

## **Ethnic Studies 103: Environmental Racism**

### **Summer Session II 2008**

**Instructor:** Traci Brynne Voyles

**Contact Information:** [tvoyles@ucsd.edu](mailto:tvoyles@ucsd.edu)

**Office Hours:** Monday, Wednesday 12:00-1:30, SSB 240 and by appointment

**Purpose:** This course is designed to explore issues germane to environmental racism and environmental injustice, particularly focusing on the theoretical and material implications of social constructions of identity (race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.) and nature that lead to the degradation of racialized environments, bodies, and communities. In this course, we will explore case studies of environmental injustice, theories of body, space, nation, and colonialism; and think through possibilities for resistance, sovereignty, and environmental justice. The course materials are derived from ethnic studies, environmental justice studies, and feminist theory to provide multiple interdisciplinary perspectives on the state of race, inequality, and environment.

**Logistics:** You can reach me by email, in my office hours, or by appointment at any time during Summer Session II. I respond to students' emails by 10am every weekday; I do not answer students' emails on weekends.

I do not accept late assignments or assignments submitted electronically.

This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced well in advance in class or by email.

Readings that are not in your course reader will be provided the week before they are due.

Please refer to the UCSD Principles of Community ([www.ucsd.edu/principles](http://www.ucsd.edu/principles)) for guidelines on standards of conduct and respect in the classroom. I reserve the right to excuse anyone from my classroom at any time for violating these principles.

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### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

- 15 points: Attendance and reading completion
- 10 points: In-class reading responses and homework assignments
- 10 points: Unit 1 Project (due in class August 13, Wed)
- 30 points: Unit 2 Paper (due in class August 27, Wed)
- 5 points: The View from UCSD Project
- 30 points: Unit 3 Paper (due by 3pm, September 6, Sat)

**Unit 1 Project** For this project, you will work both in a group (4 people MAX) and individually. 5 points will be earned by doing a group presentation of your assigned case, explaining to the class in less than 10 minutes the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your case. Your group will produce a 1 page, bullet-pointed informative analysis of the case in a style that could or would be distributed publicly. NO POWERPOINTS OR MEDIA THAT DOES NOT FIT ONTO THE 1 PAGE—on the 1page, however, you can use graphics to convey major points about the case.

The remaining 5 points will be earned by turning in a 500 word paper that links your case to course readings.

**Unit 2 Paper (1000-1250 words)** The prompt for this paper will be distributed one week before it is due. The prompt will require you to critically analyze course readings, lectures, and discussions from Unit 2.

**The View from UCSD** For this project, you will present a creative project of your choosing that explores themes of environmental racism and injustice from your viewpoint—that is, of a UCSD student. What is the relationship of UCSD as an academic institution to environmental injustice? How can (or how have) UCSD students contest and resist the perpetuation or funding of environmental injustices by their academic institutions? This project can be poetry, visual art, activist literature (i.e. brochures, web sites, pamphlets, etc.), political cartoons, activist alert bulletins, journalistic articles or photographic essays, etc.

**Unit 3 Paper (1000-1250 words)** The prompt for this paper will be distributed one week before it is due. The prompt will require you to think cumulatively about the course and apply materials and key themes from Units 1 and 2 to the readings, lectures, and discussions from Unit 3.

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**UNIT 1: What's the Problem Here? Case Studies in Environmental Racism and Environmental Injustice** In this unit, we will explore four major thinking “tools” that will be used throughout the course: racial thinking, global thinking, intersectional thinking, and relational thinking. These tools will frame the ways in which we understand and explore cases of environmental injustice.

**August 4, Mon: Racial Thinking: Environmental Racism—the Newtown Story**

Read: Pages 1-22

**August 6, Wed: Global Thinking**

Read: Pages 23-72

**August 8, Fri: Intersectional Thinking**

Read: Pages 73-90; also Castillo, *So Far From God*, pp. 170-189.

**August 11, Mon: Relational Thinking: Where Does it Come From, Where Does it Go?**

Read: Pages 91-132

**\*August 13, Wed: Analyzing Contemporary Case Studies**

Due: Case study presentation and short paper

Read: Articles available via email

**UNIT 2: How to Use Environmental Justice Studies: Analytic Frameworks and Theoretical Possibilities** This unit moves us from the material effects of environmental racism and injustice to the analytic frameworks and theoretical possibilities of environmental justice studies. In this unit, we will read, discuss, and develop theories about how racialization and naturalization work together, what role the environment

plays in colonial encounters, and how to re-imagine what we mean by “nature,” “race” and “body.”

**August 15, Fri: Cannibal Colonialism**

Read: Pages 133-168

**August 18, Mon: Beasts, Brutes, and Scientists: the Naturalization of Race**

Read: Pages 169-208

**August 20, Wed: No Hippies Here: Deconstructing “Race,” “Nature” and Environmentalism**

Read: Pages 209-244

**August 22, Fri: What IS an Environment? Cyborgs, Bodies, and Bodies Politic**

Read: Pages 245-286

**August 25, Mon: Landscapes, Maps, and Borders**

Read: Pages 287-306, also King, “Deconstructing Squ\*aw,”

**UNIT 3: Decolonize This! Modes of Resistance to Environmental Injustice** This unit is dedicated to the all-important question of where to go from here? Now that we understand the material and theoretical ins and outs of environmental racism and injustice, how can and how is it being contested, resisted, and undone?

**\*August 27, Wed: Politics**

Due: Unit 2 Paper

Read: Pages 307-334

**August 29, Fri: Poetics**

Read: Pages 335-358, also Silko, *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, pp. 13-47.

**September 1, Mon: Sovereignty**

Read: Pages 359-378

**September 3, Wed: NO CLASS**

**\*September 5, Fri: Conclusions: The View from UCSD**

Due: The View from UCSD Project

**\*UNIT 3 PAPER DUE ON OR BEFORE: September 6, Saturday, 3pm**

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**Guidelines for written assignments:**

*\*Please note: rubrics for more specific requirements for content, quality, and style will be included with each prompt.*

The three papers required for this course must:

- Be typed
- Be stapled
- Include a word count at the end
- Have a heading with your name and the name of the assignment
- Be turned in on time

Please do not include:

- A title
- The assignment prompt

The paper can be double- or single-spaced, whichever you prefer. If possible, **please** use front and back.

**Assignment Checklist:**

- ☐ **Unit 1 Project** due Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>
  - o **10 minute presentation and handout** (5 points)
  - o **500 word paper** (5 points)
- ☐ **Unit 2 Paper (1000-1250 words)** due Wednesday, August 27<sup>th</sup> (30 points)
- ☐ **The View from UCSD Project** due Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup> (5 points)
- ☐ **Unit 3 Paper (1000-1250 words)** due Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup> by 3pm

**Group Member Information:**

1. email:
2. email:
3. email: