

Problems in Philosophy Seminar: Environmental Justice as Immigrant Justice

Term: Fall 2023

Instructor: Michael Ball-Blakely

Class Meeting: W 4:30 – 7:20

Location: Psychology Building 306

Office Hours: Tue & Thu 9 - 10:30

Credits: 3

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Cross listings: PHIL 5352, PHIL 4352, MAIS 5350

Office Location: Worrell Hall 301

Course Description:

Immigration justice primarily involves questions about the rights of immigrants and would-be immigrants to space, membership, and autonomy. For example, we might ask about their rights to: remain in and exercise sovereign control over their home countries, seek refuge in other countries, move in search of opportunities, and be treated as full and equal persons in receiving countries. Questions of environmental justice, by contrast, focus primarily on the distribution and benefits of changes to our lived environment. Here we might ask questions about, for example: who suffers from climate change, who experiences the costs and benefits of climate mitigation, whether and to what extent peoples have environmental sovereignty, and where pollution, waste, and extraction occur.

Though they are often treated separately, this seminar will investigate how questions of immigration justice and environmental justice are often deeply interwoven. We will consider the ways that extractivism, climate change, and a loss of environmental sovereignty can undermine autonomy, erode living conditions, and lead to migration pressure. We will look at how borders work to prevent the movement of people but *not* the environmental causes of this movement. And we will investigate what justice requires for climate refuges—as well as whether, and to what extent, the label “climate refugee” is appropriate or desirable. In addition, though we will not have time to consider it directly, we might also consider the implications of poor, nonwhite, and particularly undocumented immigrants working in, and living amid, high-polluting industries as a paradigm case of environmental injustice.

Course Objectives

Over the seminar, students will learn more about the foundations of immigration and environmental justice as well as the social-scientific literature on the causes of immigration (including how human mobility flows fit within economic, imperial, and extractive relationships). Students should also leave with a strong competence in refugee justice—especially climate refugees—and environmental arguments for and against open borders. Students will also hone their skills at reading, analyzing, and conveying the key details of philosophical texts. Finally, students will gain experience presenting and commenting on academic papers, as well as in developing strong, carefully argued academic papers.

Course Requirements and Grading

Weekly Reading Response:

- A) Starting 9/5 & ending 11/15, you'll submit a weekly 1-2-page paper. You should briefly explain and critically engage with a major argument in one primary or secondary readings. Due by noon each Tues. **10% (Grad) & 30% (Undergrads)**
- B) Each **graduate** student will also write one longer 3- to 4-page paper that develops a more substantive criticism of a major argument in one of the primary or

secondary readings. These will be instead of, not in addition to, the weekly reading response in A above. You will submit them to the class and give a fifteen-minute presentation on your paper. These are due by noon on the day before class. **15%**

- C)** Each **graduate** student will also present one five-minute commentary during the semester. This commentary will be on that week's student paper (see B above). This should either provide an alternative analysis of the text OR a critical analysis of the claims made in the student paper. These will be due by 8am on the day that you will be presenting your commentary. **5%**

Paper Topic: To prepare for the final paper, you will submit a brief 1-2 sentence description of your intended topic as well as a 1-2 sentence summary of your intended thesis. None of this is binding—you can change your topic. **Due 11/20 5%**

Paper Abstract and Outline: As you develop your paper, you will submit an abstract (2-3 paragraphs) and outline (1-2 pages) to get more substantial feedback. These should include as much as you can of your thesis and the relevant supporting claims. **Due 11/27 5%**

Paper Conference: On the last day of class (**12/6**) we will have a paper conference. Students will be paired and will send one another drafts of their final papers (these can be rough, but should be close to complete). Each student will present for 15 minutes, followed by a 5-minute commentary from your assigned peer. Finally, there will be 5 minutes for discussion from other students. You will be graded based on a) sending your draft, b) your presentation, & c) your commentary. Papers should be sent to me and your commentator by noon on **12/3. 20%.**

Term Paper: Undergrads: 2,200-2,500-word paper. **Graduate** students: 2,600-3,200-word paper on any topic from the course. See the Blackboard handout for more information. This paper should show a strong understanding of a major line of thought from the class, involve external research (3+ sources should be cited from outside our course), and should advance an argument of your own. The idea is to work on a paper that could be revised and turned into a writing sample or a publication. **Due 12/11 40%**

Grading Scale: 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; 59 and below = F

Communication: I will try to respond to each weekday email within 24 hours. Put the course title in the subject line and include your full name in the body. Weekend emails might not receive replies until Monday morning. I will also post the occasional Blackboard update, so be sure to keep an eye on those. Finally, please consider attending office hours!

Required Texts:

- Justin Akers Chacón – The Border Crossed Us
- David Miller – Strangers in Our Midst [[Available for download through UTEP's library](#)]

Reading List: See next page. Readings from the two required books will be marked with an asterisk (*). All other readings will be available as a PDF on Blackboard.

	Topic	Primary	Secondary	Optional
8/30	Immigration Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carens - Aliens & Citizens (21) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benhabib - The Law of Peoples, Distributive Justice, & Migration (58) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rawls - The Law of Peoples (33)
9/6	Immigration Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miller - Strangers in Our Midst Chs 1-4 (75) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellman - Immigration and Freedom of Association (33)
9/13	Imm. Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miller- Strangers in Our Midst Chs 5-9 (89) 		
9/20	Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell - Environmental Justice and Rawls's Difference Principle (20) Warren - Environmental Justice: Some Ecofeminist Worries (11) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carruthers - The Globalization of EJ (10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shrader-Frechette - Environmental Justice Intro (19) Shrader-Frechette - Ch 2 (24)
9/27	Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hernandez - Immigration, Mobility, and Environmental Injustice (12) Pellow and Vazin - The Intersection of Race, Immigration Stats and EJ (12) Medium article: Supporting Immigrants to Advance Environmental Justice (5) No-Burn.org article: No Borders: There is no Environmental Justice Without Immigrant Justice (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mousie - Global Environmental Justice and the Postcolonial Critique (22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tubert - Environmental Racism: A Casusal and Historical Account (9)
10/4	Immigration Embedded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reed-Sandoval - The New Open Borders Debate (15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chacón - The Border Crossed Us Chs 1-4 (64) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Massey - Theories of International Migration (33) Favell- Rebooting Migration Theory (17)
10/11	Immigration Embedded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chacón Chs 5, 8-12, and 16 (86) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diaz - US Border Wall (12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walia - Border and Rule Chs 1, 2, and 4 (74)
10/18	Environmental Sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walia - Border and Rule Ch 3 (13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reece Jones - Violent Borders Excerpts (90) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Galeano - Open Veins of Latin America Part 1 (159) [Especially Ch 2: King Sugar & Other Agricultural Monarchs]
10/25	Environmental Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malm - Ecology is the Border (36) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cafaro & Staples - The Envir. Argument for Reducing Immigration to the US (14) 	
11/1	Environmental Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aufrecht - Rethinking the Greening of Hate (20) Hultgren - Border Walls Gone Green Ch 5 Toward an Environmental Political Theory of Migration (31) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ball-Blakely - Climate Change & Green Borders (22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honohan - Domination and Migration (14) Hoye - Migration, Membership, and Republican Liberty (23)
11/8	Climate Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lister - Who are Refugees? (27) Parekh - Reframing the Refugee Crisis: From Rescue to Interconnection (10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ferracioli - The Appeal and Danger of a New Refugee Convention (22) 	
11/15	Climate Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lister - Climate Change Refugees (15) Burkett - Behind the Veil...(49) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell - Environmental Refugees: What Rights? Which Duties? (18) 	
11/22	No Class			
11/29	Climate Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capisani - Territorial Instability and the Right to a Livable Locality (19) Nine - Ecological Refugees and the Lockean Proviso (15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buxton - Reparative Justice for Climate Refugees (25) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buxton & Draper - Refugees, Membership, and State System Legitimacy (16)
12/6	*Paper Conference*			

Course Policies

Participation and Preparation: Philosophy courses, as you know, require that students come prepared and ready to discuss the material. This is even more true of seminars. This class will be a collaborative effort, one where each of us will benefit greatly from the knowledge, lived experiences, expertise, and insights of one another.

- Read each required text at least once (ideally twice) prior to class. Look for main themes, how it advances our knowledge, and how one might critically engage with the text. Read critically but sympathetically. Your goal is not to reject what the author says out of hand, nor is it to accept it without question. Treat them like an interlocutor who might have much to teach you, but who is also fallible. approaching the issue with limited knowledge and perhaps a limited perspective.
 - Try to identify the thesis, how it fits with our course readings, what evidence the author offers, what the implications for the view might be, whether it requires a radical shift in our values, and whether and why a reasonable person might disagree.
- Treat your fellow classmates in the same way. Regardless of their philosophical background, each of your classmates will have insights and understandings that can be of use to you and to your peers. Be respectful. Critically engage with their claims, but in the spirit of a healthy dialogue rather than a debate or argument.
 - Any student that disrespects their fellow classmates will be asked to leave.
- Aim to participate as much as your comfort level permits—in fact, try testing this comfort level. Recognize that just as your classmates have much to offer, and that their perspective and background can add to your own, so too can you bring to the discussion something unique and valuable.
 - Remember, though, not to monopolize the discussion. Make sure that each member of the seminar has a chance to engage equally. If you find yourself talking more than others, pause and reflect. Ask why you are engaging more, and why they are engaging less. Ask yourself if you can engage in a way that gives them the space to participate more. And, perhaps, pause and take a few breaths before answering or asking a question, giving others a chance to talk.
 - I recognize that not everybody is equally comfortable participating in person. If so, there are a variety of opportunities available to you:
 - Post on the Blackboard discussion forum.
 - Speak with me before or after the seminar.
 - Send me an email with your questions, thoughts, or criticisms.
 - Come to office hours and speak privately.

Technology

Requirements: Each student needs access to Blackboard where I will post readings, the syllabus, and occasional announcements. Please let me know if you have access issues.

Classroom Use: While I believe that students learn best without electronic devices, I recognize that some students learn best—or are most comfortable—with a computer or tablet.

And so while I suggest that you come only with a pen, paper, and copies of the text, I am perfectly fine with you using other devices.

- However, please leave cellphones in your pockets or backpacks.
- Do not use your electronic devices for anything other than class-related activities. It can distract your classmates and will diminish your attention and learning.

Accommodations: The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services \(CASS\)](#). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747- 5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the [CASS portal](#).

Illness and Covid: Illness, injury, and other life traumas happen. While they are regrettable, they cannot be avoided. Please let me know if you are unable to make a deadline or otherwise complete a project on time and we will find accommodations.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Title IX and Mandatory Reporting: Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain support from the Counseling and Psychological Services [(915) 747-5302] and Student Health and Wellness Center [(915) 747-5624]. Title IX violations should be reported. For more information, contact the Dean of Students Office [(915) 747-5648], the Title IX Office [(915) 747-8358], or UTEP Police Department [(915) 747-5611].

Disclosure to University faculty or instructors of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer.

Technology and Academic Resources

Help Desk (Library, Rm. 300, helpdesk@utep.edu, (915) 747-4357 (HELP), utep.edu/technologysupport/): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software) can submit a work ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for help. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

UTEP Library (ask@utep.libanswers.com, (915) 747-5643, utep.edu/library/): Access a wide range of resources, including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.

University Writing Center (UWC) (Library, Main Floor, uwctutors@utep.edu, (915) 747-5112, utep.edu/uwc/): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.

History Tutoring Center (HTC) (Liberal Arts Building, Rm. 320, history@utep.edu, (915) 747-5508): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.

Individual Resources

Military Student Success Center (Mike Loya Academic Services Bldg., Rm. 130, mssc@utep.edu, (915) 747-5342, utep.edu/student-affairs/mssc/): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

Center for Accommodations and Support Services (Union East, Rm. 106, cass@utep.edu, (915) 747-5148, utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.

Counseling and Psychological Services (Union West, Rm. 202, caps@utep.edu, (915) 747-5302, utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

Student Health and Wellness Center (Union East, Ste. 100, studenthealth@utep.edu, (915) 747-5624, utep.edu/chs/shc/): Addresses health care needs of all UTEP students.

Dean of Students Office (Union West, Rm. 102, DOS@utep.edu, (915) 747-5648, utep.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students-office/): Creates a culture of care for students by providing exemplary programs and services designed to enhance success.

Division of Student Affairs (Union East, Rm. 301, studentaffairs@utep.edu, (915) 747-5076, utep.edu/student-affairs/): Supports student success inside and outside the classroom.

Office of Student Fellowships and Awards (utep.edu/student-affairs/student-fellowships-awards/index.html)

Title IX Office (Kelly Hall, Rm. 312, TitleIX@utep.edu, (915) 747-8358, utep.edu/titleix/): Protects students, employees, applicants for admission and employment, and other persons

from all forms of sex discrimination including sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and acts of sexual violence.