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%), Weekly Reflections (20%), Black and Green monologue (45%), Team project (15%)

I. Metaphor and Metamorphosis (read by 9/15)
The Green Collar Economy – Van Jones; The Soul of Environmentalism – Gelobter et al.*; Ain’t I an Environmentalist – Ludovic Blain*; Rainbow Warrior – Adrienne Maree Brown*; Ecology is a Sistah’s Issue too – Shamara Riley*
MEDIA: Majora Carter TED talk, Van Jones Bioneers 2007 speech
Key terms: Environmental Justice, the Death of Environmentalism

II. The Jungle
African American Environmental Thought Foundations – Kimberly Smith
Hoods and the Woods: Rap Music as Environmental Literature - Rosenthal
Read intro and ch. 1-3 for 9/22, read ch. 4 to the end and Rosenthal for 9/29
MEDIA: The Roots- Rising Down, Mos Def & Talib Kweli - Respiration
Key terms: Gaia Hypothesis, Mother Nature, Pachamama, Respiration

III. The Garden (read by 10/13)
Is Pollution a White thing? – Hershey and Hill*; Environmentalism of African Americans – Parker and McDonough*
MEDIA: Planting for Peace; The Garden; Wil Bullock – Time For Change
Written Draft of Monologue DUE 10/13
Key terms: sustainable urban agriculture, monoculture, genetically modified foods, the US farm bill

IV. Natives and Aliens (read by 10/27)
LaDuke essays*; The Garden and the Sea – Lynch*
MEDIA: March Point; Kamilah Aisha Moon in Dungy .p135
Presentation 1 of monologue to be completed by 11/1
Key terms: biodiversity, invasive species

* Readings with a “**” can be found online at cms.bc.edu
V. The Fountain (read by 11/17)
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 12/8
Key terms: Bees, colony collapse disorder; Bottled Water issues

Final Presentations: Thursday December 15th, 1:30pm-4:30pm

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 (1000 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 two excerpts of related poetry that support 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 (1000 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.
- Presented version 3 (20%)
  This is the final presentation of the monologue and is expected to be performed from memory.

Weekly Reading Reflections (20% of total grade)
You are required to write two to three-page reflections synthesizing the readings for each week (12 total). There will be a specific prompt for each of the reflections. 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