RACE | NATURE | POWER

Communication 146 Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00 - 12:20 | SOLIS 111

Instructor Megan Ybarra (she/her/hers)

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Office MCC 101

Office Hours I can meet in person or over Zoom, individually or in groups. If you'd like to meet over Zoom, I do not require you to have your camera on. https://meet.boomerangapp.com/meganybarra → this takes you to a link where you can sign up for a 15, 30 or 45 minute meeting. When you get a meeting confirmation, it will send you a zoom link. I'll assume that we are meeting over Zoom unless you request otherwise.

This class brings together the insights of environmental justice (usually associated with ground-up community based movements in the urban US) and political ecology (usually associated with 'First World' academics who make sense of environmental degradation in the rural 'Third World') and across three broad themes: land, body politics and repair. The course moves from what might seem familiar and intimate to make it strange, and then moves towards inviting speculations towards making a world we all can live in.

Land	We will ask questions that bring us to understand how Western / settler / colonial ways of knowing shape human/non-human relations; crisis, scarcity and other narratives that authorize action over collaboration; and the role of states in mediating our relationship with land. In particular, what is at stake in privileging the immediacy of the climate change crisis over grappling with the infrastructures and ways of knowing that made climate change predictable and acceptable?
Body Politics	Bodies are intimate, squishy, weird. Bodies are also subject to ideas of what is 'natural' and 'normal'. We will grapple with the stigmas of fatness, DNA and epigenetics, and bodily autonomy, including which people are seen as capable of informed consent.
Relations of Repair	While crisis narratives might authorize action without consent, the crises themselves of climate change, racism, colonialism are rifts in how people engage with nature. Empirical data tells us that we can't undo harms, restore ecologies, or return to purity. Course materials in this section ask, how can we come into right relations with other peoples and the land?

Learning Objectives

Students who take this class will:

- understand how unequal power relations in the production of science affects nature and climate change. The course will offer a perspective on the importance of epistemologies and power relations in knowledge production. In this, we will ask who has the power to make claims about what healthy landscapes and bodies should look like, and to make changes to the world for good.
- appreciate the importance of environmental justice as relational. Through in-class discussions and short papers, students will think through how people understand themselves through place (whether a protected area, a body, or a site of environmental injustice). Through these sites, we will challenge ourselves to think relationally across axes of race, residency/immigration status, gender and age.
- Interpret and apply social scientific research to art, podcasts and other examples testing out ideas and building arguments through discussion.
- Communicate effectively to a variety of audiences using written, oral and visual approaches.

Assignments & Course Evaluation

Course Grade	%
Learning Reflection 1: Land □ COMM157 Learning Reflections Prompt	10%
Learning Reflection 2: Bodies ■ COMM157 Learning Reflections Prompt	10%
Learning Reflection 3: Repair □ COMM157 Learning Reflections Prompt	10%
 Participation: Your active participation through in-class discussions or Canvas discussion boards. If you attend and participate in class, you will earn full points. If you do not attend class, you can submit a reflection after class via Canvas Assignments (if you email it, you may not earn credit). No summaries, please; I'll usually post a prompt that I'll ask you to respond in writing, audio post, or drawing that engages with the reading for the day. For example, if you miss class on a Tuesday, you can complete your make-up assignment through the following Monday for full credit. Everyone can skip one participation day, no explanation required. (Canvas automatically drops the lowest score in the Participation assignment category.) 	15%
 Discussion Facilitation In groups of 2-4, you will facilitate a 30-40 minute class discussion on a Practice day. Detailed Instructions: ☐ COMM146 F25 Discussion Facilitation Instructions 	15%
Community Event Reflection: Attend an event and write a response that makes connections with class material. If you would like to propose an event for credit, you must get my pre-approval in writing/email. Instructions and list of events: COMM146 F25 Event Reflection Instructions	5%

Course Grade	%
Final Project	
Either an Individual Project (paper, zine, podcast) or a Group Project (zine,	35%
podcast). Both have the same due dates for accountability check-ins and	
final project.	

Schedule & Course Materials

- You can find all readings and assignment links on Canvas. Please review readings / course materials before class. The syllabus is a <u>draft</u> -- if course content and/or due dates change to meet the needs of the class, you are responsible for keeping up with these as they are posted on Canvas.
- <u>Bonus</u> readings are not required, I promise! These are readings that I consider foundational or important, so they inform the way I teach the class. They might be useful for you in this class because they may be great starting resources for your literature review (especially using the "Cited By" tool in GoogleScholar) and you can cite them in your Final Projects as 'course materials'.
- <u>Theory</u> days will have more reading and more lecture. It's especially helpful to come with questions on these days that help you and others understand big ideas.
- <u>Practice</u> days will center on student-facilitated discussion, and should apply
 theories from the class to a real-life situation. Come prepared to discuss in groups
 or other activities that your peers put together.

Date Class Meetings & Assignments

Part 1: Land

We will ask questions that bring us to understand how Western / settler / colonial ways of knowing shape human/non-human relations; crisis, scarcity and other narratives that authorize action over collaboration; and the role of states in mediating our relationship with land.

Image: "Yoshino cherry trees have graced the Quad since 1961." (*Pamela Dore/University of Washington*)



Week 0		
Thurs,	Sep	25

Introduction

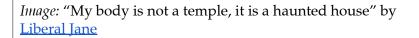
~ No reading ~

DATE	Class Meetings & Assignments
	Theory: Colonialism, militarization, and Indigenous futures
	Goodyear-Ka'ōpua N. (2018) Indigenous oceanic futures: Challenging settler
	colonialisms and militarization. In: Tuck E and Yang KW (eds) <i>Indigenous</i>
	and decolonizing studies in education: Mapping the long view. New York:
Wk 1	Routledge, 82-102.
Tues, Sep 30	Bonus
	Curley, A (2019) Beyond Environmentalism: #NoDAPL as an assertion of tribal
	sovereignty. In Estes, N and Dhillon, J (eds) Standing with Standing Rock: Voices
	from the# NoDAPL Movement. (pp 158-168). Minneapolis: University of
	Minnesota Press
	~ NO CLASS MEETING. Post on <u>Canvas Discussion Board</u> by Friday,
	11:59pm ~
Th O.1.2	Practice: This Land
Thurs, Oct 2	- "The Tribe" (30 minutes):
	https://crooked.com/podcast/this-land-episode-2-the-tribe/
	- "The Ruling" (34 minutes): https://crooked.com/podcast/the-ruling/
	Theory: Knowing Nature
	Liboiron, M (2021) <i>Pollution is Colonialism.</i> Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
	Chapter 3: "An Anticolonial Pollution Science." How does the CLEAR
Week 2	Lab develop anticolonial practices, especially in the "lab stories" shared in italics?
Tues, Oct 7	runes.
	Bonus
	Biermann, C and Mansfield, B (2014) Biodiversity, purity, and death: conservation
	biology as biopolitics. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 32:
	257-273 Prosti as Knayving Nature in the City
	Practice: Knowing Nature in the City Bang, M, Curley, L, Kessel, A, et al. (2014) Muskrat theories, tobacco in the
Thurs, Oct 9	streets, and living Chicago as Indigenous land. <i>Environmental Education</i>
	Research 20: 37-55
	Final Project Proposal due Friday, October 10
	Theory: Conservation
Week 3	Braverman, I (2008) "The Tree Is the Enemy Soldier": A Sociolegal Making of
Tues, Oct 14	War Landscapes in the Occupied West Bank. Law & Society Review 42:
	449-482

DATE	Class Meetings & Assignments
	Practice: "The Wanted 18"
Thurs, Oct 16	Bonus Robbins, P, McSweeney, K, Waite, T, et al. (2006) Even Conservation Rules Are Made to Be Broken: Implications for Biodiversity. Environmental Management 37: 162-169
	Learning Reflection 1 due Friday, Oct 17 by 10pm

Part II: Body Politics

Where 'land' allows us to think about management at a distance, bodies are intimate, squishy, weird. Bodies are also subject to ideas of what is 'natural' and 'normal'. This is most clear in terms of how US Western culture equates looking skinny with being healthy, and who has the right to make decisions about DNA, bodily autonomy, and decisions about whether a person is capable of informed consent.





Date	Class Meetings & Assignments
	Theory: The Science of Life
	Mansfield, B and Guthman, J (2015) Epigenetic life: biological plasticity,
	abnormality, and new configurations of race and reproduction. Cultural
	Geographies 22: 3-20
	Weathering / DNA Methylation: CodeSwitch (2018) "This racism is killing me
	inside." National Public Radio (NPR),
Week 4	https://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=57
Tues, Oct 21	<u>6818478</u> . Published January 10, 2018
1000) 000 21	
	Bonus
	Reardon, J and TallBear, K (2012) 'Your DNA Is Our History': Genomics,
	Anthropology, and the Construction of Whiteness as Property. Current
	Anthropology 53: S233-S245
	Roberts, D. (2011) Fatal Intervention: How science, politics, and big business re-create race in
	the twenty-first century. New York and London: New Press. Ch. 6

	Practice: Reference Man
	Facilitators: Heyli, Will, Maya, Logan
	Cram, S (2015) Becoming Jane: The making and unmaking of Hanford's
	nuclear body. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 33: 796-812
	Bonus
	Berne, P and Milbern, S (2017) "My Body Doesn't Oppress Me, Society Does." Barnard
Thurs, Oct 23	Center for Research on Women,
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7r0MiGWQY2g, Published May 9, 2017
	Piepzna-Samarasinha, LL (2018) Care Work: Dreaming disability justice. arsenal pulp
	press. [Selections provided, you can skip the interview/conversation at the
	end]
	Radiolab (2019) "G:Unfit." WNYC Studios,
	https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/articles/g-unfit
	Published July 17, 2019
	Theory: Normal Bodies
	<u>Content</u> : obesity and fatness
	Guthman (2011) Weighing In: Obesity, food justice and the limits of capitalism.
Week 5	Oakland: University of California Press. Chapter 3.
Tues, Oct 28	
	Bonus
	Spade D and Willse C. (2015) Norms and Normalization. In: Disch L and
	Hawkesworth M (eds) The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory. Oxford
	University Press, 551-571.
	Practice: Heavy
	<u>Content</u> : disordered eating; unhealthy relationships; gambling
Thurs, Oct 30	Laymon, K (2018) Heavy: An American Memoir. New York, NY: Scribner.
	"Been," "Nan," "Be," "Seat Belts," "Promises," "Bend"
	Reading guide: 🖪 Heavy Reading Guide COMM157

	Theory & Practice: Reproductive Justice [selections from below TBD]
	Gilmore, RW (2002) Fatal couplings of power and difference: Notes on
	racism and geography. Professional Geographer 54(1): 15-24
	Roberts, D (2015) "Reproductive Justice, Not Just Rights." Dissent
	Magazine,
	https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/reproductive-justice-
	not-just-rights Accessed October 15, 2015
	Tajima-Peña, R (2016) No Más Bebés. PBS Independent Lens.
Week 6	https://mediaspace.ucsd.edu/media/No+Mas+Bebes/1 73h077
Tues, Nov 4	pz/329962122
	<u>PE7 027 02122</u>
	Bonus
	Retro Report (2015) "The unrealized horrors of population explosion." The New York
	Times,
	http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/01/us/the-unrealized-horrors-of-populat
	ion-explosion.html Accessed May 31, 2015
	Sasser, J (2014) From Darkness into Light: Race, Population, and Environmental Advocacy. <i>Antipode</i> 46: 1240–1257
	Theory: Racial Capitalism
	Harvey, D. (2010) "Crisis of capitalism." RSA Animate,
	http://www.thersa.org/events/rsaanimate/animate/rsa-animat
	e-crisis-of-capitalism
	Kelley RDG. (2017) What did Cedric Robinson mean by racial
	capitalism? , Boston, MA: Boston Review, Available at:
Thurs, Nov 6	http://bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-
111415,11010	robinson-mean-racial-capitalism
	Bonus
	Nash, L (2008) Purity and danger: historical reflections on the regulation of
	environmental pollutants. Environmental History 13: 651-658
	Stern, AM (2005) Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern
	America. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Introduction & Ch 2 Veterans Day
Week 7 Tues, Nov 11	~ No Class Meeting ~
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	Practice: Viral Underclass
	Thrasher, SW (2022) The Viral Underclass: The Human Toll When Inequality and
	Disease Collide. Celadon Books. "An Invitation," Ch 9-10 and
	"Epilogue"
	Viral Underclass Reading Guide: ■ Viral Underclass Reading Guide COMM157
Thurs, Nov 13	
1110112)110112	Bonus
	Jimenez, JL, Marr, LC, Randall, K, et al. (2022) What were the historical reasons for the
	resistance to recognizing airborne transmission during the COVID-19
	pandemic? Indoor Air 32: e13070
	Thrasher, SW (2022) The Viral Underclass: The Human Toll When Inequality and Disease
	Collide. Celadon Books. Ch 1, 4 & 8
	Learning Reflection 2 due Friday, Nov 14 by 10pm

Part 3: Relations of Repair

While crisis narratives might authorize action without consent, the crises themselves -- of climate change, racism, settler colonialism -- are rifts in how people engage with nature. Empirical data tells us that we can't undo harms, restore ecologies, or return to purity. Course materials in this section ask, how can we come into right relations with other peoples and the land?

Image: Monica Trinidad, based on dialogue between Naomi Murakawa and Mariame Kaba



DATE	Class Meetings & Assignments
	Theory: Repair
	Bruno T, Curley A, Gergan MD, et al. (2024) The work of repair: land,
	relation, and pedagogy. Cultural Geographies 31: 5-19.
Week 8	Whyte, KP (2016) Is it colonial déjà vu? Indigenous peoples and climate
Tues, Nov 18	injustice. Humanities for the Environment. pp 102-119
,	
	Bonus
	Heynen, N and Ybarra, M (2021) On abolition ecologies and making freedom as a
	place. Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography 53: 21-35

	Practice: Repair
	Podcast from "Undammed: The Klamath River Story," at
	https://open.spotify.com/show/0IKmzyDxv8vBrRPOGhembX
Thurs, Nov 20	
	Bonus
	PBS (2023) "The Beautiful Undammed," WILD HOPE, PBS, published 6/12/2023 at https://www.pbs.org/video/the-beautiful-undammed-wild-hope-lvl01u/
	Theory: Climate Justice
	Méndez M. (2020) Climate Change from the Streets: How conflict and collaboration
	strengthen the environmental justice movement, New Haven: Yale
	University Press. Preface.
Week 9	Táíwò, O (2022) Reconsidering Reparations. Oxford University Press. Ch 5-6.
Tues, Nov 25	
·	Bonus
	Ray, SJ (2021) "Climate Anxiety Is an Overwhelmingly White Phenomenon." <i>Scientific American</i> ,
	https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-unbearable-whiteness-of-climate-anxiety/. Published March 21, 2021
Thurs, Nov 27	~ No Class ~
	Practice: Climate Justice
Week 10	Méndez M. (2020) Climate Change from the Streets: How conflict and collaboration
Tues, Dec 2	strengthen the environmental justice movement, New Haven: Yale
	University Press. Chapter 4
TI D (Last Day
Thurs, Dec 4	- Bring a shareable version of your final project for peer review
	Learning Reflection 3 due Friday, December 5 by 10pm
	Final Assignment due via Canvas Assignments

Course Policies

Academic Honesty: In fairness to students who put in an honest effort, cheaters will be punished. Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism (representing someone else's work as your own) demonstrates disrespect to both the instructor and your classmates. UCSD expects that both faculty and students will honor academic integrity to protect the validity of our intellectual work and ensure learning. For you, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. It is also against university policy to submit the same paper for credit in more than one course. Instructors, for our part, will exercise care in planning and supervising academic work and grading, to promote fairness, transparency, and honesty. Students who cheat or plagiarize will earn zero credit on the assignment in question, and I will report them to College authorities. Ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable defense. If you are unsure whether you have provided adequate citation for your work, you must either ask me or check with your friendly librarian before the assignment is due. Additional information is available at http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/

If you are interested in using ChatGPT or other AI technologies in completing coursework, please consult with your instructor before beginning the assignment. Students who use Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools to generate assignment context without written instructor permission will earn zero credit on the assignment and I will report them to university authorities. I reserve the right to request a discussion of any assignments, which could include an oral conversation to assess your mastery of the course concepts and materials.

Access and Accommodations: Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter (paper or electronic) issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (https://osd.ucsd.edu/). Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department in advance of any exams or assignments. If you have unmet access needs, please let me know and I will do my best to work with you to meet to increase access across multiple learning styles.

- Students are welcome to record audio, but they must inform me/classmates before turning on the recording in case participants choose not to self-identify.
- All PowerPoint/Google/Canva slides will be saved as a PDF and uploaded to our Canvas site, usually just before class.
- If you need extra time to complete in-class assignments, please check with the instructor to make arrangements to turn in the assignment.
- Please be in touch if anything about your circumstances change that impacts your ability to participate in the course. I am here to help you learn to the best of your ability, and I am only able to do so if I am aware of your situation. I don't need all the details, but a heads-up about how your health and/or family responsibilities may affect your ability to participate in class gives us an opportunity to talk about reasonable goals and develop an alternate learning contract.

Classroom Code of Conduct: I am committed to ensuring a classroom environment that contributes to teaching and learning for all students. You are invited to create an environment of mutual respect and intellectual productivity by listening and speaking with an open mind. Please remember that comfort is not safety, and feeling discomfort while learning new perspectives or ideas is a sign of growth. UCSD recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. Free speech does not permit harassment, intimidation, threats, or other behaviors that impede the learning of other students or the work of faculty and staff. Individuals who engage in disruptive behavior that creates a negative or threatening environment for teaching and learning will be asked to leave the classroom (or Zoom discussion) by the instructor. These requests are not negotiable. Disruptive behavior includes: verbal or physical aggression toward other students or faculty/TAs, threats of violence, unyielding argument or debate, yelling inside or outside of the classroom, untimely outbursts, violating class policies about technology use or seating, refusing to follow instructor directions, and entering and exiting the classroom in disruptive ways. Additionally, you may consult the UCSD Principles of Community: https://ucsd.edu/about/principles.html

Diversity is integral to academic excellence. My teaching seeks to foster reflexivity and shared knowledges across axes of difference including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion and immigration status. As everyone brings their experiences with them into the classroom, we must work together to build a community of respect.

Extensions and Late Policy: Assignments are late if they are not turned in via Canvas at the indicated date/time. Late assignments lose 10% per day they are late (this includes all Final Project and Learning Reflection assignments). If you are concerned about your ability to

complete your assignments on time, talk to me as soon as possible. Every student may have one three day assignment extension without penalty, but you have to tell me you are using it(!).

Title IX Compliance: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that are recipients of federal funds. You have the right to an educational environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. Sexual harassment or misconduct, whether physical or psychological, will not be tolerated. As a faculty member, I am required to report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you want to speak to a confidential source, you may contact the Counseling Center. The Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD http://ophd.ucsd.edu) provides information and assistance to students, faculty, and staff regarding reports of bias, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. You may receive confidential assistance at CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center at (sarc@ucsd.edu or http://care.ucsd.edu) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS http://caps.ucsd.edu).

Grade Scale

I do not grade on a curve. You earn your grades relative to course expectations, not your peers. UCSD's Grading System is explained here:

https://blink.ucsd.edu/instructors/academic-info/grades/system.html

A	94%	4.0	Students earn this grade for excellent work : their achievement is outstanding relative to the course requirements. Shows an incisive understanding of the topic, and demonstrates a high level of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity.
В	84%	3.0	Students earn this grade for good work : well-reasoned and thorough, sound content but not especially creative or sophisticated. Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency.
С	74%	2.0	Students earn this grade for satisfactory work : their achievement meets the course requirements in all respects.
D	64%	1.0	Students earn this grade for below satisfactory work : their achievement did not fully meet the course requirements.
D-	61%	0.7	Poor; lowest passing grade.
F	Below 61%	0.0	Students earn this grade if they fail to meet the course requirements.

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