

# AMST 523 The Environmentalism of the Poor

Wednesday 10-12:30

**Professor: David Correia**

**Office: Humanities 440**

**email: dcorreia@unm.edu**

**Office Hours: TTH 3:15-4; W 9-10 & 12:30-1:30**

## Course Description

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In this course we are interested in how colonial and neoliberal knowledge formations construct, and ruthlessly defend, normative categories of the human (on both a social and biological level), and of nature (both as an object and as a relation), as a means through which power is exercised and violence is practiced. We focus on the taken-for-granted categories of personhood and nature as the routes through which a biopolitics of colonial and neoliberal power and authority travel. We are interested in the forms that resistance to these arrangements takes. Are there alternative ways of knowing that resist and refuse these normative categories? And how do we participate in the construction of methodologies and ways of knowing that both undermine forms of domination and also contribute to liberatory social movements. We begin by exploring the production of colonial world-making and the politics of personhood and move on to consider how biopolitics, and particularly categories such as the non-human, figure into political and environmental dispossession—but also how they've come to offer alternative categories and experimental methodologies for decolonization projects. The texts in this course take colonial and neoliberal power relations seriously. They trace the way those social relations get produced and what they do once unleashed; how they are imposed and become contested; and what forms of resistance they provoke.

## Readings

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The following books can be found at the University Bookstore:

### Books (Required)

Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, 2010)

Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Duke, 2014)

Mel Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Duke, 2012)

Monique Allewaert, *Ariel's Ecology: Plantations, Personhood, and Colonialism in the American Tropics* (Minnesota, 2013)

Javier Aguayo and Debora Swistun, *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown* (Oxford, 2009)

Adriana Petryna, *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl* (Princeton, 2013)

Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (California, 2013)

Timothy Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison: An Ethnography of Endangerment in Hong Kong* (Duke, 2011)

Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Naguib Pellow, *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants vs. the Environment in America's Eden* (NYU, 2011)

Tania Murry Li, *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier* (Duke, 2014)

Julie Sze, *Fantasy Islands: Chinese Dreams and Ecological Fears in an Age of Climate Crisis* (California, 2015)

Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minnesota, 2014)

Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Duke, 2014)

### **Book Review List**

1. David Naguib Pellow, *Garbage Wars: The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago* (MIT Press 2004)
2. Julie Sze, *Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice* (MIT, 2006)
3. Andrew Ross, *Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City* (Oxford, 2011)
4. Michelle Murphy, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health and Technoscience* (Duke, 2012)
5. Susanna Hecht, *The Scramble for the Amazon and the "Lost Paradise" of Euclides da Cunha* (Chicago, 2013)

### **Course Requirements**

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One 10-12-page seminar paper	30%
Book review (~2,500 words)	20%
Class facilitation and participation	50%

### **Seminar Paper**

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The seminar paper will be a conference-length paper on a topic of your choice relevant to any of the course themes. A 250-word abstract will be due by March 10<sup>th</sup>. The final paper will be due at the beginning of the last day of class. Papers should be 10-12 pages (approximately 3000—4000 words), not including bibliography.

### **Book Review**

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Each student will prepare a book review for one of the four books listed on the book review list. Your review should follow the guidelines for a scholarly journal of your choice.

### **Seminar Facilitation**

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Each student will serve as an individual or group facilitator for class at least twice. Expectations and particular assignments will be discussed in more detail on the first day of class.

## **Tentative Class Schedule**

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**January 14:** Introduction

**January 21:**

Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, 2010)

**January 28:**

Monique Allewaert, *Ariel's Ecology: Plantations, Personhood, and Colonialism in the American Tropics* (Minnesota, 2013)

**February 4:**

Mel Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Duke, 2012)

**February 11:**

Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Duke, 2014)

**February 18:**

Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (California, 2013)

**February 25:**

Adriana Petryna, *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl* (Princeton, 2013)

**March 4:** No Class

**March 11:** SPRING BREAK

**March 18:** Book Review Due

Julie Sze, *Fantasy Islands: Chinese Dreams and Ecological Fears in an Age of Climate Crisis* (California, 2015)

**March 25:**

Timothy Choy, *Ecologies of Comparison: An Ethnography of Endangerment in Hong Kong* (Duke, 2011)

**April 1:**

Tania Murry Li, *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier* (Duke, 2014)

**April 8:**

Javier Aguayo and Debora Swistun, *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown* (Oxford, 2009)

**April 15:**

Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Naguib Pellow, *The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants vs. the Environment in America's Eden* (NYU, 2011)

**April 22: No Class**

**April 29:**

Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minnesota, 2014)

**May 4:**

Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Duke, 2014)