

Fall 2020

HSS 404-003: U.S. Environmental Justice Post-1945

Neil Maher

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HSS 404: Environmental Justice in Postwar America



Class Time Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00-10:20 a.m.
Location Online

Instructor Prof. Neil Maher (he/him/his)
E-mail maher@njit.edu
Phone 973-596-6348 (office)
646-325-3704 (cell)

Office Cullimore Hall, 329 (not being used this semester)

Office Hours Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and by appointment. You can attend these office hours in the following three ways:

- Sign up for a specific slot during these hours
- Simply “drop in” during these hours
- Email me with a specific day/time you would like to meet

You can find easy click-able links for each of these options at the top of our Canvas page under “Course Resources.”

Overview The Throughout human history, people’s relationship to nature has always been influenced by power. While some groups of people have the authority to gain access to nature, to transform it into natural resources for profit, and then to distance themselves from the negative consequences of such use, other groups do not. This environmental inequality can stem from obvious differences involving race, class, and gender, but is often also based on more subtle distinctions involving age, physical disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and cultural practice. In all cases, however, while the powerful tend to reap nature’s benefits, the weak pay the price. This research seminar examines this longstanding, unequal relationship to nature in post-World War II America.

Local Research	One of the goals of the Federated History Department’s senior research seminar is to familiarize students with both local history and its archival opportunities. To foster this, during the early part of this semester we will take 2 virtual “field trips” to local archives located at Rutgers University’s Dana Library and the Newark Public Library. Both of these online archival tutorials will be undertaken during our normal class hours.
Mapping Your Work Online	Throughout the semester students will upload their course assignments to an Environmental Justice Mapping Website that I have created for this course. The website will include a shared map that locates each of your chosen sites in geographic relation to one another, as well as links to individual “project webpages” that have been created for each student. The goal of this website and digital archive is to provide an open-source, interactive, geographic database of environmental justice sites, and their history, in the Newark-New York City region and beyond.
Collaboration Across Campus	Throughout the semester we will be collaborating with several organizations on the Rutgers-Newark campus, including the Price Institute on Ethnicity and Culture, the Eco-Working Group, and the Humanities Action Lab. All of these groups are working with students who are also involved in environmental justice research but approaching it through art, film, and other disciplines. During the semester there will be opportunities to meet with these students to exchange ideas and information regarding your projects.
Course Goals	<p>There are four major goals for this course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will understand the history of environmental inequality in the post-World War II United States. ● Students will locate both primary and secondary source materials relevant to the history of their chosen environmental justice site. ● Students will use those primary and secondary sources to analyze, organize, and write a final historical research paper on their chosen site. ● Students will share their research with the public by uploading all of their historical data to the course’s web-based Environmental Justice Map.
Attendance and Class Participation	<p>This is one of the most important components of your final grade. Because this is a seminar-style course, class participation should involve active listening and engagement. It is essential that reading be done on time (each day before we meet) and that everyone come to class ready to raise questions and participate actively. Absence from class means you won’t be able to participate, and doing so will therefore hurt your grade. If you do miss a class meeting, you are responsible for finding out what was missed and making up any assignments. Attendance will be taken during each class session.</p>
	<p>WebEx Privacy Issues: I expect everyone to have their audio AND video on during our online class meetings. This will ensure active participation by everyone. If for privacy reasons you would like to use an alternative background during these meetings, you can do so by following these easy steps: https://help.webex.com/en-us/80jduab/Use-a-Virtual-Background-in-the-Cisco-Webex-Meetings-Suite</p>
Reading	Reading assignments will average approximately 75-100 pages per week, and will consist of three types of materials. During the initial 5 weeks of the semester, we will familiarize ourselves with the history of environmental inequality in America since 1945 by reading several articles on

Course Assignments

environmental discrimination and the environmental justice movement. In the middle of the semester we will read a book that explains how historians “do” history — this book will help you choose a research topic, locate source materials for that research topic, organize your research, and also help you outline and write your final assignments. Finally, during the last several weeks of the course, your assignment will be to read the secondary and primary sources that you have collected for your own project.

Because this is a Humanities Senior Seminar, this class will be a writing-intensive course. Yet you will also have opportunities to express your research in non-written form. For each assignment, I will provide detailed directions beforehand. You will be graded on both your ideas and your writing.

On-Line Reader’s Responses:

Before many of our class meetings you will be asked to post to Canvas a “Reader’s Response” to the assigned reading. Directions for each “Reader’s Response” can be found on our Canvas page under each week’s assignment. To locate these directions, log into our course Canvas webpage, go to the week for which you are submitting a response, and click on the “Post Reader’s Response Here” tab. The tab will then open in another window, and you will see my directions for that particular Reader’s Response assignment.

Historical Data Collection:

For your final research project, you will first choose a specific site where environmental injustice occurred during the post-World War II period. This place can be many things – a public park, a toxic waste site, even a golf course. It can also come in a wide variety of sizes: it can be as small as an individual building or a street corner or as large or larger than an entire neighborhood. After choosing your site, you will complete the following 6 assignments, all of which will become components to your final written project:

- *Project Site Description:* This short assignment entails describing the environmental inequality that took place at your chosen site, and explaining why it is important for others to understand. **Due: Week 6**
- *Secondary Source Report:* In this assignment you will describe the historical context for your project. This describes the “background” history of the time period and location of your chosen site. **Due: Week 7**
- *Primary Source Analysis:* For this assignment you will locate and list 3 primary sources related to your chosen site. You will then choose one source and analyze it more deeply for evidence. **Due: Week 8**
- *Oral Interview or Video Essay:* For this assignment you may choose one of two options. First, you can conduct an oral interview with someone associated with your chosen environmental justice site. Or you may choose instead to create your own short video on your project. We will have an in-class training regarding both of these assignments. **Due: Week 10**
- *Paper Outline:* To help you organize your paper, you will submit an outline that you will rely on while writing your final paper. **Due: Week 11**

Final Report:

Your final report will be a research paper approximately 10-12 pages in length, but it will include

some material from the assignments listed above. **Drafts Due: Weeks 13-15; Final Paper Due: Dec. 15, 5:00 p.m.**

Grading Consistent effort and improvement will be weighted heavily in grading, which will be apportioned as follows:

- In-Class Participation and On-Line Reader’s Responses: 20%
- Historical Data Collection Assignments: 40%
- Final Research Paper 40%

Late Submissions: Written Assignments (other than reading responses) will lose one grade for every day late (A to A-, A- to B+). Assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week late.

Required Texts The majority of the readings for this class will be available for download on our Canvas site. You will, however, be required to purchase a hard copy of the following book (available online or now at the NJIT bookstore):

- *The Craft of Research*, by Booth, et. al. (University of Chicago Press, 2008). Fourth Edition (**This must be the 4th edition**)

Please remember to bring the article and book to class (no electronic copies) when we are reading them. We will constantly refer to these readings during in-class discussions.

Academic Integrity All Students should be aware that the Federated History Department takes the NJIT and Rutgers honor codes seriously and enforces them strictly. Because of the nature of our assignments, if you plagiarize it will be obvious and I will be forced to report such actions to the Dean of Students. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail the course for the semester and therefore not be able to graduate.

Course Schedule

Part I The History of Environmental Inequality

Week 1 Introductions

September 1: **The Syllabus**
Required Reading:
The syllabus

In-Class Discussion:
The course website and your potential research projects

September 3: **Defining Environmental Justice**
Required Reading:

	<p>Cole & Foster, <i>From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement</i>, pps. 1-33.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader's Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>September 8:</p> <p>September 10:</p>	<p>The Causes of Inequality</p> <p>NO CLASS</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Chris Wells, "Introduction," <i>Environmental Justice in Postwar America, A Documentary Reader</i>, 3-20.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader's Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p> <p>Race vs. Poverty – Los Angeles, California</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Mike Davis, "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn," <i>Environmental History Review</i> 19, no. 2 (Summer, 1995), pp. 1-36.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader's Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>September 15:</p> <p>September 17:</p>	<p>Building a Movement</p> <p>Grassroots Activism – San Antonio, Texas</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Char Miller, "Streetscape Environmentalism: Floods, Social Justice, and Political Power in San Antonio, 1921–1974," <i>Southwestern Historical Quarterly</i> CXVIII, no. 2 (October 2014): 159-177.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader's Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p> <p>Virtual Class Trip to Dana Library</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Valerie S. Thaler, "Teaching Historical Research Skills to Generation Y: One Instructor's Approach," in <i>The History Teacher</i> 46, No. 2 (February 2013): 267-281.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader's Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
Week 4	Local Communities

September 22:	<p>Newark, New Jersey <u>Required Reading:</u> Sara Grossman, “Off the Rails,” on Newest Americans (http://newestamericans.com/OFF-THE-RAILS/)</p> <p>“Dirty Little Secrets” (NJ Public Radio) https://www.wnyc.org/story/nj-contaminated-sites/</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader’s Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
September 24:	<p>Virtual Class Trip to Newark Public Library <u>Required Reading:</u> George Hawley, “Newark Public Library: Finding Aid,” 1-5.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader’s Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
Part II	Doing History
<p>Week 5</p> <p>September 29:</p>	<p>Choosing a Topic</p> <p>From Historical Questions to Research Topic <u>Required Reading:</u> Booth, <i>Craft of Research</i>, pages 3-64</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader’s Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
<p>October 1:</p>	<p>Making it Personal (Guest — Leora Fuller) <u>Required Reading:</u> Adrienne Maree Brown, “Introduction,” in <i>Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds</i>.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader’s Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>October 6:</p>	<p>Mid-Semester Check-In</p> <p>Individual Meetings for Project Descriptions <u>Required Reading:</u> Booth, <i>Craft of Research</i>, pages 65-104 (before your meeting)</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Project Site Description (due on course website, Sunday, Oct. 4, 5:00 p.m.)</p>
October 8:	

	<p>Individual Meetings for Project Descriptions</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Booth, <i>Craft of Research</i>, pages 65-104 (before your meeting)</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Project Site Description (due on course website, Tuesday, Oct. 6, 5:00 p.m.)</p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>October 13:</p> <p>October 15:</p>	<p>Locating Evidence</p> <p>Secondary Sources</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Each other's "Secondary Annotated Bibliographies"</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secondary Annotated Bibliography (due on course website, Sunday, Oct. 11, 5:00 pm) 2. Written comments on classmates' Bibliography (due by email before class) <p>Primary Sources as Evidence</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Booth, <i>Craft of Research</i>, pages 105-130.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader's Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
<p>Week 8</p> <p>October 20:</p> <p>October 22:</p>	<p>Using Visual Culture</p> <p>Thinking with Images</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Cindy Ott, "Visual Details as Clues," unpublished essay, 1-15.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader's Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p> <p>Making Video Essays</p> <p><u>Required Watching:</u> iMovie video</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Primary Source Analysis (due on course website before class)</p>
<p>Week 9</p> <p>October 27:</p>	<p>Conducting Oral Interviews & Making Arguments</p> <p>Conducting Oral Interviews</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u></p>

<p>October 29:</p>	<p>“Oral History Best Practices: Introduction”: 1-11.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader’s Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p> <p>Understanding Warrants (Linking Evidence to Arguments)</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Booth, <i>Craft of Research</i>, pages 131-172.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader’s Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>November 3:</p> <p>November 5:</p>	<p>Organizing Your Evidence</p> <p>How to Take Notes</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> None – Conduct Your Own Primary and Secondary Research</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader’s Response on reading (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p> <p>The Art of Outlining</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> Booth, <i>Craft of Research</i>, 173-186; and your own research</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Oral Interview or Video Essay (due on course website before class)</p>
<p>Part III</p>	<p>Paper Writing Workshop</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p>November 10:</p> <p>November 12:</p>	<p>Outlining</p> <p>Individual Meeting I</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> None</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Draft of paper outline (due by email to me Sunday, Nov. 8, 5:00 p.m.)</p> <p>Individual Meeting II</p> <p><u>Required Reading:</u> None</p>

	<p><u>Assignment:</u> Draft of paper outline (due by email to me Tuesday, Nov. 10, 5:00 p.m.)</p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p>November 17:</p> <p>November 19:</p>	<p>Beginnings, Ends, and Footnotes</p> <p>When and How Do I Footnote? <u>Required Reading:</u> Booth, <i>Craft of Research</i>, 187-202 & 273-276.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Reader's Response on your own footnotes (due on Canvas, 8:00 a.m. day of class).</p> <p>Introductions and Conclusions <u>Required Reading:</u> Booth, <i>Craft of Research</i>, 232-248.</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> None</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p>November 24:</p> <p>November 26:</p>	<p>Writing</p> <p>Draft Workshop I <u>Required Reading:</u> One another's Paper Drafts</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> 1. Paper Drafts (due on Canvas by Sunday, Nov. 22, 5:00 p.m.) 2. Written Comments on your classmates Paper Drafts (due in class)</p> <p>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING</p>
<p>Week 14</p> <p>December 1:</p>	<p>Writing (continued)</p> <p>Draft Workshop II <u>Required Reading:</u> One another's Paper Drafts</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> 1. Paper Drafts (due on Canvas, Sunday, Nov.29, 5:00 p.m.) 2. Written Comments on your classmates Paper Drafts (due in class)</p>

December 3:	<p>Draft Workshop III <u>Required Reading:</u> One another's Paper Drafts</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> 1. Paper Drafts (due on Canvas, Tuesday, Dec. 1, 5:00 p.m.) 2. Written Comments on your classmates Paper Drafts (due in class)</p>
<p>Week 15</p> <p>December 8:</p> <p>December 10:</p>	<p>Writing (continued)</p> <p>Draft Workshop IV <u>Required Reading:</u> One another's Paper Drafts</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> 1. Paper Drafts (due on Canvas, Sunday, Dec. 6, 5:00 p.m.) 2. Written Comments on your classmates Paper Drafts (due in class)</p> <p>Draft Workshop V <u>Required Reading:</u> One another's Paper Drafts</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> 1. Paper Drafts (due on Canvas by Tuesday, Dec. 8, 5:00 p.m.) 2. Written Comments on your classmates Paper Drafts (due in class)</p>
December 15:	<p>Final Reports Due (on course website by 5:00 p.m.)</p>