



School of the Environment
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ENV1113HS: Social Sustainability: Environmental Justice in Africa

Winter 2024

Tuesdays: 10am – 12pm

Room: UC D301 (15 King's College Circle)

Instructor: Prof. Kariuki Kirigia

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12-2pm or by appointment

Office: 5 Bancroft Ave., Rm. 1044B



Trees felled to mark the border between Kenya and Tanzania in 2018. Photo by Kariuki Kirigia.

Course Description

This course sets out to critically explore environmental justice in the African context through a rigorous examination of the concept by drawing from African philosophies such as *Ubuntu*, that are anchored in African ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies, African feminisms, and imaginaries of African futures. We shall examine the nature of environmental (in)justice by engaging texts, theories, ethnographies, and case studies on African colonial histories and afterlives of colonialism, racial capitalism, historical and ongoing land injustices, climate change and climate justice, ecocriticism, decolonization, biodiversity conservation and multispecies justice, carbon markets, resource governance and conflicts, environmental education, and environmental justice movements driven especially by African youth. To map the fast-evolving politics and poetics of environmental justice in the African context, we shall engage with African media, songs, and films. At the end of the course, students will have gained in-depth understanding of the complex nature of reading and writing about environmental justice in Africa, value of geographies of knowledge and onto-epistemic decolonization, and to design robust theoretical frameworks for studying environmental justice in Africa and beyond.

Evaluation

Participation (10%). It is important that all participants participate in the class. Do come to each class with a key point or question concerning each reading that will advance our collective learning.

Essays (90%). There will be three 5-page essays, each worth 30% of the grade, due Thursdays 6pm. Essay topics will be shared by the course instructor a week before the assignment due date.

Essay #1 due: 1st February 2024

Essay #2 due: 7th March 2024

Essay #3 due: 11th April 2024

Assignments submitted after the due date without either prior arrangement with the course instructor or a documented excuse, will receive a 5% reduced grade per day late.

Course Materials

The required course readings are available through your U of T library account. Additional course material including links to online articles and films will be provided by the course instructor through Quercus or via email.

Communication

- Kindly use the subject line “ENV1113HS” in all email correspondence.
- Only use your @mail.utoronto.ca address in communication with me about this course to avoid your message being directed to the spam folder.
- I shall do my best to respond to your emails in a timely manner. Please allow between 48hrs to 72hrs of response time, excluding weekends and holidays.

University of Toronto Policies

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

“The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another’s differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.”

Accommodation

“The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University’s courses and programs.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services office.”*

Further information about accessibility services may be found here:

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departement/accessibility-services/> and [416-978-8060](tel:416-978-8060).

Academic Integrity

“All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (for example, the [University of Toronto website on Academic Integrity](#)).”

Plagiarism Detection

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).”

If, as a student, you object to using a plagiarism detection tool, see the course instructor for alternative arrangements for submission of your written assignments. These arrangements will include some or all of the following: submission of drafts; rough work and notes; complete reference list of sources used; a personal meeting with the instructor.

Copyright and Course Readings

The material made available to you as part of your course is solely for your own personal and educational use (for research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review or news reporting), unless otherwise noted. It is important that students not redistribute this material to others, or make copies other than for a purpose related to their work in the course.

Graduate Grade Scale

Truncated Letter Grade Scale	Numerical Scale of Marks
A+	90-100%
A	85-89%
A-	80-84%
B+	77-79%
B	73-76%
B-	70-72%
FZ*	0-69%

*FZ = Fail

Additional Resources

- Writing centres: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres>
- Health & Wellness: <http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/>
- Positive space (LGBTQ+ resources): <http://positivespace.utoronto.ca>
- Religious accommodations: <http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation>

Classroom Housekeeping

- We will meet every Tuesday in person for this graduate seminar.
- Class starts 10 minutes after the hour, and there will be a 10-minute break halfway through the class.
- Please let me know your preferred pronouns, and names if different from your official records.

Land Acknowledgement

“We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.”

To learn more about the land acknowledgment, see here: <https://indigenous.utoronto.ca/about/land-acknowledgement/>

Weekly Topics and Readings

Week 1 (9th January): Introduction

- Course overview

Week 2 (16th January): Environmental Justice in Theory

- Schlosberg, D. (2013). Theorising environmental justice: the expanding sphere of a discourse. *Environmental politics*, 22(1), 37-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2013.755387>
- Chemhuru, M. (2022). *Environmental justice in African philosophy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176718>
 - Introduction
 - Chapter 1: Environmental Ethics in African Philosophy
- Pulido, L., & De Lara, J. (2018). Reimagining 'justice' in environmental justice: Radical ecologies, decolonial thought, and the Black Radical Tradition. *Environment and planning. E, Nature and space (Print)*, 1(1-2), 76-98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848618770363>

Suggested readings

- Gear, A. (2020). Literature Review Article: Environmental Justice. In *Environmental Justice*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788970242>

Week 3 (23rd January): African Philosophies of Environmental Justice

- Muhonja, B. B. (2020). *Radical utu : critical ideas and ideals of Wangari Muta Maathai*. Ohio University Press.
 - Chapter 2: Replenishing the Earth – Maathai's holistic environmentalism
 - Chapter 3: Eco-agency and Unbowed Personhood – A Decolonial Imagining of Equity
 - Chapter 4: Theorizing and Activating Utu Citizenships
- Chemhuru, M. (2022). *Environmental justice in African philosophy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176718>
 - Chapter 3: Environmental Justice from an African Land Ethic
 - Chapter 5: African Ecofeminist Environmental Justice

Week 4 (30th January) : Racial Capitalism and Environmental Justice

1. Al-Bulushi, Y. (2022). Thinking racial capitalism and black radicalism from Africa: An intellectual geography of Cedric Robinson's world-system. *Geoforum*, 132, 252-262. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.01.018>
2. Pierre, J. (2020). Slavery, Anthropological Knowledge, and the Racialization of Africans. *Current anthropology*, 61(S22), S220-S231. <https://doi.org/10.1086/709844>
3. Kiamba, M. (1989). The Introduction and Evolution of Private Landed Property in Kenya. *Development and Change*, 20(1), 121-147. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.1989.tb00342.x>

4. Hecht, G. (2023). *Residual governance : how South Africa foretells planetary futures*. Duke University Press.
 - a. Introduction: The Racial Contract is Technopolitical
5. Benegiamo, M. (2021). Exploring Accumulation in the New Green Revolution for Africa: Ecological Crisis, Agrarian Development and Bio-Capitalism. *Accumulating Capital Today: Contemporary Strategies of Profit and Dispossession Policies*, 61-74.

Suggested readings

6. Arsel, M. (2023). Climate change and class conflict in the Anthropocene: sink or swim together? *The Journal of peasant studies*, 50(1), 67-95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2022.2113390>

*****Essay #1 due 1st February 2024*****

Week 5 (6th February): Black Geographies and Environmental Justice 1

1. Moulton, A. A., & Salo, I. (2022). Black geographies and Black ecologies as insurgent ecocriticism. *Environment and Society*, 13(1), 156-174.
2. Lunstrum, E. (2014). Green Militarization: Anti-Poaching Efforts and the Spatial Contours of Kruger National Park. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(4), 816-832. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2014.912545>
3. Parker, J. D. (2022). Ecologies of Development: Ecophilosophies and Indigenous Action on the Tana River. *History in Africa*, 49, 65-96. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hia.2022.11>
4. Pierre, J. (2020). The Racial Vernaculars of Development: A View from West Africa. *American Anthropologist*, 122(1), 86-98. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13352>
5. Hecht, G. (2023). *Residual governance : how South Africa foretells planetary futures*. Duke University Press.
 - a. Chapter 1: You Can See Apartheid From Space

Week 6 (13th February): Black Geographies and Environmental Justice 2

- Hecht, G. (2023). *Residual governance : how South Africa foretells planetary futures*. Duke University Press.
 - Chapter 2: The Hollow Rand
 - Chapter 3: The Inside-Out Rand
 - Chapter 4: South Africa's Chernobyl?
 - Chapter 5: Land Mines
- Ogwu, M. C. (2019). Towards Sustainable Development in Africa: The Challenge of Urbanization and Climate Change Adaptation. In P. B. Cobbinah & M. Addaney (Eds.), *The Geography of Climate Change Adaptation in Urban Africa* (pp. 29-55). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-04873-0_2

Week 7 (20th February): Reading Week

Week 8 (27th February): Natural Resource Governance

- Manji, A. S. (2020). *The struggle for land and justice in Kenya*. James Currey.
 - Chapters 1, 2, & 7
- Ramutsindela, M., Mushonga, T., & Matose, F. (2022). *The violence of conservation in Africa : state, militarization and alternatives*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
 - Chapter 2: The state and contested natural resources in Africa
- Verhoeven, H. (2021). The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Africa's Water Tower, Environmental Justice & Infrastructural Power. *Daedalus (Cambridge, Mass.)*, 150(4), 159-180. https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01878

Suggested readings

1. Chomba, S., Kariuki, J., Lund, J. F., & Sinclair, F. (2016, 2016/01/01/). Roots of inequity: How the implementation of REDD+ reinforces past injustices. *Land Use Policy*, 50, 202-213. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2015.09.021>

Week 9 (5th March): Violence, Decolonization and Epistemic Justice

1. Fanon, F., Philcox, R., Sartre, J.-P., Bhabha, H. K., & West, C. (2021). *The wretched of the earth* (60th anniversary edition / [with a new introduction by Cornel West]. ed.). Grove Press.
 - a. Introduction to the Sixtieth Anniversary Edition, by Cornel West
 - b. Foreword: Framing Fanon, by Homi K. Bhabha
 - c. Preface, by Jean Paul Sartre
 - d. Chapter 1: On Violence.
2. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2018). *Epistemic Freedom in Africa : Deprovincialization and Decolonization (Edition 1)* (1st ed., Vol. 1). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429492204>
 - a. Introduction
3. Fairhead, J., & Leach, M. (1996). *Misreading the African landscape : society and ecology in a forest-savanna mosaic*. Cambridge University Press.
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Chapter 6: Enriching a landscape: working with ecology and deflecting successions

Suggested readings

4. Robinson, D. F., Abdel-Latif, A., & Roffe, P. (2017). *Protecting traditional knowledge : the WIPO intergovernmental committee on intellectual property and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore*. Routledge.
5. De Wit, S. (2015). *Global Warning. an Ethnography of the Encounter Between Global and Local*. Langaa RPCIG.
 - a. Chapter 5: Believing in climate change – a grassroots perspective.

*****Essay #2 due 7th March 2024*****

Week 10 (12th March) : Biodiversity Conservation & Environmental Justice

1. Ramutsindela, M., Mushonga, T., & Matose, F. (2022). *The violence of conservation in Africa : state, militarization and alternatives*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
 - a. Chapter 1: Conservation and violence in Africa
 - b. Chapter 3: The violence of greening the state in Africa

- Holmes, G. (2011). Conservation's Friends in High Places: Neoliberalism, Networks, and the Transnational Conservation Elite. *Global Environmental Politics*, 11(4), 1-21.
- Benjaminsen, T. A., Goldman, M. J., Minwary, M. Y., & Maganga, F. P. (2013). Wildlife Management in Tanzania: State Control, Rent Seeking and Community Resistance. *Development and Change*, 44(5), 1087-1109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12055>
- Ramalefane, T., & Moyo, P. Climate Finance, Public–Private Partnerships and Climate Injustice in Lesotho. In *Climate Action in Southern Africa* (pp. 70-84). Routledge.

Suggested readings

- Death, C. (2016). Green states in Africa: beyond the usual suspects. *Environmental politics*, 25(1), 116-135.
- Agarwal, B. (2001). Participatory exclusions, community forestry, and gender: An analysis for South Asia and a conceptual framework. *World development*, 29(10), 1623-1648.

Week 11 (19th March) : Multispecies Justice

- Chemhuru, M. (2022). *Environmental justice in African philosophy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176718>
 - Chapter 4: African Relational Environmental Justice
- Ruiz-Serna, D. (2023). Transitional Justice beyond the Human: Indigenous Cosmopolitics and the Realm of Law in Colombia. *Cultural Politics*, 19(1), 57-76. <https://doi.org/10.1215/17432197-10232473>
- Tschakert, P., Schlosberg, D., Celermajer, D., Rickards, L., Winter, C., Thaler, M., Stewart-Harawira, M., & Verlie, B. (2021). Multispecies justice: Climate-just futures with, for and beyond humans. *Wiley interdisciplinary reviews. Climate change*, 12(2), e699-n/a. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.699>

Suggested readings

- Chatterjee, S. (2023). Political Plants: Art, Design, and Plant Sentience. *Cultural Politics*, 19(1), 86-106. <https://doi.org/10.1215/17432197-10232502>
- Winter, C. J. (2023). Unearthing the Time/Space/Matter of Multispecies Justice. *Cultural Politics*, 19(1), 39-56. <https://doi.org/10.1215/17432197-10232459>

Week 12 (26th March): Doing Research on Environmental Justice in Africa

- Islam, G. (2015). Practitioners as Theorists : Para-ethnography and the Collaborative Study of Contemporary Organizations. *Organizational Research Methods*, 18(2), 231-251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114555992>
- Boone, C. G., & Buckley, G. L. (2018). Historical approaches to environmental justice. In (1 ed., pp. 222-230). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315678986-18>
- Onís, C. M. d., & Pezzullo, P. C. (2018). The ethics of embodied engagement: Ethnographies of environmental justice. In (1 ed., pp. 231-240). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315678986-19>

Week 13 (2nd April): African Futures

- Kroeker, L. (2022, 2022/08/01). African Renaissance, Afrotopia, Afropolitanism, and Afrofuturism: Comparing Conceptual Properties of Four African Futures. *Africa Spectrum*, 57(2), 113-133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00020397221101633>

3. Nkrumah, B. (2021). Eco-Activism: Youth and Climate Justice in South Africa. *Environmental claims journal*, 33(4), 328-350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10406026.2020.1858599>
4. Chemhuru, M. (2022). *Environmental justice in African philosophy*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176718>
 - a. Chapter 6: Intergenerational Environmental Justice in African Philosophy
5. Hecht, G. (2023). *Residual governance : how South Africa foretells planetary futures*. Duke University Press.
 - a. Conclusion: Living in a Future Way Ahead of Our Time

*****Essay #3 due 11th April 2024*****