materials

Except for the speculative novel *Keep Me Posted* (starting Week 6; link to purchase the e-book is in Canvas), all course materials will be available through Canvas and/or available as e-books through UCSD libraries. If you wish to have a physical copy of any of the assigned texts, they can also be purchased at the UCSD bookstore or online.

### Assignments & Grading

Fulfilling the basic minimum of work for the following requirements will not result in an “A” grade. To earn a high grade for the course, you must be attentive to the thoughtfulness, quality, and punctuality of your assignments, and work respectfully with classmates and the instructor.

**\*Student Questionnaire: 2%** (Week 0-1)

**\*Discussion & Participation: 40%** (4 Tuesday reflections; 4 lecture responses)

Participate via discussions on Tuesdays during our scheduled class time. In these discussion meetings, be prepared to share your insights and questions about the readings. Generally, we will spend about 20 minutes of large group discussion, another 20 minutes in smaller groups, and then

reconvening as a group. The last 10-20 minutes of class time will be reserved for students to write exit reflections.

Participation, Discussion, and Exit Reflection Evaluation Guidelines:

- 5 points: Contributions reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive and provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class.
- 4 points: Contributions reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive and provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class.
- 3 points: Contributions reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion.

**\*Midterm – 20%** (details in Week 4)

**\*Final Creative Project or Academic Paper – 38%**

-Final Creative Project: Prepare a creative project that engages what we have taken up in our course. Examples include zines, recorded spoken word, paintings, game, or recorded performances. Be creative with the format! You might also consider making a very short music video, creating a comic book, or something that draws on your creative talents and/or academic interests. A two-page reflection on the creative project and about your class experience is part of this assignment.

-Academic Paper: Write a 1,000-word analysis of two of the primary texts from the course, with an emphasis on close reading. The argument should adhere to the themes of the course: what insights do the texts offer about race, gender, sexuality, and/or displacement in the context of environmental racism? What are the texts able to theorize that is unique to their genre or specific conversations?

Late assignments: No late assignments unless there is a documented emergency.

### **Policies, Procedures, and Resources**

The syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

COVID-19 pandemic: I invite you to communicate with me if you encounter difficulties with our class, especially to discuss alternatives related to coursework due to pandemic-related challenges. For UCSD campus resources, additional information is available at <https://returntolearn.ucsd.edu/info-for/students/index.html> and at <https://vcsa.ucsd.edu/news/covid-19/index.html>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Office for Students with Disabilities (<https://osd.ucsd.edu/>) coordinates appropriate accommodations for eligible students. OSD is located in University Center 202 and can be reached by phone at 858-534-4382 and by email at [osd@ucsd.edu](mailto:osd@ucsd.edu). I am available to discuss academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities – please be in communication with me as early as possible in the quarter.

Writing Support: In addition to writing support from your TA(s) and myself, additional assistance may be available through the Writing and Critical Expression Hub (<https://writinghub.ucsd.edu/>)

and the OASIS Language Arts Tutorial Program (<https://oasis.ucsd.edu/academic-services/lats-folder/index.html>).

Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in this course, is encouraged to contact [foodpantry@ucsd.edu](mailto:foodpantry@ucsd.edu) and [basicneeds@ucsd.edu](mailto:basicneeds@ucsd.edu). Additional information on food security, housing resources, and financial wellness can be found at <https://basicneeds.ucsd.edu/>.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): CAPS (<https://caps.ucsd.edu/>) provides services such as confidential counseling and consultations for psychiatric services and mental health programming.

Undocumented Student Services: The Undocumented Student Services Center (<https://uss.ucsd.edu/>) provides programs designed to help students overcome obstacles related to immigration status.

Audio/Visual Recordings in UCSD Learning Spaces:

No audio or visual recording is permitted without the *written approval* of the instructor and all others who may appear in the recording. Any recordings, should approval be granted, are for personal use for studying purposes only.

## Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

### Week 0: Course Introductions and Goals

Thurs. Sept. 22: Syllabus, introductions, expectations; complete Student Questionnaire (2%) before next Tuesday's class

### Week 1: Why Environmental Racism?

Prompt for the week: We'll introduce and take up the concept "environmental racism" as part of a much broader set of interlocking systems. We'll also begin working out our own definitions. One central question we'll attempt to answer: *Why "environmental racism" (ER)? What is the "environmental" in ER meant to stand in for and why is it different than other racisms?*

Tues. Sept. 27: In-person class. Before class, read "Introduction" and "Environment" in *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, eds. Joni Adamson, William Gleason, and David Pellow. New York: New York UP, 2016.

Thurs. Sept. 29: Watch Remote Lecture (Canvas)

### Week 2: In a Moment of Danger, part 1

Prompt for the week: Sze's book presents case studies to demonstrate particular instances of environmental racism, as well as community resistance to it. But there is also attention to broader patterns over place, time, identities, and responses from communities. The central questions we'll attempt to answer: *What impact does reading across these situations, categories, and histories show us? What keywords are presented and how useful are they for understanding ER?*

Tues. Oct. 4: In-person class. Before class, read the Introduction and Chapter 1 in Julie Sze, *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*, U of California P, 2021.

Thurs. Oct. 6: Remote Lecture (Canvas); read "Environmental Justice" in *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, eds. Joni Adamson, William Gleason, and David Pellow. New York: New York UP, 2016.

### Week 3: In a Moment of Danger, part 2

Tues. Oct. 11: In-person. Before class, read Chapters 2-3 and Conclusion in *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*.

Thurs. Oct. 13: Remote Lecture (Canvas); Read Conclusion in *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*.

### Week 4: What Is Critical Environmental Justice?

Tues. Oct. 18: In-person. **Midterm** details; Before class, read Chapters 1-2 in David Pellow, *What Is Critical Environmental Justice?*

Thurs. Oct. 20: Remote Lecture (Canvas); read Chapters 3-4 and Conclusion of *What Is Critical Environmental Justice?*

### **Week 5 Midterm**

Tues. Oct. 25: In-person. **Midterm**

Thurs. Oct. 27: Remote Lecture (Canvas); read J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “Patrick Wolfe on Settler Colonialism” in *Speaking of Indigenous Politics: Conversations with Activists, Scholars, and Tribal Leaders*

### **Week 6: Imagining Environmental Futures, part 2**

Tues. Nov. 1: In-person. before class, read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of Shelley Streeby, *Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making through Science Fiction and Activism*

Thurs. Nov. 3: **No class/lecture:** read Rosaura Sánchez & Beatrice Pita’s speculative fiction novel, *Keep Me Posted: Logins from Tomorrow* (pgs. TBD)

### **Week 7: Imagining Environmental Futures, part 3**

Tues. Nov. 8: In-person. Before class, read Sánchez & Pita, *Logins from Tomorrow* (pgs. TBD)

Thurs. Nov. 10: Remote Lecture (Canvas); finish *Logins from Tomorrow* (pgs. TBD); read selections from *Latinx Environmentalisms: Place, Justice, and the Decolonial*

### **Week 8: Pollution Is Colonialism, part 1**

Tues. Nov. 15: In-person. Final Project details; before class, read Introduction, Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism*

Thurs. Nov. 17: Recorded Lecture; read Chapter 1, *Pollution is Colonialism*

### **Week 9: Pollution Is Colonialism, part 2; Fall Break**

Tues. Nov. 21: In-person. Before class, read Chapter 2, *Pollution is Colonialism*

Thurs. Nov. 23: **No Class**

### **Week 10: Octavia Butler’s California on Fire**

Tues. Nov. 21: Last in-person discussion. Before class, read Octavia Butler’s speculative fiction novel *Parable of the Sower*

Tues. Nov. 29: **In-person.** Finish Octavia Butler’s speculative fiction novel *Parable of the Sower*. end of course wrap-up

**Final Projects Date and Time**

Thurs. Dec. 8, 2022: Final project/paper due by 11am.