

Environmental History: Race and Resources

Spring Quarter 2011

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Office hours Wednesday 10am-12pm, SSB 249 or by appointment

Territory is no doubt a geographical notion, but it's first of all a juridico-political one:
the area controlled by a certain kind of power.

Soil is a historico-geological notion.

Horizon is a pictorial, but also a strategic notion.

-Michel Foucault

Course description This course explores the relationships between peoples and environments, focusing on the roles of resources (natural and human), identity, power relations, and geography in order to understand the development of unequal access to environmental resources among populations in the US. We will explore the theoretical and material implications of social constructions of identity and nature that lead to the degradation of racialized environments, bodies, and communities, using theories of body, space, nation, and colonialism; and think through possibilities for resistance, sovereignty, and environmental justice.

Required texts Weekly required texts are available by electronic reserve. Please note that the reading schedule is subject to change; any changes will be announced well in advance by email or by WebCT.

You are also required to subscribe to the New York *Times* for the quarter (www.nytimes.com). You may choose to read the paper at Geisel Library in lieu of a subscription, and you may share a subscription with another student, but you may **not** use the online version of the paper. For more details, see the assignment description below.

All readings must be completed by class time on Tuesday the week they are assigned.

Assignments and expectations Points will be awarded as follows:

New York *Times* project 25 points

One Step project 25 points

Attendance and participation 15 points

Preliminary research report 10 points

Final research project 25 points

New York Times project During the quarter, the *Times* will be one of your required texts. Every weekday you will read the paper in its entirety, and pick out the articles that are relevant to the topics of race and resources. You will write a thorough summary of each article, with proper citation (date and page number). Please keep in mind that this assignment is meant as a *daily* reading and writing practice. *You may not use the online version of the paper.*

One Step project In collaboration with a group of 2-3 students, you will develop a policy proposal to solve the problem of global environmental racism in **one** step. As a group, your job will be to choose one step, and explain its ramifications for environmental and racial justice. Think creatively. Be prepared to defend your step. Remember: this project is designed for BIG IDEAS. In Weeks 5 & 6, each group will present and defend its idea, and turn in a 6-8 page proposal explaining the step and its potential for resolving wide-ranging problems of environmental injustice.

Final research project This project will be undertaken throughout the quarter, either individually or in pairs. You will select a research topic, write a **preliminary research report** of 5-7 pages with an annotated bibliography (due Thursday of Week 7), and develop a research project presentation. You may choose any format to present the research (spoken word, powerpoint lecture, poster, theater, roundtable discussion, conference paper, film, etc.) but you must turn in a final research report and analysis with a full bibliography. The projects will be presented during our final exam time.

Schedule

Unit 1: The modern colonial order of things

Week 1 – 3/29, 3/31 Introduction: race, nature, and the production of difference

- Donald Moore, Anand Pandian, and Jake Kosek, "Introduction: the Cultural Politics of Race and Nature," from *Race, Nature, and the Politics of Difference* [ER]
- James Scott, "Introduction," *Seeing Like a State* [ER]
- Carolyn Merchant, "Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History" [ER]

Week 2 – 4/5, 4/7 Race, resources, and property

- John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, "Of Political Power," "Of the State of Nature," "Of Slavery," "Of Property," "Of Paternal Power," "Of Conquest" [<http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/locke/>]
- Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as property," [ER]
- Grace Hong, "Something Forgotten Which Should Have Been Remembered": Private Property and Cross-Racial Solidarity in the Work of Hisaye Yamamoto" [ER]

Week 3 – 4/12, 4/14 Colonialism = thingification: things and their uses in the colonial order

- Franz Fanon, “Concerning Violence,” *The Wretched of the Earth* [ER]
- C.L.R. James, “Prologue,” “The Property,” & “The Owners,” *The Black Jacobins* [ER]

Unit 2: Deploying frameworks of the modern colonial order of things

Week 4 – 4/19, 4/21 (Eco) Biopower: land as body

- Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, pp. 1-74 [ER]
- Richard White, “Describing Squ*w” [ER]

Week 5 – 4/26, 4/28 (Eco) Biopower continued: body as land?

Thursday 4/28: One Step project presentations

- Charles Mills, *Black Trash* [ER]

Week 6 – 5/3, 5/5 Mapping & the American self: the production of space & history

Tuesday 5/3: One Step project presentations

Thursday 5/5: Library Research Practicum, meet in Geisel Library Computer Classroom

- Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, Chapters 1 & 3-6 [ER]
- Raymond Craib, “Introduction,” *Cartographic Mexico* [ER]
- Traci Brynne Voyles, “Intimate Cartographies” [ER]

Unit 3: The uses of space, land, and bodies through and against colonialism

Week 7 – 5/10, 5/12 Anti-coloniality & land claims

Thursday 5/12: preliminary research report due

- “Order by the Commander of the Military Division of the Mississippi, IN THE FIELD, SAVANNAH, GA., January 16th, 1865” [ER]
- Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund, “Significant Dates of Black Land Loss and Land Acquisition” [<http://www.federationsoutherncoop.com/landloss.htm>]
- Melvin Oliver & Thomas Shapiro, *Black Wealth, White Wealth* [ER]
- Jake Kosek, “Deep Roots and Long Shadows” [ER]

Week 8 – 5/17, 5/19 Anti-colonial land claims, continued

- Mishuana Goeman, “Notes toward a Native Feminism’s Spatial Practice,” [ER]
- Traci Brynne Voyles, *Decolonizing Cartographies*, Introduction, Chapter 4 & Conclusion [Roger]

Week 9 – 5/24, 5/26 Environmental history & environmental justice

- William Cronon, “The Uses of Environmental History,” [ER]

- Simon Dalby, “Ecological Politics, Violence, and the Theme of Empire” [ER]
- Executive Order 12898 [ER]

Week 10 – 5/31, 6/2 Environmental history & environmental justice, continued

- Readings TBA

Finals week

Final project symposium: Tuesday 6/7, 7:00-10:00pm