Political scientist Harold Lasswell focused his study of politics on the use of power to shape the distribution of value in societies. He is widely quoted as defining politics as the process of deciding “who gets what, when, and how.” This quarter we will examine how power shapes and is reinforced by the construction of environmental inequality. That is, with respect to spaces, or environments, we will ask “who gets what, when, and how”? Why do some of us have the good fortune to breathe clean air, drink safe water, and wander through gorgeous forests while others drink leaded water and have no access to fresh fruit? Still others harvest the fruit, exposing their bodies to an array of toxic substances. We will examine how the exercise of power in political economic institutions shapes differential access to varying environments.

Environmental policies and practices distribute various environmental benefits and burdens as well as opportunities to participate in environmental policy making. During the 1980s, movements challenging environmental injustices emerged in the United States. Activists argued that their communities endured disproportionate costs of industrial development, including exposure to various toxic substances. During the next several decades, claims expanded to address access to environmental goods (e.g., clean air, open space, good neighborhoods, healthy food) and acknowledgement of the environmental expertise of communities of color and other marginalized groups.

Our goal is to examine the extent and nature of environmental inequality, how communities have organized to frame claims of environmental injustice, and how political institutions have processed these claims. Our discussions will draw on concepts from several areas of political science and environmental studies. Among the most central concepts are social justice, racism, class, and sustainability.

Texts
Reading will be drawn from the following books and a number of article-length manuscripts.


Grades and Requirements
Grades are a source of unpleasantness and ambivalence for me. I am not at all sure of their value; their assignment often reveals a gulf in understanding between students and me. But assigning grades is part of my job and I am committed to doing it with integrity. Thus I do my best to assign letter grades that reflect the quality of students' work. In my experience, some of that work is excellent; some is good;
much of it is fair; and some is indeed poor. For the purpose of calculating grades, each assignment will be weighted according to the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Inequality Paper (2/5)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy/Governance Paper (2/19)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper (3/11)</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination (3/17)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing**

Because writing proficiency is a central attribute of good scholarship, we will devote particular attention to improving the quality of your writing. We will take some class time to discuss common challenges in writing. In advance of those discussions, I offer the following suggestions regarding writing. First, use words economically. If a word, sentence, or paragraph is not essential to your analysis, omit it. Second, organize your effort by constructing an outline before you write. An outline will help to discipline your analysis. Third, do not submit your first draft; few of us are sufficiently talented to inflict our first drafts on others. Plan your schedule so that you have sufficient time to complete a draft of each assignment and then return to it at least a day later. Re-read it and revise to ensure clarity. Fourth, consider your audience. For this course, you may assume an audience of college students who have not studied environmental justice. You should demonstrate your regard for that audience by defining important concepts and presenting clear explanations that do not unduly tax your readers’ patience. Fifth, for all assignments, be sure to cite all sources and append a list of references; please use parenthetical citation. Within the text, cite the author and date for ideas that are not your own and for facts that are not common knowledge. When you quote another author or paraphrase a very specific claim, also cite the page number on which the relevant passage may be found. Try to paraphrase when possible, avoiding extended quotations. You may use APSA, APA, or Chicago style for parenthetical citation. Finally, there are rules or conventions of grammar, punctuation, citation, and syntax. Please follow these rules.

For further discussion of grammar and style, you may wish to consult Jack Lynch’s, *Guide to Grammar and Style*, and William Strunk and E.B. White’s, *The Elements of Style*, which is available in most bookstores.

**Assignments**

**Midterm Papers**

The first two papers will draw primarily on course reading and class discussion. These papers should range from four to five pages.

*Constructing and Evaluating Evidence of Environmental Inequality*: During the first several weeks of class we will review how scholars and activists have constructed a body of evidence regarding the distribution of environmental quality. Though recent research in this area consistently finds a relation between race and environmental quality, early research generated mixed findings. We will examine how both methods and theory have developed in this area of study. We will also review the Environmental Protection Agency’s, EJSCREEN, an online tool that can be used to identify several kinds of environmental inequality. For this paper, you will have the option of using EJSCREEN to compare
environmental burdens experienced by two neighborhoods or responding to a question that I will distribute one week before the paper is due.

*Environmental Justice Policy/Governance:* The Trump Administration has initiated efforts to reverse many environmental protection policies. After several class sessions reviewing the structure of environmental (justice) policy, we will look at some of the Trump Administration proposals. You have two options for this paper. One is to select a Trump Administration policy proposal, describe progress implementing it, and analyze how it might affect environmental justice. A second option is to respond to a question about environmental justice policy that I will distribute one week before the paper is due.

*State Environmental Justice Movement Research* This project has both data collection and writing components. Students will select a state and conduct newspaper searches for the period 1985-2020 on the topics of environmental justice and environmental racism. After collecting relevant news articles, students will build a database of environmental justice movement activity for their state. I will provide an Excel spreadsheet to ease your data organization task. After completing your database, you will write a paper (6-8 pages) describing the development of the movement in your state. Students may choose to work with partners on data collection to compare two or more states. Please consult with me before you begin research.

*Final Examination:* The exam will include two essay questions. I will distribute a set of four questions one week before the examination. On the day of the examination I will select two questions and you will have the entire class period to respond. You may bring one page of notes to the examination.

**Instructor's Policies**

*Accommodations:* Please let me know if you require any accommodations regarding class sessions or examinations. I will work with the *Disability Access Center*, [https://disability.wwu.edu](https://disability.wwu.edu), to provide appropriate accommodations.

Western also has a policy to ensure *religious accommodations*. You may find the relevant information here: [https://syllabi.wwu.edu](https://syllabi.wwu.edu).

*Academic Honesty:* The core requirement of academic honesty is that we do not take credit for others’ work. When we draw on the work of others (through direct quotation, the use of ideas developed by other authors, or by making factual claims), we must acknowledge original sources. I am happy to discuss any concerns regarding citation with you. You may find information about academic dishonesty at [http://libguides.wwu.edu/plagiarism](http://libguides.wwu.edu/plagiarism). You may find a more general discussion about academic integrity at [http://www.wwu.edu/integrity/](http://www.wwu.edu/integrity/).

**Class Sessions and Assigned Reading**

- Please complete reading **before** the class session for which it is assigned.
- Please bring the texts to class so that we may refer to them during our discussions.
- The schedule below is tentative and may change during the quarter; you are responsible for being aware of any changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Reading</th>
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### Part 1 Introduction: Inequality, Politics, and Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>Environmental Injustice as Social Problem and Policy Focus</td>
<td>Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Injustice as Social Problem II</td>
<td>Trump’s EPA Concludes Environmental Racism Is Real</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Environmental Injustice as Social Problem and Policy Focus

**Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty**, 1-15

**Trump’s EPA Concludes Environmental Racism Is Real**

#### Environmental Injustice as Social Problem II

Walker, Chapters 1-2

Recommended:

**Pursuing a Toxic Agenda**


#### Environment and Race

Walker, Chapter 3


Recommended:

**Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty**, Chapter 2


https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2018.00058/full?&utm_source=Email_to_authors&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=T1_11.5e1_author&utm_campaign=Email_publication&field&journalName=Frontiers_in_Communication&id=425909

### Part 2 Empirical Evidence of Environmental Inequality

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>Assessing Inequality I</td>
<td>Walker, Chapter 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pastor, Manuel, James Sadd, and Rachel Morello-Frosch. 2007. Still Toxic After All These Years: Air Quality and Environmental Justice in the San Francisco Bay Area. Center for...
### 1/21

**Assessing Inequality II**  
Walker, Chapter 5  
**EJ Screen** (download [user guide](#)). Look at webpage before class. We will use in class.

Recommended:  
**Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty**, Chapter 3  

### 1/23

**Assessing Inequality III**  

Recommended:  

1/28

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distributing Environmental Goods</th>
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<tr>
<td>Walker, Chapter 7</td>
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Recommended:

Part 3 Public Policy

1/30

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The EPA and Environmental Justice I</th>
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[Executive Order 12898](http://www.aiacc.org/2012/05/29/20792/)

Recommended:

2/4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The EPA and Environmental Justice II</th>
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</table>

Recommended:
Pursuing a Toxic Agenda  
78 Environmental Rules on the Way Out Under Trump

2/5

| Environmental Inequality Paper Due (4 PM) |

2/6

<p>| The EPA and Environmental Justice III |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Title and Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Part 4 Environmental Justice and Democracy: Flint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/25</td>
<td>Policy/Governance Paper Due (4 PM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/20</td>
<td>Emergence of a Crisis Pauli, Introduction, Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/25</td>
<td>Narratives of a Crisis</td>
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</table>
### Part 5 Environmental Injustice

**3/5**

**Climate Justice and Struggles Against Colonialism**

Walker, Chapter 8


**Indigenous Environmental Network**: Look through progress report.

**Recommended:**


**3/10**

**Pesticides**


**Agricultural Worker Protection Standard CHAMACOS**

**Recommended:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>State Environmental Justice Movement Research Paper Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3/12 | Summing Up  
| 3/17 1-3 PM | Final Examination |
Appendix: Student Learning Objectives
Of late, Western (along with many other universities) has taken great interest in the practice of assessment. One of the consequences of this interest is a requirement that faculty list student learning objectives on their syllabi (as opposed to narrating a direction of inquiry in a paragraph). Please do not let the following limit what you take from your work in this class.

1. Possess substantive knowledge in the disciplines of political science, geography, and sociology related to the phenomenon of environmental injustice and public policies that address it.
2. Exhibit analytical skills in interpreting data related to claims about environmental (in)equality.
3. Demonstrate writing competence.
4. Engage in independent research. The writing assignments will allow you to practice research (independently).
5. Demonstrate critical, independent thinking about politics and public life as related to environment and social justice.