

The Growth Imperative, Global Ecology, and Women's Health

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Course Description

Over the past half-century, scholars have debated the relationship between the quest for “endless growth”--capital accumulation on a global scale--and resource exhaustion. This course situates women's health in the context of these debates, investigating the health consequences of environmental crises linked to various market-based development strategies and technological innovations. Analyzing externalized business costs in the currency of human health, the course investigates illness caused by toxic industrial products and byproducts, injury from resource extraction processes such as nuclear fission and deep-water oil drilling, the manifold health hazards stemming from violent conflict over control of scarce resources in postcolonial states, and dangers that attend dislocation resulting from climate change.

Course Requirements

Students are required to complete all assigned readings for the course and actively participate in the online discussion board. The class participation grade will be based on the number, volume, and quality of student comments, which will engage reading materials, films, and lectures (given by the professor and uploaded to the online lecture delivery system). Sustained, astute, and critically engaged class participation is crucial for a successful and productive online classroom experience, and such participation depends largely upon students completing the reading assignments at length. Class discussion will stay closely aligned with the reading assignments for each week. To facilitate candid discussions, it is important that each student manifest respect for the opinions of their classmates. Hostile, intolerant, and insensitive remarks will not be tolerated and will be removed from the online discussion board. **Class participation as described here will count toward 30 percent of the final grade.**

Each student is required to complete one short project and one final project, the requirements for which are outlined in the syllabus under “Course Structure.” **The short project counts toward 20 percent of your final grade, and the final project counts toward 50 percent of your final grade. Projects count, in total, toward 70 percent of your final grade.**

Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated and will result in serious consequences. If students are ever unclear about the meaning of plagiarism or whether or not their work may be plagiarizing, the student must discuss the issue directly with me. Again, failure to do so may, and most likely will, result in severe punishment. You may also address your inquiries online at <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.

Reading Materials

The following books are required for this class. They are available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore (One Penn Plaza, Ferren Mall, New Brunswick, NJ 08901). I have included ISBN numbers if you would prefer to order these books online.

Rachel Carson. 2002. *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. (ISBN-10: 0618249060; ISBN-13: 978-0618249060)

David Harvey. 2012. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to Urban Revolution*. New York: Verso. (ISBN-10: 1844678822; ISBN-13: 978-1844678822)

Eric Holt-Gimenez, and Raj Patel, eds. 2009. *Food Rebellions! Crises and the Hunger for Justice*. Oakland, CA: First Food Books. (ISBN-10: 093502834X; ISBN-13: 978-0935028348)

Fred Magdoff, and John Bellamy Foster. 2011. *What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know about Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press. (ISBN-10: 1583672419; ISBN-13: 978-1583672419)

Christian Parenti. 2012. *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*. New York: Nation Books. (ISBN-10: 1568587295; ISBN-13: 978-1368587295)

Vandana Shiva. 2002. *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. (ISBN-10: 089698650X; ISBN-13: 978-0896086500)

Vandana Shiva. 2005. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. (ISBN-10: 089608745X; ISBN-13: 978-0896087453)

Vandana Shiva. 2008. *Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. (ISBN-10: 0896087824; ISBN-13: 978-0896087828)

Vandana Shiva. 2012. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. (ISBN-10: 089608793X; ISBN-13: 978-0935028348)

Sandra Steingraber. 2010. *Living Downstream: An Ecologist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment*. Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press. (ISBN-10: 030681898; ISBN-13: 978-0306818691)

Other readings are drawn from these books, which are not required for this class.

Anatole Anton, Milton Fisk, and Nancy Holmstrom, eds. 2000. *Not for Sale: In Defense of Public Goods*. Boulder, CO: PublicAffairs.

Deborah Barndt, ed. 1999. *Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food and Globalization*. Toronto: Sumach Press.

- Ravi Bhandari, and Chris Sturr, eds. 2009. *Real World Globalization*. (Tenth Edition.) Boston: Dollars & Sense.
- William Eno DeBuys. 2011. *A Great Aridness: Climate Change and the Future of the American Southwest*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Paul Farmer. 2012. *Haiti after the Earthquake*. New York: PublicAffairs.
- John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark, and Richard York. 2011. *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism's War on the Earth*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Susan George. 2010. *Whose Crisis, Whose Future*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Nandini Gunewardena, and Mark Schuller, eds. 2008. *Capitalizing on Catastrophe: Neoliberal Strategies in Disaster Reconstruction*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton. 1999. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Richard Hofrichter, ed. 2002. *Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Maria Mies, and Vandana Shiva. 1993. *Ecofeminism*. New York: Zed Books.
- Naomi Oreskes, and Erik M. M. Conway. 2011. *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.
- Richard Peet, Paul Robbins, and Michael Watts, eds. 2011. *Global Political Ecology*. New York: Routledge.
- Betsy Reed, and Adolph Reed, Jr., eds. 2006. *Unnatural Disaster: The Nation on Hurricane Katrina*. New York: Nation Books.
- Paul Robbins, John Hintz, and Sarah A. Moore. 2010. *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ariel Salleh, ed. *Eco-Sufficiency & Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology*. New York: Pluto Press.
- Gregory Squires, and Chester Hartman, eds. 2006. *There Is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Katrina*. New York: Routledge.
- Nalini Visvanathan, Lynn Duggan, Nan Wiegersma, and Laurie Nisonoff, eds. 2011. *The Women, Gender, and Development Reader*. New York: Zed Books.

Lynn Weber, and Lori Peek, eds. 2012. *Displaced: Life in the Katrina Diaspora*. Austin: University of Texas.

Course Structure

Week # 1: Introducing the New Environmentalism and the Concern for Health at Its Roots

Week of Tuesday, September 4th

Silent Spring (Carson)

Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming (Oreskes and Conway): “Doubt Is Our Product,” 10–35.

Week # 2: The New Environmentalism for the Twenty-First Century: Imagining the Ecological Contours of the Social Body

Week of Monday, September 10th

Living Downstream: An Ecologist’s Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment (Steingraber)

Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming (Oreskes and Conway): “Denial Rides Again: The Revisionist Attack on Rachel Carson,” 216–239.

Week # 3: The Ecology of Growth

Week of Monday, September 17th

Whose Crisis, Whose Future (George): “Introduction: Choosing Freedom,” 1–19.

Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice (Hofrichter, ed.): “Capitalism and the Crisis of Environmentalism” (Faber and O’Conner), 12–24.

Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton): “Catastrophe in the Making: Globalization and the Environment,” 376–413.

What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know about Capitalism (Magdoff and Foster)

Week # 4: Growth’s Measure of Truth

Week of Monday, September 24th

Ecofeminism (Mies and Shiva): “The Myth of Catching-up Development” (Mies), 55–69; “The Impoverishment of the Environment: Women and Children Last” (Shiva), 70–90; “Liberating the Consumer” (Mies), 251–63; “Decolonizing the North” (Shiva), 264–76.

Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development (Shiva): “Development, Ecology and Women,” 1–13.

Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice (Hofrichter, ed.): “Corporate Plundering of Third-World Resources” (Weissman), 186–96.

Capitalizing on Catastrophe: Neoliberal Strategies in Disaster Reconstruction (Gunewardena and Schuller, ed.): “‘Haiti Is Finished.’ Haiti’s End of History Meets the Ends of Capitalism” (Schuller).

Week # 5: Defining Externalized Costs

Week of Monday, October 1st

Eco-Sufficiency & Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology (Salleh, ed): “Ecological Debt: Embodied Debt” (Salleh), 1–40; “Development for Some Is Violence for Others” (Nayak), 109–120; “Mainstreaming Trade and Millennium Development Goals?” (Francisco and Antrobus), 157–164; “Policy and the Measure of Woman” (Waring), 165–179.

Film: Selected scenes from *The Corporation* (2003)

Week # 6: Externalized Costs: Earth

Week of Monday, October 8th

Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming (Oreskes and Conway): “Epilogue: A New View of Science,” 266–274.

The Ecological Rift: Capitalism’s War on the Earth (Foster, Clark, and York): Part I, “Capitalism and Unsustainable Development,” 51–164; Part III, “Dialectical Ecology,” 213–372.

Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace (Shiva)

Environment and Society (Robbins, Hintz, and Moore): “Trees,” 160–180

Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development (Shiva): Chapter 4, “Women in the Forest,” 55–95.

Film Short: *The Story of Stuff* (<http://www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-stuff/>)

Week # 7: Externalized Costs: Fire

Week of Monday, October 15th

Assignment Week: Drought in the United States

Assignment due 11:59pm, Friday, October 19th

A critical questions assignment will go along with your reading of *A Great Aridness: Climate Change and the Future of the American Southwest* (deBuys),

Or,

Research a township or municipality in the United States that has privatized its water. Examine why the township or municipality decided to privatize its water and the impact that water privatization has had on the local community. Write a 1000-word paper on your findings. Further paper guidelines will be included in a separate document.

Week # 8: Externalized Costs: Water

Week of Monday, October 22nd

Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit (Shiva)

Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development (Shiva): Chapter 6, “Women and the Vanishing Waters,” 179–217.

Global Political Ecology (Peet, Robbins, and Watts, eds.): “Commons versus Commodities: Political Ecologies of Water Privatization” (Bakker), 347–370; “The Social Construction of Scarcity: The Case of Water in Western India” (Mehta), 371–386.

Eco-Sufficiency & Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology (Salleh, ed.): “Deliberative Water Management” (Moraes and Perkins), 140–154.

Environment and Society (Robbins, Hintz, and Moore): “Bottled Water,” 224–244.

Film: *FLOW: For the Love of Water* (2008)

Film Short: *The Story of Bottled Water* (<http://www.storyofstuff.org/movies-all/story-of-bottled-water/>)

Week # 9: Externalized Costs: Air

Week of Monday, October 29th

Naomi Klein. November 28, 2011. “Capitalism vs. the Climate.” *The Nation*.

Real World Globalization (Bhandari and Sturr, eds.): “Climate Economics in Four Easy Pieces” (Ackerman), 283–289; “Climate Change and Ecosocialism” (An interview with Joel Kovel), 290–297.

Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming (Oreskes and Conway): “The Denial of Global Warming,” 169–215.

Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis (Shiva)

The Women, Gender and Development Reader (Visvanathan, Duggan, Wieggersma, and Nisonoff, eds.): “Gender, Climate Change and Human Security: Lessons from Senegal” (The Women’s Environment and Development Organization, WEDO), 317–326.

Week # 10: Externalized Costs: Food

Week of Monday, November 5th

Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food & Globalization (Barndt, ed.): “The ‘Poisoning’ of Indigenous Migrant Women Workers and Children: From Deadly Colonialism to Toxic Globalization” (Martinez-Salazar), 99–111; “Putting Food First: Women’s Role in Creating a Grassroots System outside the Marketplace” (Field), 193–208; “Women as Organizers: Building Confidence and Community through Food” (Moffett & Morgan), 221–236; “A Day in the Life of Maria: Women, Food, Ecology and the Will to Live” (Pena), 237–248.

Food Rebellions! Crisis and the Hunger for Justice (Holt-Giménez and Patel)

Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development (Shiva): Chapter 5, “Women in the Food Chain,” 96–178.

Global Political Ecology (Peet, Robbins, and Watts, eds): “Excess Consumption or Over-production? US Farm Policy, Global Warming, and the Bizarre Attribution of Obesity” (Guthman), 51–66.

Youtube, Vandana Shiva, The Future of Food, Parts 1, 2, and 3 (Part 1:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi1FTCzDSck>; Part 2:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVIJqwt9I8>; Part 3:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQDqEUd53YQ>)

Film: *Bullshit* (2005)

Week # 11: Externalized Costs: Space

Week of Monday, November 12th

Not for Sale: In Defense of Public Goods (Anton, Fisk, Holmstrom, eds.): “Public Goods, Future Generations, and Environmental Quality” (Light), 209–225; “Reconstructing Cities, Restoring the Environment: New Urbanism Versus Mobile/Agile Capital” (Resnick), 255–275.

Eco-Sufficiency & Global Justice: Women Write Political Ecology (Salleh, ed.): “Saving Women: Saving the Commons” (Podlashuc), 268–290; “From Eco-Sufficiency to Global Justice” (Salleh), 291–312.

Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution (Harvey)

Film: *This Land Is Our Land: The Fight to Reclaim the Commons* (2010)

Week # 12: Capitalist Solutions to Externalized Costs: Do They Work?

Week of Monday, November 19th

Victor Wallis. 2009. "Beyond 'Green Capitalism.'" *Monthly Review* 61(9):32–48.

Jonathan Latham. March/April 2012. "Way beyond Greenwashing: Have Corporations Captured 'Big Conservation'?" *Dollars & Sense*: 11–16.

John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark, and Richard York. 2010. "Capitalism and the Curse of Energy Efficiency: The Return of the Jevons Paradox." *Monthly Review* 62(6):1–12.

John Bellamy Foster. 2011. "Capitalism and Degrowth—An Impossibility Theorem." *Monthly Review* 62(8):26–34.

Film: *Soylent Green* (1973)

Week # 13: Nature's Unforgiving Pedagogy, Part I: Colonialism Masked as Humanitarian Aid

Week of Monday, November 26th

Haiti After the Earthquake (Farmer): "Women," 249–295; "Doctors," 296–329; "Humanitarians," 330–360.

Week # 14: Nature's Unforgiving Pedagogy, Part II: Postcolonial Climate Wars

Week of Monday, December 3rd

Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence (Parenti)

Week # 15: Nature's Unforgiving Pedagogy, Part III: Hurricane Katrina and US Internal Colonialism

Week of Monday, December 10th

Capitalizing on Catastrophe (Gunewardena and Schuller, eds.): "Race, Class, and the Politics of Death: Critical Responses to Hurricane Katrina" (Lubiano); "Disaster, Displacement, and Employment: Distortion of Labor Markets during Post-Katrina Reconstruction" (Button and Oliver-Smith); "Class Inequality, Liberal Bad Faith, and Neoliberalism: The True Disaster of Katrina" (Reed).

Displaced: Life in the Katrina Diaspora (Weber and Peek, eds.): "'We Need to Get Together with Each Other': Women's Narratives of Help in Katrina's Displacement" (Litt), 167–182.

There Is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Katrina (ed. Squires and Hartman): “Abandoned before the Storms: The Glaring Disaster of Gender, Race, and Class Disparities in the Gulf” (Jones DeWeever and Hartmann), 85–102; “A New Kind of Medical Disaster in the United States” (Franklin), 185–196; “Rebuilding a Tortured Past or Creating a Model Future: The Limits and Potentials of Planning” (Marcuse), 271–290.

Sheri Fink. August 27, 2009. “The Deadly Choices at Memorial.” *Propublica: Journalism in the Public Interest*.

Film: *Trouble the Water* (2008)

Recommended Reading:

Emily Chamlee-Wright. 2007. “The Long Road Back: Signal Noise in the Post-Katrina Context.” *The Independent Review* 12(2):235–259.

Unnatural Disaster: The Nation on Hurricane Katrina (Reed and Reed, eds.)

Final Project

Throughout the semester we have examined multiple coordinates connecting health with the environment, sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, neocolonialism, etc. Identify the set of coordinates you find most pressing (e.g. climate change, water privatization, food speculation, etc.), and propose establishing a non-governmental organization that addresses the negative impacts of these coordinates on the environmental and human health. Your proposal should include: The name and purpose of your organization; your organization’s geographical and cultural context and information on how your organization will acquire local knowledge and make local contacts, especially if you are establishing your organization in another country; your organization’s short-term and long-term goals; your organization’s plan of action for institutionalizing and establishing a leadership structure; how you will advertise your organization (e.g. website, blog, etc.); your NGO’s financial needs and how you plan to meet those needs; a list of other NGOs and community groups and leaders with which/whom you will network and from which you will learn. Further project guidelines will be included in a separate document.

The final project is due on or before 11:59pm Thursday, December 20th.