

GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

GPY 370 – Special Topics in Human Geography: Radical Black Ecologies



Course Instructor	Kesha Fevrier	Email: kmfevrier@gmail.com
Office	TBD	
Contact Time	(2x) 1.5 hours lectures per week	
Format	Lectures and videos; case studies; in-class activities	
Class Assessment	Blogpost; Student Presentation; Term Paper and/or Project; Class Participation and Activities	

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course introduces students to the emerging interdisciplinary field of Radical Black Ecologies. The premise of this course is that “ecological and/or environmental issues are also racial issues” which results from the coupling of racism and capitalism and the uneven/asymmetric global geographies and ecologies that emerge therein. Using case examples (from the global North and South), this course explores and analyzes how the effects of ecological crises, environmental destruction, and environmental hazards are distributed unequally such that Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color are disproportionately affected. The course will adopt an interdisciplinary methodology drawing from racial capitalism, critical race theory, environmental studies, political economy, and ecology and black studies more broadly. Fundamentally, this course addresses issues of racial difference, power, equity, access, and belonging, and offers theoretical tools and perspectives to understand how these issues unfold within society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Explain key theoretical approaches and concepts in the field of Radical Black Ecologies
2. Develop a broad understanding of the relation between race, colonialism, capitalism, and environmental destruction
3. Describe the causes and consequences of inequitable distributions of environmental harms.
4. Critically analyze complex concepts in written and verbal formats
5. Develop critical reading skills, participate and learn from class discussions and assigned readings

COURSE TOPICS

Racism and inequality, environmental racism, environmental (in)justice, environmental politics, political ecology, race and space, waste ecologies, (racial) capitalism, colonialism, globalization and transnationalization. We will engage with these topics through case examples including; Eglinton Crosstown LRT and its impacts on the Little Jamaica community in Toronto; food deserts in inner-city suburbs; barriers to access, and lack of diversity in outdoor forest spaces and leisure activities; prisoner justice and structural racism in the prison industrial complex; extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change and its impact on vulnerable communities; and toxic stewardship and its impact on Indigenous and other communities of color. These examples point to interconnections between environmental, economic and social vulnerabilities – exacerbated by capitalism’s orientation towards maintaining and reproducing uneven geographies. We will explore these and other themes through the readings, and assignments, regular contributions to a class blog, individual research projects, and lectures from invited guests.

SAMPLE COURSE READINGS (reading list subject to change)

- Brand, A. L., & Miller, C. (2020). Tomorrow I’ll be at the table: black geographies and urban planning: a review of the literature. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 35(4), 460-474.
- Finney, C. (2014). *Black faces, white spaces: Reimagining the relationship of African Americans to the great outdoors*. UNC Press Books.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. (2002). “Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography.” *The Professional Geographer* 54(1), 15–24.
- Hare, Nathan. (2016). “Black Ecology.” *The Black Scholar* 1 (6) (2016): 2–8.
- Hoover, E. (2017). *The river is in us: Fighting toxics in a Mohawk community*. U of Minnesota Press.
- McKittrick, Katherine, and Clyde Woods. (2007). *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press
- Nishime, L., & Williams, K. D. H. (Eds.). (2018). *Racial ecologies*. University of Washington Press.
- Pellow, D. N. (2021). Struggles for environmental justice in US prisons and jails. *Antipode*, 53(1), 56-73.
- Pulido, Laura. (2000). “Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90(1),12–40
- Roane, J. T., & Hosbey, J. (2019). *Mapping Black Ecologies*. *Current Research in Digital History*, 2.
- Yusoff, K. (2018). *A billion black Anthropocenes or none*. U of Minnesota Press.