



School of the Environment  
**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

**ENV1113HS: Social Sustainability: Environmental Justice in Africa**

**Winter 2025**

**Tuesdays:** 3pm – 5pm

**Instructor:** Prof. Kariuki Kirigia

**Office Hours:** Thursdays 2-4pm or by appointment



*Trees felled to mark the border between Kenya and Tanzania in 2018. Photo by Kariuki Kirigia.*

## Course Description

This course sets out to critically explore environmental justice in Africa through rigorous engagement with African philosophies such as *Ubuntu*, that are anchored in African ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies, African feminisms, and imaginaries of African futures. The course material will include key texts and theories on African colonial histories and afterlives of colonialism, racial capitalism, historical and ongoing land injustices, climate change and climate justice, migration, African diasporic experiences, decolonization, biodiversity conservation, resource governance and conflicts, and environmental justice movements. To map the fast-evolving politics and poetics of environmental justice in the African context, we shall engage with African media, films, and collaborative projects with organizations. At the end of the course, students will have gained in-depth understanding of the complex nature of reading and writing about environmental justice in Africa, value of geographies of knowledge and onto-epistemic decolonization, and to design robust theoretical frameworks for studying environmental justice in Africa and beyond.

## Evaluation

**Participation (10%).** It is important that all students participate in the class. Do come to each class with a key point or question concerning each reading that will advance our collective learning.

**Essays (60%).** There will be two 1,500-word essays, each worth 30% of the grade, due by 11.59pm EST on the dates noted below. Essay topics will be shared by the course instructor a week before the assignment due date. The following are the key dates for the assignments:

- Essay #1 due: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- Essay #2 due: 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Group Assignment (30%):** A group assignment, worth 30% of the final grade, will be carried out as part of the Sandbox Project. Further details on the assignment including the due date and creation of groups will be provided in class.

## Late Submission

Assignments submitted after the due date without either prior arrangement with the course instructor or a documented excuse, will receive a 5% reduced grade per day late.

## Course Materials

The required course readings are available through your U of T library account. Additional course material including links to online articles and films will be provided by the course instructor through Quercus or via email.

## Communication

- Kindly use the subject line “ENV1113HS” in all email correspondence.
- Only use your @mail.utoronto.ca address in communication with me about this course to avoid your message being directed to the spam folder.
- I shall do my best to respond to your emails in a timely manner. Please allow between 48hrs to 72hrs of response time, excluding weekends and holidays.

## University of Toronto Policies

### Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

*"The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities."*

### Accommodation

*"The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs."*

*Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Accessibility Services\* office."*

Further information about accessibility services may be found here:

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/accessibility-services/> and [416-978-8060](tel:416-978-8060).

### Academic Integrity

*"All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (for example, the [University of Toronto website on Academic Integrity](#))."*

### Plagiarism Detection

*"Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>)."*

If, as a student, you object to using a plagiarism detection tool, see the course instructor for alternative arrangements for submission of your written assignments. These arrangements will include some or all of the following: submission of drafts; rough work and notes; complete reference list of sources used; a personal meeting with the instructor.

### Copyright and Course Readings

The material made available to you as part of your course is solely for your own personal and educational use (for research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review or news reporting), unless otherwise noted. It is important that students not redistribute this material to others, or make copies other than for a purpose related to their work in the course.

### Graduate Grade Scale

Truncated Letter Grade Scale	Numerical Scale of Marks
A+	90-100%
A	85-89%
A-	80-84%
B+	77-79%
B	73-76%
B-	70-72%
FZ*	0-69%

**\*FZ = Fail**

### Additional Resources

- Writing centres: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres>
- Health & Wellness: <http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/>
- Positive space (LGBTQ+ resources): <http://positivespace.utoronto.ca>
- Religious accommodations: <http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation>

### Classroom Housekeeping

- We will meet every Tuesday in person and online for this hybrid graduate seminar.
- Class starts 10 minutes after the hour, and there will be a 10-minute break halfway through the class.
- Please let me know your preferred pronouns and names if different from your official records.

### Land Acknowledgement

"We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land."

To learn more about the land acknowledgment, see here: <https://indigenous.utoronto.ca/about/land-acknowledgement/>

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## *Weekly Topics and Readings*

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### **Week 1 (7<sup>th</sup> January): Introduction**

1. Introduction
2. Course Overview

### **Week 2 (14<sup>th</sup> January): Environmental Justice in Theory and History**

1. Schlosberg, D. (2013). Theorising environmental justice: the expanding sphere of a discourse. *Environmental politics*, 22(1), 37-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2013.755387>
2. Chemhuru, M. (2022). *Environmental justice in African philosophy*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176718>
  - a. Chapter 1: Environmental Ethics in African Philosophy
3. Menkiti, I. (2017). Community, Communism, Communitarianism: An African Intervention. In A. Afolayan & T. Falola (Eds.), (pp. 461-473). Palgrave Macmillan.  
[https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59291-0\\_30](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59291-0_30)

### **Suggested Readings**

4. Bullard, R. D. (2001). Environmental Justice in the 21st Century: Race Still Matters. *Phylon*, 49(3/4), 151-171. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3132626>
5. Murdock, E. G. (2021). A history of environmental justice: Foundations, narratives, and perspectives. In B. Coolsaet (Ed.), (1 ed., pp. 6-17). Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429029585-2>

### **Week 3 (21<sup>st</sup> January): African Philosophies of Environmental Justice**

1. Etieyibo, E. (2017). Ubuntu and the Environment. In A. Afolayan & T. Falola (Eds.), (pp. 633-657). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59291-0\\_41](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59291-0_41)
2. Chemhuru, M. (2022). *Environmental justice in African philosophy*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176718>
  - a. Chapter 3: Environmental Justice from an African Land Ethic
3. Muhonja, B. B. (2020). *Radical utu : critical ideas and ideals of Wangari Muta Maathai*. Ohio University Press.
  - a. Preface; Chapter 2, 3, and 4

### **Week 4 (28<sup>th</sup> January) : Colonialism and Racial Capitalism**

1. Kiamba, M. (1989). The Introduction and Evolution of Private Landed Property in Kenya. *Development and Change*, 20(1), 121-147. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.1989.tb00342.x>

2. Fairhead, J., & Leach, M. (1996). *Misreading the African landscape : society and ecology in a forest-savanna mosaic*. Cambridge University Press.
  - Introduction
3. Al-Bulushi, Y. (2022). Thinking racial capitalism and black radicalism from Africa: An intellectual geography of Cedric Robinson's world-system. *Geoforum*, 132, 252-262. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.01.018>

#### **Suggested readings**

4. Fairhead, J., & Leach, M. (1996). *Misreading the African landscape : society and ecology in a forest-savanna mosaic*. Cambridge University Press.
  - a. Chapter 6: Enriching a landscape: working with ecology and deflecting successions
5. Benegiamo, M. (2021). Exploring Accumulation in the New Green Revolution for Africa: Ecological Crisis, Agrarian Development and Bio-Capitalism. *Accumulating Capital Today: Contemporary Strategies of Profit and Dispossession Policies*, 61-74.

#### **Week 5 (4<sup>th</sup> February) : The Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and Plantationocene**

1. Moore, J. W. (2017). The Capitalocene, Part I: on the nature and origins of our ecological crisis. *The Journal of peasant studies*, 44(3), 594-630. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1235036>
2. Wolford, W. (2021). The Plantationocene: A Lusotropical Contribution to the Theory. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 111(6), 1622-1639. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2020.1850231>
3. Davis, J., Moulton, A. A., Van Sant, L., & Williams, B. (2019). Anthropocene, Capitalocene, ... Plantationocene?: A Manifesto for Ecological Justice in an Age of Global Crises. *Geography Compass*, 13(5), e12438. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12438](https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12438)

#### **Suggested Reading**

4. Arsel, M. (2023). Climate change and class conflict in the Anthropocene: sink or swim together? *The Journal of peasant studies*, 50(1), 67-95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2022.2113390>

**\*\*\*Essay #1 due 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025\*\*\***

#### **Week 6 (11<sup>th</sup> February): Natural Resource Governance**

1. Manji, A. S. (2020). *The struggle for land and justice in Kenya*. James Currey.
  - Chapters 1, 2, & 7

2. Verhoeven, H. (2021). The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: Africa's Water Tower, Environmental Justice & Infrastructural Power. *Daedalus (Cambridge, Mass.)*, 150(4), 159-180. [https://doi.org/10.1162/daed\\_a\\_01878](https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01878)
3. Ndi, F. A. (2024). Justice concerns in large-scale renewable energy projects: a case study echoing the importance of procedural justice in wind energy development in Kenya. *Energy, sustainability and society*, 14:47(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13705-024-00482-z>

#### **Suggested readings**

4. Enns, C. (2019). Infrastructure projects and rural politics in northern Kenya: the use of divergent expertise to negotiate the terms of land deals for transport infrastructure. *The Journal of peasant studies*, 46(2), 358-376.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1377185>
5. Agarwal, B. (2001). Participatory exclusions, community forestry, and gender: An analysis for South Asia and a conceptual framework. *World development*, 29(10), 1623-1648.

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### ***Week 7 (18<sup>th</sup> February): Reading Week***

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#### **Week 8 (25<sup>th</sup> February): Black Geographies and Environmental Justice**

1. Hecht, G. (2023). *Residual governance : how South Africa foretells planetary futures*. Duke University Press.
  - Introduction: The Racial Contract is Technopolitical
  - Chapter 1: You Can See Apartheid From Space
  - Chapter 2: The Hollow Rand
  - Chapter 4: South Africa's Chernobyl?

#### **Suggested Readings**

2. Hecht, G. (2023). *Residual governance : how South Africa foretells planetary futures*. Duke University Press.
  - Chapter 3: The Inside-Out Rand
  - Chapter 5: Land Mines

#### **Week 9 (4<sup>th</sup> March): Violence in Development**

1. Pierre, J. (2020). The Racial Vernaculars of Development: A View from West Africa. *American Anthropologist*, 122(1), 86-98. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13352>
2. Rutten, M. (2008). Why De Soto's Ideas Might Triumph Everywhere But In Kenya: A Review Of Land-Tenure Policies Among Maasai Pastoralists. In A. Leliveld, M. Rutten, & D. Foeken (Eds.), (Vol. 7, pp. 83-118). BRILL. <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004158405.i-306.32>



3. Tschakert, P. (2010). Digging Deep for Justice: A Radical Re-Imagination of the Artisanal Gold Mining Sector in Ghana. In *Spaces of Environmental Justice* (pp. 116-152). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444322767>.

### **Suggested Readings**

4. Unks, R. R., Goldman, M. J., Mialhe, F., Gunnell, Y., & Hemingway, C. (2023). Diffuse land control, shifting pastoralist institutions, and processes of accumulation in southern Kenya. *The Journal of peasant studies*, 50(5), 1757-1790. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2022.2160630>

### **Week 10 (11<sup>th</sup> March) : Neoliberal and Militarized Conservation**

1. Ramutsindela, M., Mushonga, T., & Matose, F. (2022). *The violence of conservation in Africa: state, militarization and alternatives*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
  1. Chapter 1: Conservation and violence in Africa
  2. Chapter 2: The state and contested natural resources in Africa
2. Lunstrum, E. (2014). Green Militarization: Anti-Poaching Efforts and the Spatial Contours of Kruger National Park. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(4), 816-832. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2014.912545>
3. Bersaglio, B., & Enns, C. (2024). Settler Ecologies and the Future of Biodiversity: Insights from Laikipia, Kenya. *Conservation and society*, 22(1), 1-13. [https://journals.lww.com/coas/fulltext/2024/22010/settler\\_ecologies\\_and\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_biodiversity\\_1.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/coas/fulltext/2024/22010/settler_ecologies_and_the_future_of_biodiversity_1.aspx)
4. Holmes, G. (2011). Conservation's Friends in High Places: Neoliberalism, Networks, and the Transnational Conservation Elite. *Global Environmental Politics*, 11(4), 1-21.

### **Suggested Readings**

5. Benjaminsen, T. A., Goldman, M. J., Minwary, M. Y., & Maganga, F. P. (2013). Wildlife Management in Tanzania: State Control, Rent Seeking and Community Resistance. *Development and Change*, 44(5), 1087-1109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12055>
6. Ramutsindela, M., Mushonga, T., & Matose, F. (2022). *The violence of conservation in Africa: state, militarization and alternatives*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
  - a. Chapter 3: The violence of greening the state in Africa

**\*\*\*Group Assignment due ##<sup>th</sup> March 2025\*\*\***

### **Week 11 (18<sup>th</sup> March) Borders, Coloniality, and African Diaspora**

1. Goldman, M. (2020). *Narrating nature : wildlife conservation and Maasai ways of knowing*. The University of Arizona Press. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/78235>
  - a. Chapter 2: Mapping the Study of *Emanayara* Maasailand
  - b. Chapter 4: Bounding Nature and Reorganizing Maasailand



2. Danewid, I. (2021). "These Walls Must Fall": The Black Mediterranean and the Politics of Abolition. In G. Proglia, C. Hawthorne, I. Danewid, P. K. Saucier, G. Grimaldi, A. Pesarini, T. Raeymaekers, G. Grechi, & V. Gerrand (Eds.), (pp. 145-166). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51391-7\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51391-7_8)
3. Checker, M. (2008). Eco-Apartheid and Global Greenwaves: African Diasporic Environmental Justice Movements. *Souls*, 10(4), 390-408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940802523968>

### **Suggested Readings**

4. Danewid, I. (2017). White innocence in the Black Mediterranean: hospitality and the erasure of history. *Third World Quarterly*, 38(7), 1674-1689. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1331123>

### **Week 12 (25<sup>th</sup> March): Decolonization and Epistemic Freedom**

1. Fanon, F., Philcox, R., Sartre, J.-P., Bhabha, H. K., & West, C. (2021). *The wretched of the earth* (60th anniversary edition / [with a new introduction by Cornel West]. ed.). Grove Press.
  - a. Introduction to the Sixtieth Anniversary Edition, by Cornel West
  - b. Chapter 1: On Violence.
2. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2018). *Epistemic Freedom in Africa : Deprovincialization and Decolonization (Edition 1)* (1st ed., Vol. 1). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429492204>
  - a. Introduction (p.1-31)

### **Suggested readings**

3. Robinson, D. F., Abdel-Latif, A., & Roffe, P. (2017). *Protecting traditional knowledge : the WIPO intergovernmental committee on intellectual property and genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore*. Routledge.
4. Parker, J. D. (2022). Ecologies of Development: Ecophilosophies and Indigenous Action on the Tana River. *History in Africa*, 49, 65-96. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hia.2022.11>

### **Week 13 (1<sup>st</sup> April): Research and African Futures**

1. Kroeker, L. (2022, 2022/08/01). African Renaissance, Afrotopia, Afropolitanism, and Afrofuturism: Comparing Conceptual Properties of Four African Futures. *Africa Spectrum*, 57(2), 113-133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00020397221101633>
2. Chemhuru, M. (2022). *Environmental justice in African philosophy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176718>
  - a. Chapter 6: Intergenerational Environmental Justice in African Philosophy
3. Hecht, G. (2023). *Residual governance : how South Africa foretells planetary futures*. Duke University Press.
  - b. Conclusion: Living in a Future Way Ahead of Our Time

**\*\*\*Essay #2 due 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025\*\*\***