Environmental Activism
ENVST-UA 485
Th, 6:00-8:30pm
Dr. Tyson-Lord Gray; tlg8@nyu.edu
Office hours: 2:00–6:00pm (Thurs) by appointments
Office Location: 25 West 4th St. Rm. 545

Course Description:
This course examines how local and global activists respond to and engage environmental injustice outside the boundaries of traditional policy structures. We examine the tactics of extremist groups, grassroots movements, and faith-based organizations to understand why they choose the methods they do, how they seek change, how they measure success, and whether or not they are successful. The inquiry will be grounded in ethical, economic, socio-political, and critical race theory. We begin with a survey of these theoretical approaches, so that students can be conversant in these basic theories and vocabulary. We then use these tools to understand the local and global activism of movements such as Earth First, the Chipko Movement, the Green Belt Movement, GreenFaith, Green the Church, and other activism occurring on the fringes of traditional environmental policies. This course will examine three primary questions regarding environmental activism: 1) When do activists mobilize? 2) What tactics do they use and why? and 3) What qualifies as success and failure in environmental activism?

Learning Objectives:
This course seeks to develop students' understanding of the various modes of environmental activism, the reasons, the context, the means, the goals, and the outcomes. By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Articulate various methods, means, and modes of environmental activism.
- Explain the social, economic, and political challenges that create conditions for environmental activism.
- Articulate the philosophical values and underpinnings of those that engage in environmental activism.
- Explain the cultural and racial tensions that often give rise to environmental activism.
- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of particular environmental movements, cases, topics, and issues both domestically and internationally i.e. Earth First, Chipko Movement, Green Belt Movement, Slow Food Movement, Etc.

Required Texts:

Other course materials will include viewing documentaries, reviewing websites, and readings provided on NYU Classes. In all instances these will be either listed on the syllabus or announced in class.
CLASS OUTLINE/SCHEDULE
1/30 - Intro/Syllabus – What is Activism?

2/6 - What are the Key Issues/Concerns that lead to Environmental Mobilization?
   A) Perez – “Evolution of the EJ Movement”
   B) Pellow – Ch. 1, 10, 12, 14, 16
   C) The Guardian – “50 Activists”

2/13 – What makes an Activist? A Look at Leaders in the Environmental Movement?
   A) Biographic Portrayal Due
   B) A Fierce Green Fire – DOCUMENTARY

2/20 – NO CLASS

2/27 – International Environmental Activism
   A) MacDonald – “The Green Belt Movement”
   B) Taylor – “Green Belt Movement”
   C) http://www.greenbeltmovement.org

3/5 – International Environmental Activism
   A) Shiva – “Chipko Movement Evolution”
   B) Chipko Movement – DOCUMENTARY

3/12 – International Food Activism
   A) Rayman – “Time Magazine”
   B) Stubblefield – “What is the Slow Food Movement”
   C) Simonetti – “The Ideology of Slow Food”
   D) Slow Food – “Welcome to Our World”
   E) https://www.slowfood.com/

3/19 – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

3/26 – Food Justice in Environmental Activism
   A) Pellow Ch. 8-9

4/2 - Faith Based Environmental Activism
   A) Interfaith Power and Light Documentary – RENEWAL
   B) Going Green – RENEWAL
   C) Darlington – “The Ordination of a Tree”
   D) https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org
   E) https://greenfaith.org

4/9 – The Black Church and Environmental Activism
   A) Arp – “Religiosity”
   B) Green the Church DOCUMENTARY
   C) http://greenthetchurch.org
4/16 – Environmental Justice / Environmental Activism
   A) Pellow – Ch. 2-4
   B) Eco-Justice – RENEWAL

4/23 – Environmental Extremism
   A) Activist Facts – “Earth First”
   B) Taylor, *Earth First – Worldviews, Religion and the Environment*
   C) If a Tree Falls – DOCUMENTARY
   D) Barcott – “Tree Hugger to Terrorist”

4/30 – Presentations

5/7 - Final Exam

**Course Requirements**

**Quizzes (30%)** There will be a total of 3 quizzes, each counting for 10% of your final grade.

**Attendance and Participation (10%)** Each unexcused absence will result in a 1% deduction.

**Biographic Portrayal (10%)** Each student will have to select an environmental activist and present to the class as that person and share what actions, views, philosophies, and contributions to society make you an environmental activist.

**Presentations: (20%)** Students will be required to develop a strategy for activism addressing one of several contemporary environmental issues. Students are expected to provide an analysis of the issue as well as present guidelines for educating, mobilizing, and implements policy changes regarding their particular issue. More details will be provided later in the semester.

**Final Exam (30%)** For the final exam students will be asked to choose two essay questions from among three topics addressing main themes, issues, and movements discussed throughout the course. Students will be expected to show an understanding of the key issues that led to activism, the concerns, the methods used, and the outcome. Students will also be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the broader political and socio-economic concerns surrounding environmental activism.

**POLICIES:**

*Plagiarism:* Academic integrity means that the work you submit is original. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious — for example, presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written); writing a sentence or paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea(s) without a reference to the source of the idea(s); or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance). Receiving or giving help on a take-home paper, examination, or quiz is also cheating, unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects).
Extensions/Incompletes:
In the interest of fairness to other students, extensions and incompletes are only given in exceptional circumstances. Please discuss a request with me well before the due date.

Disability Disclosure Statement:
Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980. NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor New York, NY 10003-6675 Telephone: 212-998-4980 Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114 Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/csd.