ENVS 410/510: Justice, Capitalism, and the Anthropocene  
Spring 2019

Class schedule: Tuesday/Thursday 12-1:20 PM - Room: 142 COL

Instructor: Barbara Muraca, Ph.D. (bmuraca@uoregon.edu)
Office Hours: Thursday 3:30-5:30 PM & upon appointment - Room: 232 Susan Campbell Hall

GTF: Krysta Best
Office Hours: T-R 10:30-11:30 – UO Annex, Room 120.

Course Description
Geologists are about to name the age in which we live according to its main geological driving factor: human influence - the Anthropocene. This is at the same time a contested and powerful term. Who is meant by the ‘anthropos’, the human, responsible of the devastating ecological crisis we are facing? According to indigenous scholar Kyle Whyte the Anthropocene is intensified colonialism. For others, Capitalism and its specific relation to Nature should be at the core of the Anthropocene narrative. In this course we will discuss the different perspectives on the Anthropocene and analyze the modes of intensified colonization that started before the industrial revolution, but significantly increased in the last 5 decades, and their implications in terms of global justice. We will critically examine the specificity of a colonization that does not only extend to territories, communities, and natural resources, but also to the way in which people think, dream, shape their lives, and relate to other human and nonhuman others. We will also explore alternatives, breaking points, as well as forms of resistance and subversion.

Learning outcomes
In this class you will learn how to:
- compare, contrast, and critique different perspectives on the Anthropocene and connect them to issues of justice
- interpret, critically analyze, and discuss material from different disciplines, methodological approaches and traditions of thought
- apply the theoretical perspectives discussed in class to a critical analysis of daily life’s objects, practices, and tools
- design and conduct collaborative research projects and present them in different forms (as a poster, in written form or through other media)

Besides, graduate students will improve their skills in preparing and presenting a topic and in facilitating class discussion by practicing different methods.

Course Requirements
Consistent attendance, a close reading of all the texts, submitting assignments on time, and active participation during class discussions are necessary requirements for a successful completion.

This is an interactive lecture class. This means that we will have ongoing discussions (both online and in class) and exercises during class hours. Therefore, you are expected to attend class regularly, to come prepared in order to be able to accomplish the discussion assignments and the in-class exercises. Regular attendance is not only a form of respect towards your fellow students and your instructors, but also an indispensable condition for success! There is nothing more boring than a group discussion during which half of the discussants have no idea about the topic. Please come to class with the texts ready to hand (hard or electronic copy) and be prepared to ask and answer questions on the assigned material.

The readings will require time and close attention. Plan enough time to dedicate to the class material before each class session and never wait until the very last minute to prepare.
You will find all important information about the class, its structure, the readings, and the assignments on CANVAS. Please make sure you know how to work on Canvas and enable receiving notifications in your settings. As a navigation guide, please follow 'Modules' on Canvas: there you will find the class schedule week by week, materials, assignments due dates, and a detailed description of the requirements for each assignments (including the respective grading rubrics if any).

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing special accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with your GE and with me soon as well with the AEC.

**Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.** Please make sure that you know and understand exactly what plagiarism is all about BEFORE you start working on your writing assignments. If you are not sure, please contact me or your GE ahead of time.

**Land Acknowledgment:** [https://library.uoregon.edu/honoring-native-peoples-and-lands](https://library.uoregon.edu/honoring-native-peoples-and-lands)

### Schedule and Readings

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<th>Schedule of Class</th>
<th>Topics and Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<td><strong>Week 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Tuesday</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> to class, reciprocal expectations, structure, &amp; description of assignments (<em>if you cannot attend class, please make sure that you have access to all information</em>)</td>
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| **Week 3**  
- Tuesday | **Anthropocene or Capitalocene?** Are we not in the Age of Capitalism, a global system of framing social relationships to nature and to otherized human and nonhuman others? What is Racial Capitalism?  
Readings - Choose two from the following list:  
   https://bostonreview.net/forum/walter-johnson-to-remake-the-world | Readings response & Discussion 3 |
| - Thursday | **Ecology and Capitalism**  
Readings:  
| **Week 4**  
- Tuesday | **Capitalism and Social-Ecological Reproduction:** How is the hyper-exploitation of ‘nature’ and of so-called reproductive activities (care) linked in the Anthropocene?  
Readings:  
   Additionally, choose one from the following list:  
| - Thursday | **Anthropocene reconsidered:** is this really all about Capitalism? What does the concept of the Anthropocene entails in terms of political action and representation? What alternative ideas can ignite transformation?  
Readings - choose two of the following:  
2. Swyngedouw Interrupting the Anthrpo-obScene: Immuno-biopolitics and Depoliticising Ontologies in the Anthropocene  
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| **Week 5**  
- Tuesday | **Neoliberalism or putting Life to work - Biocapitalism and Biopolitics:**  
*Neoliberalism as an answer to the ecological crisis - The Life Turn in Capitalism*  
Readings - Choose two from the following list:  
| - Thursday | **Neoliberalism or putting life to work - Biocapitalism and Biopolitics:** discussion continued  
Readings - Choose two from the following list:  
| **Week 6**  
- Tuesday | **Poster Session and discussion in class** | Poster in class (submission of posters with comments by Friday) |
| - Thursday | **Extractivism under Neoliberalism:** resource extraction under neoliberalism  
Readings:  
1) Brand, Ulrich: Environmental crises and the ambiguous postneoliberalising of nature  
2) Swampa, Maristella: Resource Extractivism and Alternatives: Latin American Perspectives on Development. In: Lang, Miriam and Dunia Mokrani: Beyond Development. Alternative Visions from Latin America | Readings response & Discussion 6 |
| **Week 7**  
- Tuesday | **Imperial Way of Living:** What does it mean to live at others’ expense? What can we do to understand and address it?  
Readings:  
2) ILA Werkstatt: https://aufkostenanderer.org/publication-in-english-language/ | Readings response & Discussion 7 |
<p>| - Thursday | <strong>FILM: Sand Wars:</strong> Sand is one of the most scarce materials on Earth. Who knew? To secure nice beaches, roads, buildings, the effects of climate change for people, especially in the Global South, are worsened. | |</p>
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Assignments and Grades:

Assignments include (Detailed instructions about the form and structure of the assignments will be given during class & on Canvas in due course):

1) **Reading Responses and Discussion Post on Canvas**: 10 times over term, to be posted before class meeting: 5 pt. each, max. 50 points

2) **Social-Ecological Rucksack**: during the whole term you are required to choose a product/service/tool/practice and identify, analyze, and critically discuss its social-ecological burdens. To be submitted by the end of week 9: **10 points**

3) **Mid-Term Assignment: Poster** to be discussed during the in-class poster sessions (this is a group assignment) - see below for details: **15 pt.**

4) **Final Project/Paper**: (max 3000 words) - see below for details. **Max. 25 points**

5) **Only for graduate students** (PHL 510): one in class **presentation** and attendance to additional meetings: **max. 15 points**.

**Reading Responses and Discussion Post on Canvas**: each week you have the chance to post a brief response to one or more of the readings assigned for that date. The response should briefly address the reading(s) (by offering a brief summary or a brief list of key messages) and add a personal, well substantiated comment (something more than just whether you like it or not!). You are welcome to add additional material (including multimedia) to the post to contribute to the discussion in class. You have to post 10 responses to earn the full points and it is your choice which class meeting in each week you want to contribute to by your posting. To earn the full points, after having posted your contribution, add a brief (but substantial) comment to someone else’s contribution. Responses should be posted no later than 6pm of the day before the class meeting you are contributing to.

**Poster**: the poster session is scheduled at the beginning of week 6, during which we will have an extended in-class discussion of the topics addressed in the posters. The poster is a **group assignment**. Each group should have between 3 and max. 6 members. Groups will be set up on Canvas under ‘People’.

It is an essential requirements that each member actively participates in the group work. It is your responsibility to make sure that you find a group and communicate timely with the other groups members.

The poster will be discussed and commented in class by all students according to the method of a ‘poster walk’. After the discussion, by Friday of Week 6, the poster should be submitted on CANVAS, including the following: 1) picture or slides of the whole poster; 2) brief response to at least three
comments on the posters collected during the in-class discussion, and 3) a brief annotated bibliography including at least three of the readings from class plus additional material.

**Final project/paper:** (for papers max. 3000 words): based on the class material or on additional research documents related to the class topic. Topics have to be discussed timely with me. Alternatives formats to a paper (poster, web-based outcome, multimedia product, etc.) are welcome. In this case, you will have to include a brief introduction to the project (what, why, how) and an annotated bibliography, listing at least 3 readings from class and 3 additional readings that you used for your project. You are encouraged to to make the final project/paper into a collaborative work experience and a group assignment.

**Graduate Students** (PHL 510): One or more additional meeting(s) with graduate students will be scheduled throughout the term, in which the presentation will be prepared and discussed together. Additionally to the standard assignments, graduate students are required to give one brief presentation in class on the topic they are interested in and to organize the discussion afterwards together with the instructor. The presentation slides (or manuscript) will have to be discussed with me in advance and sent to me after the class session.

**Late Assignments policy:** if, in exceptional cases that you have discussed with your GE and with me, an assignment is posted moderately late, it will be accepted, but penalized by one point down per each full day. This does not work for the reading responses!

*Extra credits,* include summaries of public talks on Campus related to the class topics on the ground of a template/worksheet that will be posted on Canvas. **2 points each for a maximum of 6 points. To be submitted at the very latest by the last day of class of week 10. No later submission will be considered.**

All the assignments add up to a score of max. 100 points – 115 points for graduate students. Points roughly translate into letters according to the following table that serves as a general (not strictly mathematical) guidance:

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<th>Points</th>
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<td>Exceptional additional performance</td>
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<td>100-95</td>
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<td>94-90</td>
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