The U.S. consumes over 40% of the world’s gasoline and more paper, steel, aluminum, energy, water, & meat per capita than any other society. Seven additional planets would be needed if each of the Earth’s inhabitants consumed at the level of the average American.

Who is most hurt by environmental degradation and abuse and who benefits? In this course we’ll examine what contemporary world literature has to say about environmental racism, ecofeminism, toxic colonialism, homophobia and the social construction of nature, globalization, food justice, and urban ecological issues. We will ask: What is the role of art in the struggle for social change?

Reading includes authors from diverse racial and national locations—Zambia, South Africa, multicultural U.S., India, Malawi, Nigeria, China, Canada, Guatemala. Our study will focus on the intersection of environmental issues and various systems of social injustice, especially racism, sexism, and economic inequity. Primary texts include films, essays, poems, and the following novels and stories: Helena María Viramontes, Under the Feet of Jesus; Zakes Mda, Ways of Dying; Awiakta, Selu; Mo Yan, “Iron Child”; Rigoberta Menchú, “Death of Her Little Brother in the Finca”; Margaret Atwood, Oryx and Crake; and Mahasweta Devi, “Paddy Seeds.”

This course meets a number of articulated English Department objectives, especially in its emphasis on critical thinking, historical and socio-political contexts, and diverse aesthetics. Above all, the goal of this course is empowerment for social change. How can each of us participate as a change agent in the struggle for environmental justice, locally and globally? How can our understanding of literature contribute? Group work, a field trip, one paper, and active class discussion will be important parts of the course.
Required Texts:
Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*
Marilou Awiakta, *Selu: Seeking the Corn Mother’s Wisdom*
Robert Bullard, ed. *Confronting Environmental Racism*
Zakes Mda, *Ways of Dying*
Helena Maria Viramontes, *Under the Feet of Jesus*

Course Packet (Please purchase at Gnomon on Boston Ave, Hillside; open Mon-Fri 8-5)

Films on Reserve for our course in Tisch Library AV & streamed on Trunk:

- *Chemical Valley*
- *Bhopal*
- *Exporting Harm*
- *In the Light of Reverence*
- *Farmingville*
- *The Last Mountain*
- *Thirst*
- *Life and Debt*
- *Food Inc.*
- *Toxic Racism*
- *Darwin’s Nightmare*
- *Uranium*
- *Maquilapolis: City of Factories*
- *Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai*

Books on Reserve for our course in Tisch Library (in addition to our primary texts):

- Alkon, Allison Hope, and Julian Agyeman, eds. *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability.*
- Agyeman, Julian. *Sustainable Communities and the Challenge of Environmental Justice.*
- Ammons, Elizabeth. *Brave New Words: How Literature Will Save the Planet.*
- Brown, Lester R. *Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth.*
- Davis, Mike. *Late Victorian Holocauasts.*
- Gaard, Greta, and Patrick Murphy, eds. *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism.*
- Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle.*
- Mander, Jerry, and Edward Goldsmith, eds. *The Case Against the Global Economy.*
- Shiva, Vandana. *Biopiracy*  
  -----------------------. *Soil Not Oil*.
**Course requirements:**
regular attendance (no unexcused absences)
faithful reading & viewing
class participation (including one conference before Spring Break: just stop in)
weekly 1-2 page response paper (use scrap paper; if 2 pages, you must double side)*
one co-teaching unit**
group social action project***
one 15 page paper
open book, open notes final exam

* **Weekly Response Paper:**
For one of our meetings each week, after you complete the reading and/or viewing, write a 1-2 page response to hand in at the beginning of class. All response papers must be word processed. Sometimes there will be an assigned focus for your response, but usually it will be open. When it is, you may do any of the following: look closely at an issue, topic, or section of a text; reflect on your own feelings, experience, and reactions to issues and ideas; try out an interpretation of some aspect of a text; link a text to other texts in and out of our course; think about your life, political position and action plans for the future vis a vis the material. Your goal is to engage the material and put some of your thoughts down on paper before coming to class. **Only one response paper may be handed in per week.** In the week you co-teach you do not hand in a response paper.

**** **Co-teaching Unit:**
As part of our collaborative learning, students will work together to create part of our class on certain days. On your co-teaching day, your group will teach our assigned reading/viewing for 45 minutes of the class period. Your co-teaching team will decide what you want the class to focus on, what your pedagogical goal is, and how you will achieve that goal—how you will engage the class in the material. You might decide to bring in outside materials or hand outs. You might choose to present a short lecture (being sure each of you speaks) and then lead discussion. You might want to try something innovative such as a case study or a class role play. More instructions will be provided, but the goal is to spread the authority in the class and create opportunities during class time for collaborative peer learning and teaching.

*** **Group Social Action Project:**
Since our goal is empowerment for social change, it is important not only to learn about issues but also to gain hands-on experience working together as allies and change agents. The course will end with students working together as allies on an environmental justice issue of the group’s choice and engaging in social action. More specifics about this assignment will be provided.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation (incl. co-teaching)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Th 1/17  Introduction

Material listed for each date should be read/viewed before class on that day.

Part 1: DEFINING ISSUES

What’s Race/Sex/Class Got To Do With It?

Tu 1/22  Uranium (film, 48 min., streamed on Trunk)
Audre Lorde, “Every Traveler Has One Vermont Poem” (packet)
Janice Mirikitani, “When There Is Talk of War” (packet)
Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., “Foreword” (Bullard)
Robert D. Bullard, “Introduction” & “Anatomy of Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement” (Bullard)

Th 1/24  Testimonies from Doris Bradshaw, Sterling Gollogeran, Edgar Mouton, Alberto Saldamando, Paul Smith (packet)
Namwali Serpell, “The Man with the Hole in His Face” (packet)
Laura Pulido, “Sustainable Development at Ganados del Valle” (Bullard)
Janice Mirikitani, “Graciella” (packet)
Simon Ortiz, “That’s the Place Indians Talk About” (packet)
Exporting Harm (film, 23 min., streamed on Trunk)

Tu 1/29  In the Light of Reverence (film, 77 min., streamed on Trunk)
Peggy McIntosh, “Unpacking the Invisible Backpack” (packet)
Gloria Yamato, “Something About the Subject Makes It Hard to Name” (packet)
Angelo Ancheta, “Race Relations in Black and White” (packet)

Th 1/31  Life and Debt (film, 80 min., streamed on Trunk)
Steve Chimombo, “The Rubbish Heap” (packet)
Evelyn C. White, “Black Women and the Wilderness” (packet)
“Principles of Environmental Justice” (packet)
Simon Ortiz, “Welcome to America the Mall” (packet)
Tu 2/5  Beverly Daniel Tatum, “Talking About Race, Learning About Racism: The Application of Racial Identity Development Theory in the Classroom” (hand out)
Narmada Bachao Andolon, “The People’s Manifesto” (packet)
Adrienne Rich, “For the Record” & “North American Time” (packet)

The Role of Art
Th 2/7  Helena María Viramontes, Under the Feet of Jesus (first half)
Tu 2/12  Under the Feet of Jesus (completed)
Farmingville (film, 78 min., streamed on Trunk)
Th 2/14  Bhopal (film, 52 min, streamed on Trunk)
Jayanta Mahapatra, # 24 from Dispossessed Nests: The 1984 Poems (pckt)
Tu 2/19  Zakes Mda, Ways of Dying
Th 2/24  (no class: Monday schedule at Tufts)
Tu 2/26  Ruth Perry, “Engendering Environmental Thinking: A Feminist Analysis of the Present Crisis” (packet)
Mei Mei Evans, “‘Nature’ and Environmental Justice” (packet)
Annie Proulx, “Brokeback Mountain” (packet)
Th 2/28  Wangari Maathai, “The Linkage Between Patenting of Life Forms, Genetic Engineering, and Food Scarcity” (packet)
Mike Davis, “Preface” to Late Victorian Holocausts (packet)
Chemical Valley (film, 58 min., streamed on Trunk)
Janice Mirikitani, “Love Canal” (packet)
Tu 3/5  Margaret Atwood, Oryx and Crake (first half)
Th 3/7  Oryx and Crake completed
Tu 3/12  Darwin’s Nightmare (film, 110 min, streamed on Trunk)
Th 3/14  Mahasweta Devi, “Paddy Seeds” (packet)

(Spring Break)

Part 2: EMBRACING SOLUTIONS
# Social Action: Analysis, Alliance, Coalition

**Tu 3/26**

What Does It Mean To Be a Change Agent?  
Audre Lorde, “The Uses of Anger” (packet)  
Amy Edgington, “Moving Beyond White Guilt” (packet)  
Lorna Dee Cervantes, “Poem for the Young White Man Who Asked Me How I, an Intelligent, Well-read Person Could Believe in the War Between Races” (packet)  
“Coal’s Ascent is Igniting a Debate” (packet)  
James H. Cone, “Whose Earth Is It, Anyway?” (packet)  
Ken Saro Wiwa, “To Mandy Garner” & “Summing-up: Defense Statement” (packet)  
Michael Albert, “Stop Whining, Start Winning,” “Sustaining Radicalism,” & “What Are We Waiting For?” (packet)

**Th 3/28**

*Thirst* (film, 62 min., streamed on Trunk)  
Cynthia Hamilton, “Coping with Industrial Exploitations” (Bullard)  
Andrew Leong, “The Struggle Over Parcel C: How Boston’s Chinatown Won a Victory in the Fight Against Institutional Expansionism and Environmental Racism” (packet)  
Andrea Smith, “Environmental Racism and Sexism” (packet)  
Simon Ortiz, “To Change Life in a Good Way” (packet)  
Russell Means, “The Same Old Song” (packet)

**Tu 4/2**

Joni Seager, “Patriarchal Vandalism: Militaries and the Environment” (packet)  
Dana Alston and Nicole Brown, “Global Threats to People of Color” (Bullard)  
H. Patricia Hynes, “Consumption: North American Perspectives” (packet)  
*Food Inc.* (film, 93 min, streamed on Trunk)  
Chris Carroll, “High-Tech Trash” (packet)  
Janice Mirikitani, “Assaults and Invasions” (packet)

**Th 4/4**

EJ Field Trip to ACE (Alternatives for Community and Environment)

**Tu 4/9**

Mo Yan, “Iron Child” (packet)  
*Maquilapolis: City of Factories* (film, 68 min., streamed on Trunk)  
Jim Tarter, “Some Live More Downstream than Others: Cancer, Gender, and Environmental Justice” (packet)  
Lisa Lebduska, “How Green Was My Advertising: American Ecoconsumerism” (packet)
April J. Taylor, “High-Tech, Pop-a-Pill Culture: ‘New’ Forms of Social Control for Black Women” (packet)
Janice Mirikitani, “Shadow in Stone” (packet)

### Relearning from the Earth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Lecture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>Vandana Shiva, “Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Forest” (packet) and “Politics of Change” (packet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>Marilou Awiakta, <em>Selu</em> (first half)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td><em>Selu</em> (completed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>Rigoberta Menchú, “An Eight-Year-Old Agricultural Worker,” “Death of Her Little Brother in the Finca,” &amp; “Ceremonies for Sowing Time and Harvest” (packet) Final exam described</td>
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### Taking Action

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>Class Social Action Last day of class</td>
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Final Exam: ______________________