The Chemical Action Project
People, Poison, Place
Extra Guidance

Here is some further guidance with tips, pointers, and ideas for your final project. First look at what I've written as regards the assignment on the **syllabus**. Imagine yourself an information-gatherer called in to see what you can learn. This is a guide to follow, not a rubric. Always document everything you tried.

1) **Lore:** In a place to whose residents you have access and familiarity (say, your hometown or somewhere else you've lived) elicit—as you would with ghost stories—some lore/stories about local knowledge of contamination ("pollution," "toxicity," etc.) at some particular site or through some particular process. Try to seek firsthand and I-know-someone-who-knows-someone type stories. If you find any leads to something even richer, then do follow them.
   a) If an opportunity for a more in-depth conversation avails itself, then develop a list of open-ended questions that you plan to use. Write these down to stash in your dossier later, in addition to a journal-style account of everything you've done.
   b) Even if you don't succeed in getting any firsthand info, document what you tried. You won't be marked down for not getting, only not trying.
   c) Hometown is not the only direction you could go. You could talk to family members who've lived somewhere else and have great stories, or friends from a former place you've lived, or you could pick something to chase in Burlington (say the geodes we have discussed, at stores), something that would afford you the ability, say, to go to boutiques or businesses and talk to people. Wherever you talk to people, you have to make sure they know what it's for, even though this is not in fact really technically research but conversations largely with people you know. What personal stories do people have? Do people have systems of avoidance and evasion of harm? Step carefully if you get too close to anything tragic or difficult for people to talk about.
   d) Please explore how people know what they know or feel they know.
   e) Minimum 3 pages for this whole section.

2) **Documenting/Research:** Take a next step and begin to dig deeper for whatever you can find on the actual empirical background, facts—a manufacturer's history, the chemistry of the process involved, the biology of its potential harm, whatever you want. This is the research portion.
   a) Can you contact local advocacy organizations? State department or health-type folks? Who else can you think of to call or write who might help you find stuff out? Document everything you do or think of.
   b) Can you obtain any land use history from any public records, or from the internet? Soil, water, or air sample info?
   c) Step back and make an assessment. Why do people think there's a problem here? In your view, *is* there a problem? What is your analysis of either why people perceive what they perceive or what is actually happening—and also of the relationship between the two.
   d) If you don't find much, explain why you think you didn't. Is anything being hushed?
   e) Minimum 3 pages for this whole section. Sources must be cited.

3) **Interventions (Imaginary and Real):** How might you do something? Who would you call? Is there an intervention to be had here?
   a) If there was, what kind of toolkit would you offer the affected? Make a fictional toolkit handout/brochure for people who might be affected by this issue or in this area. Use it if possible.
   b) Is there a letter to write to a senator, a congressperson, a company CEO, a local watchdog, an association? An employer, a school, a state health board? Are there hospitals and legal organizations one might ask to get involved? Write at least one such fictional letter if you feel it warranted. If you feel bold, check in with me and then send it and tell us what happens.

c) If you did not find any reason to suspect any harm was at hand, explain why not? Did you not find the lore substantiated? Was no harm shown by your research? What would you tell those who suspect harm. If so, what would you tell them? Why do you think that they believed there was harm when you did not?
d) No particular page minimum.

4) **Disseminations:** Choose one of the following:
   a) Produce a rough design for and describe an innovative informational audiovisual placard to be viewed by visitors to (and in regions near) your site, like signs at National Parks. Who would you contact to ask for the placard to be displayed?
   b) Write either hypothetical or real content to post here:
   http://www.globalpollutionmap.org/form.html
   And here:
   http://gahp.net/crowd-sourced-pollution-reporting/
   And here:
   https://yourshot.nationalgeographic.com/tags/tellyourpollutionstory/
   No particular page range for this section.

5) **Taking Stock:** Step back and do a final synthesis. What is this all really about, globally, say, in terms of the structure of states and capitalisms? Apply at least two external scholarly readings and two readings from the course. Minimum 1 page for this section.

All this should be presented as a dossier.

Alternative formats (documentary, graphic novel, etc.) will be considered.

If you think you've found a story that really needs to get out there, whether to a congressperson or to a newspaper or social media, let me know and I will work with you to push it to the next stage.