

ENVR 300/PLSC 379: TOXIC POLITICS: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN RICHMOND AND BEYOND

Fall 2019

Instructor: Andrea Y. Simpson, Associate Professor, Political Science

Meeting Times: Tuesday/Thursday: 10:30-11:45

Classroom: Weinstein Hall 209

Office: 202K Weinstein Hall

Office Hours: By Appointment

[asimpson@richmond.edu](mailto:asimpson@richmond.edu)

Office Phone: 804.289.8739

Environmental Justice is a movement, an ideology, and a policy issue. In this course, we will explore EJ in all three areas, with a particular concentration on lead poisoning. The course will have a significant community-based learning component that will take us into neighborhoods in the City of Richmond where we will conduct tests for the presence of lead. The Flint, Michigan lead poisoning case has alerted us to the dangers of lead in drinking water. Whycan’t we eradicate lead as a threat to the health of children and adults? Let’s try to answer that question, and others, together in the Fall of 2019 through readings, field work, and class discussions.

This semester, we will have the honor of working with Queen Zakia Shabazz. Ms. Shabazz is an author, educator, lecturer, and environmental justice advocate. Her work began in 1996 when she discovered that her young son had been poisoned by lead, prompting her to establish United Parents Against Lead (UPAL). UPAL is a national networking organization of and for parents of children poisoned by lead that works to end the threat of lead poisoning and other environmental hazards through education and awareness, advocacy, intervention, and resource referrals.

Course Goals

* Students will understand the connection between federal regulatory and agencies, lobbying groups, and state regulations.
* Students will understand the role of lobbying in setting regulatory policies.
* Students will learn about the Environmental Justice Movement and its role in one of the most serious threats to public health: lead poisoning.
* Students will learn where and how lead enters the human body and is much more harmful to children than adults.
* Students will map two communities that surround schools identified as

Readings

*What the Eyes Don’t See*, Mona Hanna-Attisha

*Brush with Death: A Social History of Lead Poisoning*, Christian

Warren

Articles-These articles may be accessed on the course blog at:

<https://blog.richmond.edu/toxicpolitics/>

Allan, Nicole. 2010. “The Triumphs and Failures of the EPA,”*The*

*Atlantic*, Retrieved from The Atlantic at:

https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2010/12/

Campbell, et. al, 2016. “A Case Study of Environmental Injustice: The

Failure in Flint,” *International Journal of Environmental*

*Research and Public Health*, This article is an open access

article distributed under the terms and conditions of the

Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) license

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Fredriksson, Per G. and Noel Gaston. 2000. “Environmental Governance

in Federal Systems: The Effects of Capital Competition and

Lobby Groups,” *Economic Inquiry* 38:3.

Gibbs, Carol, and Jennifer L. Melvin. 2008.“Structural Disadvantage

and the Concentration of Environmental Hazards in School Areas: A

Research Note.” *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 49:315-358.

Hunt, Thomas J., Ray Hepner, and Karen W. Seaton. 1982. “Childhood

Lead Poisoning and Inadequate Child Care.” *American Journal of*

*Diseased Children*, 136:538-42.

Johnson, Wendy. 2003. “The Legacy of Lead: Pervasive Poisoning,

Suspect Science, and the Industry Effort to Escape Liability,” in

*Multinational Monitor*, April 2003; 24:4.

Lazarus, Richard J. 1991. “The Neglected Question of Congressional

Oversight of EPA: Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes (Who Shall

Watch the Watchers Themselves)? *Law and Contemporary Problems* 54:4, 205-239.

Mintz, Joel A. 2012. “Did Industry Capture EPA Enforcement? Captive

Agency Theory and Its (Partial) Applicability,” in *Enforcement*

*at the EPA: High Stakes and Hard Choices*. Austin, University of

Texas Press.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2012, “Destruction, Confusion, Confrontation, and

Disarray: EPA Enforcement and Congressional Oversight in the

Gorsuch Era,” in *Enforcement at the EPA: High Stakes and Hard*

*Choices*. Austin, University ofTexas Press.

Pell,M.B. and Joshua Schnever, 2016. “The Thousands of U.S. Locale

Where Lead Poisoning is Worse than in Flint,” Retrieved

At; <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-lead-testing/>

Schmidt, Charles. 2018. “America’s Misguided War on Childhood Lead

Exposures,” at *Undark,* retrieved 3 March 2019 at

[https://undark.or/article/lead-testing-child-blood levels/](https://undark.or/article/lead-testing-child-blood%20levels/)

Shell, Ellen Ruppel. 1995. “An Element of Doubt,” 267:6, 24-39.

Sheppard, et.al, 2002. “Advancing Environmental Justice through

Community-Based Participatory Research,” *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 110:2.

Zhang, Nanhua, et.al, 2013. “Early Childhood Lead Exposure and

Academic Achievement” Evidence from Detroit Public Schools,

2008-2010.” *American Journal of Public Health* 103:3, 72-77.

Recommended Readings

Dickman, Jennifer, 2017. “Gaps in State Lead Screening Policies,” in

*Safer Chemicals Healthy Families*, pp. 1-50.

Sampson, Robert J., and Alix S. Winter. 2018. “Poisoned Development:

Assessing Childhood Lead Exposure as a Cause of Crime in a

Birth Cohort Followed through Adolescence.” *Criminology*

56:2,269-301.

Warniment, Crista, Katrina Tsang, and Sim S. Galazka. 2010. “Lead

Poisoning in Children.” *American Family Physicians* 81:6, 751-757.

**NEW CLASS SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**OCTOBER 4, 2019**

Assignments

During the course of the semester, you will write **two** main papers. The first paper will be a response to some aspect of the readings that you will extend by illuminating an idea we have not covered in class. The second paper should emerge from your field notes. These papers should help you understand the complex relationship between policy and regulation, politics, the public interest, and economics. They should lay the foundation for your digital portfolio. *They should be anywhere from five to seven pages and include at least five references.*

Here are ways to consider each assignment:

- as a structured tool of analysis where you are asked to focus on the elements of the text, how the text fits into larger cultural negotiations, and questions of meaning making, values, and the political.

- as a structure is to think about all texts as part of a *multi*cultural conversation, where texts, places, and interactions, involve struggles over power, recognition, and the freedom of thought and action.

Purpose of the papers:

Response Paper

* to critically read and discuss ideas
* bring an analytical lens to our current understandings of various theories about responsibility for the environment
* present our analysis, beliefs and ideas in structured, clear and concise writing.
* a tool for analyzing and thoughtfully.
* tease out key ideas in a format that gets to the heart of your response.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Field Note Paper/Digital Portfolio

* tools for “on the ground” engagement, integration with content, and reflection
* honing powers of observation through meticulous recordings of what is seen, heard, smelled, touched, and felt
* learning how to record field notes while in the field and immediately after completing the fieldwork; the more time that passes between observation and field notes, the less useful they become
* contribute to the body of public knowledge regarding lead poisoning and its effects on society

Participation Assignments

**Each week our readings will be summarized by a student. This will begin our discussion of the material. Come prepared with questions and responses to the readings.**

We have a class blog on which I will post questions for you to answer. Questions will be uploaded on Tuesday before or after class as specified on the syllabus unless something exciting happens—then I will post an extra question. You have until Friday at 5:00 pm to post an answer. You do not have to post to all of the questions, but I expect you to post frequently. You may post an answer to someone else’s comment, which is how we create a learning community. This is the blog address:

<https://blog.richmond.edu/introwgss>

Digital Portfolio

A digital *process portfolio* is your main project for the course. The purpose is to help you reflect on course materials, discussion, and your field notes. It is designed to be a learning tool and an assessment tool. The portfolio offers the opportunity to expand on the ideas you build in your papers. It is not a visual summary of material. It is a visual representation on your own intellectual journey in this class. You can insert video clips, more writing, news articles, artwork, music, and journal entries. It can be anything that you want it to be.[[2]](#footnote-2)

We will discuss in class what platform might be best to use. A rubric is on our class blog, so be sure to check regularly for extra articles and other resources.

Grading Distribution:

25% Participation: Blog posts and responses, class participation, and field notes from our experiential learning exercises

30% Writing: Two five-to-seven-page response papers. (15% each)

20% Exam: Midterm

25% Final Project: Digital Portfolio and Presentation

**Class Schedule**

T-8.27 Introductions, review syllabus, and discussion of community-based learning component

Readings: In-class, “America’s Misguided War on Lead Poisoning in Children”

Thu-8.29 Readings: Chapters 1-3, *Brush with Death-****Aniyah***

T-9.3 Readings: Chapters 4-8, *Brush with Death-****Izzy***

Thu-9.5 Library Orientation

Blog Post Due Tomorrow

T-9.10 Readings: Chapters 9-13, *Brush with Death-****Savannah***

Thu-9.12 Zhang, Nanhua, et.al, 2013. “Early Childhood Lead Exposure and Academic Achievement” Evidence from Detroit Public Schools, 2008-2010.”-***ProfSi***

Fredriksson, Per G. and Noel Gaston. “Environmental Governance in Federal Systems: The Effects of Capital Competition and Lobby Groups***,”-ProfSi***

Discussion of Field Work and Taking Field Notes

~~T-9.17 Field Work~~

~~Thu-9.19 Field Work~~

~~T-9.24 Field Work~~

~~Thu-9.26 Field Work~~

~~T-10.1 Discussion and Comparison of Field Notes~~

TOPICS FOR PRESENTATIONS DUE BEFORE CLASS ON 10.01

Thu-9.26 Readings:

Hunt, et. al, “Childhood Lead Poisoning and Inadequate Health Care”

Sheppard, et.al, 2002. “Advancing Environmental Justice through Community-Based Participatory Research”- ***ProfSi***

T-10.1 Readings:

Allan, Nicole. 2010. “The Triumphs and Failures of the

EPA,”*The Atlantic*

Campbell, et. al, 2016. “A Case Study of Environmental Injustice: The Failure in Flint***”-Maria***

Pell,M.B. and Joshua Schnever, 2016. “The Thousands of U.S. Locale Where Lead Poisoning is Worse than in Flint” ***-ProfSi***

Thu-10.3 Research Project-Discussing Field Notes

Blog Post Due on Tomorrow, Friday, 10.4

OUTLINE/PARAGRAPH FOR DIGITAL PORTFOLIO DUE TODAY BEFORE CLASS

FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE BEFORE CLASS ON TUESDAY, 10.8

T-10.8 Review for Midterm.

Thu-10.10 Midterm Exam-In Class, Open Notes

**BREAK BEGINS FRIDAY, 10.11 after classes; RESUMES Thursday, 10.17**

Thu-10.17 Readings: *What the Eyes Don’t See*, Chapters 1-8-***Caroline and Maddy***

Readings: *What the Eyes Don’t See*, Chapters 9-12-***Aniyah***

T-10.22 Field Work

Thu-10.24 Field Work

Blog Post Due Tomorrow

T-10.29Readings: *What the Eyes Don’t See,* Chapters 13-21-***Izzy, Savannah, and Leighton***

Thu-10.31 Readings: *What the Eyes Don’t See,* Chapters 22-24-

T-11.5 Readings: *What the Eyes Don’t See,* Final Chapters-***Stuart***

SECOND RESPONSE PAPER DUE BEFORE CLASS ON 10.29

Thu-11.7 Epilogue-***Class***

T-11.12 Readings:

Mintz, Joel A. 2012. “Did Industry Capture EPA Enforcement? Captive Agency Theory and Its (Partial) Applicability,”

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2012, “Destruction, Confusion, Confrontation, and Disarray: EPA Enforcement and Congressional Oversight in the Gorsuch Era,”***-Savannah***

***Discuss Digital Portfolios***

Thu-11.14 Lazarus, Richard J. 1991. “The Neglected Question of Congressional Oversight of EPA: Quis Custodiet Ipsos Custodes (Who Shall Watch the Watchers Themselves)?

Shell, Ellen Ruppel. 1995. “An Element of Doubt,” 267:6, 24-39- ***ProfSi***

Blog Post Due Tomorrow

T-11.19 Johnson, Wendy. 2003. “The Legacy of Lead: Pervasive Poisoning, Suspect Science, and the Industry Effort to Escape Liability”- ***ProfSi***

*Discuss Digital Portfolios*

Thu-11.21 Gibbs, Carol, and Jennifer L. Melvin. 2008.“Structural

Disadvantage and the Concentration of Environmental Hazards in School Areas: A Research Note.” *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 49:315-358.- ***ProfSi***

**Tuesday, 11/26-Assignment due on 12.3: A one-page response to the following documentary:**

<http://docuseek2.com.newman.richmond.edu:2048/cart/product/789>

**THANKSGING BREAK BEGINS, TUESDAY, 11.26, CLASSES RESUME 12.2**

T-12.3 Presentations

Thu-12.5 Presentations

1. https://canvas.brown.edu/courses/202417/pages/writing-assignment-number-1-think-pieces [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.edutopia.org/blog/11-essentials-for-excellent-eportfolios-vicki-davis [↑](#footnote-ref-2)