

Notes to Guide Reading

Week 4, Section 2: Writing the Research Paper, and Responsibility for Global Climate Change

Caney, “Cosmopolitan Justice, Rights and Global Climate Change” (2006)

- Understand what “common but differentiated responsibility” is and what the “polluter pays principle” means.
- Be thinking about what the difference is between causal and moral responsibility, and why it’s problematic that assigning moral responsibility for the effects of climate change requires that we first establish causal responsibility.
- Also, be able to explain one of the three reasons why the polluter pays principle fails to justify how the burdens of climate change should be distributed.
- Caney makes two starting assumptions: (1) anthropogenic global climate change is a fact, and (2) principles of justice extend beyond borders (cosmopolitanism is true).
 - Be prepared to explain whether or not you think either of these assumptions are problematic.
 - This will require you to think about why Caney would make these assumptions, and who his likely target audience is.
- Considering that Caney’s central claim is that burdens of climate change should be distributed according to the notion of “common but differentiated responsibility,” be prepared to answer the following:
 - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Caney uses to support the truth of his central claim?
 - What might the warrant for his argument be? This is to say that you should be able to articulate what you think the bedrock justification is for his argument in this section—and this will require you to identify some fundamental value or idea that Caney could rest his argument on.
- Lastly, having completed your own literature review, be prepared to explain whether or not Caney effectively situates his argument within the broader literature on climate justice (and why or why not).

Bell, “Global Climate Justice, Historic Emissions, and Excusable Ignorance” (2011)

- Be able to explain the difference between “moral responsibility” and “moral liability” for the damage of one’s emissions.
- Bell makes several starting assumptions, including (1) mitigating the effects of climate change requires global cooperation, (2) this cooperation requires a mutually-acceptable, fair system of distribution of the costs of climate change, (3) emitters of GHGs were partially “excusably ignorant” until the 1990s, (4) ignorant emitters should not be blamed or punished for emissions, (5) we are only liable to blame or punishment (v. costs/compensation) when we know our actions may cause others harm, and (6) it is possible to establish the causal contribution of emitters
 - In addition to being able to explain in detail one of these assumptions, be prepared to explain whether or not you think the assumption you choose to explain is problematic.
 - This will require you to think about why Bell would make this assumption, and who his likely target audience is.
- Considering that Bell’s central claim is that excusably ignorant emitters should be held partially liable for the effects/costs of their emissions, be prepared to answer the following:
 - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Bell uses to support the truth of his central claim?

- What might the warrant for his argument be? This is to say that you should be able to articulate what you think the bedrock justification is for his argument in this section—and this will require you to identify some fundamental value or idea that Bell could rest his argument on.
- Finally, referencing the components of the rhetorical situation and our working list of principles of good writing, be able to explain two characteristics of good or bad writing that you see in Bell's article.