Race has been a controversial topic for the largely White and affluent environmental movement. In this course we will examine how this racial bias has arisen and what many are doing to promote more diverse and equitable strategies for sustainability. Using a historical and sociological perspective we will cover key modes of environmental thought coming from African American, Latino, Asian and Indigenous communities. Themes include the legacy of slavery and its effect on participation in the environmental movement, the role of racialized modes of thought such as hip hop and the environmental justice movement.

Required Readings

Grading: Attendance and Participation (20%), unit reflections/evaluations (20%), Black and Green monologue (45%), Team project (15%)

I. Metaphor and Metamorphosis (read by 9/11)
The Green Collar Economy – Van Jones; Rainbow Warrior – Adrienne Maree Brown*; Ecology is a Sistah’s Issue too – Shamara Riley*
MEDIA: Majora Carter 2005 TED talk, Van Jones Bioneers 2007 speech
Key terms: Environmental Justice

II. The Jungle
African American Environmental Thought Foundations – Kimberly Smith
Read intro and ch. 1-3 for 9/18, read ch. 4 to the end for 9/25
Hoods and the Woods: Rap Music as Environmental Literature – Rosenthal
Teaching a Hip Hop Ecology – Cermak, read both papers for 9/25
Reflection 1 DUE 9/18
MEDIA: The Roots- Rising Down, Mos Def & Talib Kweli - Respiration
Key terms: Gaia Hypothesis, Mother Nature, Pachamama, Respiration

III. The Garden (read by 10/2)
Is Pollution a White thing? – Hershey and Hill*; Environmentalism of African Americans – Parker and McDonough* MEDIA: The Garden(FILM);
Planting For Peace (FILM); Wil Bullock – Time For Change
Reflection 2 DUE 10/2; written draft of monologue DUE 10/19
Reflection 3 DUE 10/23
Key terms: sustainable urban agriculture, monoculture, the US farm bill

IV. Natives and Aliens (read by 10/30)
LaDuke essays*; The Garden and the Sea – Lynch*, Dungy p.135
MEDIA: March Point (FILM); We Still Live Here (FILM)
Presentation 1 of monologue to be scheduled and completed by 11/2
Key terms: biodiversity, invasive species

* Readings with a “*” can be found online at cms.bc.edu
V. The Fountain (read by 11/13)

Hip Hop and Environmental Education: Towards a Critical Ecological Literacy – Cermak*; To Rap of Rivers: the sociocultural implications of the African American Lyrics about Water –Cermak*; “The Bees” Dungy p.78

MEDIA: Mos Def New World Water

Presentation 2 of monologue to be completed by 11/23
Reflection 4 DUE 11/27
Key terms: Bees, colony collapse disorder; Bottled Water issues

Final Presentations: Tuesday, December 4th 12-2:30pm

Assignment Descriptions:

Black and Green Monologue (45% of total grade)
Focus: Reconstructing a symbol of environmentalism
The major project for this course will be the development of a five minute oral presentation. This piece will be written first (900 word limit), then presented to the class for feedback and edits and finally presented in its final form. Your task is to choose a symbol of contemporary environmentalism (ex: hybrid cars) and bring a perspective that will add a dimension of social justice to the narrative of this symbol. You are required to include at least one excerpt of related poetry that supports your topic. At the same time you deconstruct this symbol you will incorporate your personal social location and history to enhance your argument.

Grading (50% of total grade)
- Written Draft /Meeting (10%)
  A written draft (900 word limit) and a mandatory editing meeting with the instructor is to be scheduled outside of class time.
- Group Presented version 1 & 2 (15%)
  You will be working in a peer group of five and required to schedule two one-hour sessions for a draft presentations outside of class time. You will be given feedback on the draft and on presentation.
- Final Presentation (20%)
  This is the final presentation of the monologue and is expected to be performed from memory.

Unit Reflections (20% of total grade)
You are required create reflections synthesizing the readings for the first four units. There will be a specific prompt for each of the reflections with the work equivalent to three pages of writing. These reflections take the form of written and recorded responses to various media from class. These reflections are scored on a 10 point scale and submitted on Blackboard Vista (cms.bc.edu).

Team Project (15% of total grade)
As a class we will be coordinating one event for the larger Boston College community. This event will take place in late October/early November and will be selected by the class for content and audience. Participation and effort in planning this event will be graded and a 2-3 page self-evaluation is required.

* Readings with a “*” can be found online at cms.bc.edu