

ETHNIC STUDIES 189: RACIAL ECOLOGIES AND CULTURES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Monday 5-7:50, 148 Sequoyah

Professor Shelley Streeby; Email: sstreeby@ucsd.edu; Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-3:30



Course Description: This class focuses on race, indigeneity, ecology, and climate change through an Ethnic Studies lens, which illuminates interdisciplinary and activist environmental histories. We will take an intersectional approach, emphasizing the significance of critical feminist, queer, race, disability, decolonial, and animal studies to debates about the environment, ecologies, and climate change. We will study struggles over resource extraction, food sovereignty, and environmental destruction and analyze how environmental hazards are distributed unequally. We will also talk about why ecologies and climate change are important subjects for the field of Ethnic Studies and how social movements are making ecological issues part of an intersectional practice. We will pay special attention to how artists, writers, filmmakers, social movement organizers, and activists use culture to imagine different worlds and futures in the face of colonialism, environmental injustices, and drastic changes to the climate.

Topics to be addressed include US-Mexico border ecologies and the documentary form; film, video, art, and theory about Indigenous resistance to resource extraction in the Americas; rethinking environmental justice movements in relation to race, sexuality, and disability; urban farming and community gardens as alternate world-making; Indigenous science and the Standing Rock struggle over the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL); slow violence and cultures of climate change; and race, sexuality, and animal rights activism. During the last four weeks of the class we will read two novels: Octavia E. Butler's 1993 classic, *Parable of the Sower*, a coming of age story set in a near future Los Angeles transformed by climate change, and Karen Joy Fowler's 2013 novel (recently made into an upcoming HBO mini-series starring Natalie Portman) *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, which takes up animal rights activism and the relations between human and non-human animals through a coming of age story about a UC Davis student who, as a young girl, was raised with a chimpanzee sister.

Our once a week, two hour and fifty-minute time frame will allow us to study film and video, fiction, art, and theory in depth together during class time. The class will be run as a discussion seminar with mini-lectures and assignments such as short blog posts, in-class writings, brief

keywords presentations, and a final paper and/or project rather than a traditional mid-term and final. At the end of the quarter, students will understand the important flashpoints and key questions in the history of Ethnic Studies approaches to ecologies and climate change. They will also have experience explaining their ideas through public-facing work such as blog posts and the creation of a final paper and/or project centering their own interdisciplinary research in relation to required course materials.

Course Materials:

Will be available at UCSD Bookstore:

1. *Racial Ecologies*. (2018). Co-edited by Leilani Nishime and Kim Hester Williams.
2. *Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making through Science Fiction and Activism*. (2018). By Shelley Streeby
3. *Parable of the Sower* (1993). By Octavia E. Butler.
4. *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (2013). By Karen Joy Fowler.

Electronically available on TED or Library Reserves: Other Required Readings and most other course materials are digital. If you are unable to access TED, please contact ACMS, and get the readings from a colleague. For class, please print out and bring the readings to class or bring a device to access them for exercises and discussions.

Available on eReserve: All of the films as well as the *Keywords for Environmental Studies* reader are available through library course eReserves located here (must use single sign-on): <https://reserves.ucsd.edu/ares/>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (With special thanks to Professor Aimee Bahng):

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (20%)

Students must complete all of the required readings and screenings before the class meeting for which they are assigned. Your active responses will provide the foundation for our class discussions. Class discussion is really important because I want to help you work on developing and articulating your ideas about what you read and screen. Improving each student's ability to articulate ideas effectively in public is one of the goals of this class; for most people this takes practice, rather than being something that comes naturally. Also, we will all learn more by encountering many different ideas about the topics we are studying. I expect each member of the class to take seriously the seminar's collective project of respectfully engaging and responding to the ideas of the participants. I will take attendance every time class meets. I will take notes on student contributions to discussion and will give you credit in my evaluations of your work. Please also bring writing materials to class as I will sometimes ask you to do short in-class writings. Computers and other electronic devices may only be used to access the readings since using them in class for other reasons can be disruptive. Satisfactory completion of the class requires attendance and the timely completion of all assignments. Please come to class on time. Try your best not to miss any seminars this quarter unless you are ill or something serious comes up, since we only meet once a week and there is no class Week 9, the Memorial Day holiday.

BLOG POSTS (50%)

I will ask you to write 5 Blog Posts. I will announce in lecture when the Blog prompts are available on TritonEd; usually one week ahead of the due date. These Blog Posts are designed to give you practice writing in a public mode and to help you actively respond to the reading and other assignments. The aim of these assignments is to give students space to explore new ideas,

raise questions, develop insights, and think critically. Blog posts must be a minimum of 800 words and include at least one image. They must be posted by 3 PM on the due date and you must also bring a hard copy to class. Late submissions will not be accepted. *Please note:* Blog entries are not summaries of the reading and students should not summarize the plot in their entries. Instead, use the Blog Post as a way to pursue a question or idea in relation to the prompt.

BRIEF KEYWORDS IN-CLASS PRESENTATION (5%)

Beginning Week 3, each day of class will open with a five-minute keyword tutorial, wherein one of you will teach a term of your choosing (other than the few I am assigning as required reading over the quarter) from the *Keywords for Environmental Studies* reader, available through Reserves for our course as well as through the UCSD library as an electronic text. Sign up for a day on which to present your keyword and figure out how to bring the keyword into conversation with the other assigned readings for the day. The goal is to use your keyword presentation as a jumping off point for the rest of the day's discussion.

TUMBLR (5%)

The course tumblr is a space for us to extend our conversations beyond class and to share with one another things we encounter in our reading, viewing, and lives that intersect with our in-class discussions. The point of the assignment is to provide an informal way for us to apply what we are learning to our everyday encounters with questions about racial ecologies and cultures of climate change. The tumblr should not be a space of anxiety, but rather a low-stakes form of engaging with the course, the instructor, and your peers. At least once a week, set a timer for 15 minutes, during which time you will search online for stories about racial ecologies and climate change. Navigate your way to a topic or breaking news story that interests you and post about the Ethnic Studies implications of the story in our course tumblr. Over the course of the term, aim for 8-10 posts. While thoughtful and frequent contributors will enjoy an added bonus, participating in this space can only *help* your participation grade. Think of it as a supplement to in-class discussion. If you didn't have a chance to say something in class or were still working something out, post those thoughts to the tumblr. The minimum expectation is that you post once per week (with perhaps one week off), but some enthusiastic users may post daily, and still others may post in fits and spurts. You may and are encouraged to comment on other posts. Note: Irresponsible and/or hostile posts are unacceptable and will have proportionally adverse effects on your overall grade. The Tumblr is called ETHN 189 Racial Ecologies and Cultures of Climate Change and the password is UCSDETHN189. I'll send an email invitation to each one of you to join as you add the class.

FINAL PAPER/PROJECT (20% of final grade): Each student will submit a final paper and/or project by **Monday June 10 at 2pm** on our TED course website. I will provide a range of options for either an analytical or a creative paper/project. For an analytical paper, students will be expected to analyze and engage various authors' arguments, synthesize them, and offer an original conclusion in 6-8 pages. I will also offer creative prompts that require you to engage the material through a creative project and a brief maker's statement (3 pages) connecting it to required texts. Paper/project prompts will be distributed three weeks in advance of the final deadline. Papers and maker's statements must conform to MLA or APA style conventions and must include a bibliography page.

Extra Credit: There will be a number of speakers invited to campus. For extra credit, attend the lecture, take notes on it, then write up a 1-2 page single-spaced response paper (part recap of the main argument, questions, and examples; part analysis/engagement with the ideas presented). Dates, times, and locations for these events will be announced in class. You may also ask me to approve a lecture I have overlooked for an extra-credit write-up. You can also revise one Blog Post by the end of the quarter and I will replace the original grade with the grade for the revision.

ADA Statement: If you have a disability or condition that compromises your ability to complete the requirements of this course, you should inform me as soon as possible of your needs. I will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate you. If, as a result of a disability, you cannot accept the content or terms of this syllabus, you need to notify me in writing within one week of receiving it.

Ground Rules: The number one ground rule to which we will all adhere is to engage in respectful and considerate debate and discussion in the classroom. Abusive and harsh language will not be tolerated. These ground rules are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community, which we are all expected to follow (see <http://wwwvcba.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>).

Cheating and Plagiarism: Cheating and/or plagiarism are not tolerated behaviors at UCSD. If you are caught cheating, it will result in a failing grade and your infraction will be referred to your college for disciplinary action. If there is any suspicion that your paper or assignments have been plagiarized, the case will be forwarded to the dean of your college for further investigation and appropriate disciplinary action.

Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD: Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of interest yet do not realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, creative writing, education, medicine, public health, social work, counseling, film-making, journalism, government and politics, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact: Mónica Rodriquez, de Cabaza, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor 858-534-3277 or nmrodriquez@ucsd.edu, or visit www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 Monday April 1 Racial Ecologies and Cultures of Climate Change
Course Introductions

Week 2 Monday April 8 Racial Ecologies

READ Curtis Marez, Foreword: “Racial Ecologies: A View from Ethnic Studies”; LeiLani Nishime and Kim D. Hester Williams, Introduction: “Why Racial Ecologies?” and Afterword: “Collective Struggle, Collective Ecologies”; Julie Sze, “Denormalizing Embodied Toxicity: The Case of Kettleman City” from *Racial Ecologies*, ix-xiv, 3-15, 107-122, 250-254

READ: Selection from *Keywords for Environmental Studies*: Introduction; Seidler and Bowa,

“Ecology”; Alston, “Environment,” 1-5, 71-75, 93-96

READ: Sharada Balachandran Orihuela and Andrew Carl Hageman, “The Virtual Realities of US/Mexico Border Ecologies in *Maquilapolis* and *Sleep Dealer*,” 166-185

WATCH BEFORE CLASS: *Maquilapolis* (Vicki Funari and Sergio de la Torre)

Week 3 Monday April 15 Resource Extraction and Earth Beings

READ Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*. Duke UP, 2017 (Preface, Introduction, Chapter 4, and Conclusion)

READ Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*. Duke UP 2015 (Preface, Story 2, and Epilogue)

WATCH IN CLASS: *Yuma, Land of Friends* (Caycedo, 2014)

Blog Post #1 Due

Week 4 Monday April 22 Rethinking Environmental Justice Movements

READ Di Chiro, “Environmental Justice” and Sandilands, “Queer Ecology” in *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, 100-105, 169-71

READ Laura Pulido, “Geographies of race and ethnicity II: Environmental racism, racial capitalism and state-sanctioned violence” from *Progress in Human Geography* 2017, Vol. 41(4), 524–533

READ David Pellow, “Black Lives Matter as an Environmental Justice Challenge” from *Du Bois Review*, 1-15

READ Jesse Quizar, “Working to Live: Black-Led Farming in Detroit’s Racialized Economy” from *Racial Ecologies*, 76-89

READ Alison Kafer, “Bodies of Nature: The Environmental Politics of Disability” from *Disability Studies and the Environmental Humanities*, 201-241

In-Class Writing Today

Week 5 Monday April 29 Indigenous Science

READ Kyle Powys Whyte, “Indigeneity” from *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, 143-146

READ Robin Wall Kimmerer, “Learning the Grammar of Animacy,” *Leopold Review* (2012), 4-9

READ Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* excerpts (through page 21)

READ Kimmerer, *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*, Preface, 1-34, 69-81, 100-162.

Blog Post #2 Due

Week 6 Monday May 6 Indigenous Movements/Speculative Futures

READ Shelley Streeby, “Introduction” and Chapter 1, “#NoDAPL: Native American and Indigenous Science, Fiction, and Futurisms,” *Imagining the Future of Climate Change* (2018), 1-68

READ Nick Estes, Preface and Selections, *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (2019)

READ Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, “Introduction” to *A Nation Rising: Hawaiian Movements for Life, Land, and Sovereignty* (2014), 1-33

In-Class Writing Today

Week 7 Monday May 13 Cultures of Climate Change I

READ Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* through page 149 (stop at 2027)

READ Rob Nixon, Introduction, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), 1-44

READ Min Hyoung Song, “The Artful Things of Climate Change” from *Racial Ecologies*, 50-61

In-Class Writing Today

Week 8 Monday May 20 Cultures of Climate Change II

READ Butler, *Parable of the Sower* through the end.

READ Streeby, Chapter 2, “Climate Refugees in the Greenhouse World: Archiving Global Warming with Octavia E. Butler,” and Chapter 3, “Climate Change as a World Problem: Shaping Change in the Wake of Disaster” from *Imagining the Future of Climate Change*, 69-126

READ Aimee Bahng, “Plasmodial Improprieties: Octavia E. Butler, Slime Molds, and Imagining a Femi-Queer Commons” from *Queer Feminist Science Studies: A Reader*, 310-325

Blog Post #4 Due

Week 9 NO CLASS Memorial Day Holiday Non-Human Animals and Us

READ Karen Joy Fowler, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* through page 154

READ Stacey Alaimo, “Animal” from *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, 9-13

WATCH *Project Nim* (Marsh, 2011)

Week 10 Monday June 3 Species Matters

READ Fowler, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* to the end

READ Hua and Ahuja, “Chimpanzee Sanctuary: “Surplus” Life and the Politics of Transspecies Care” (2013), 619-637

READ Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, “Animal: New Directions in the Theorization of Race and Post-Humanism” (2013), 669-68

Blog Post #5 Due

Final Papers Due: Monday June 10, 2019 by 2:00 pm uploaded to TED course website.