

## Notes to Guide Reading

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### Week 5, Section 1: Revising the Research Paper, and Collective Responsibility for Injustices

#### Shrader-Frechette, “Human Rights and Duties to Alleviate Environmental Injustice” (2007)

- Shrader-Frechette assumes that we have a right against “severe and life-threatening” *threats* of environmental harm: that is, mere possibilities of harm.
  - Yet, it is unclear that a right against harm—a right, say, to security—protects against *potential* harms.
  - Think through this connection: how might a right not to be harmed translate into a right not to be exposed to certain *risks* of harm?
  - Be prepared to explain whether or not you think this starting assumption is problematic.
  - This will require you to think about why Shrader-Frechette would make these assumptions, and who her likely target audience is.
- Be prepared to explain the difference between the notions of ethical and democratic responsibility to help prevent environmental injustices, as this distinction is key to Shrader-Frechette’s argument.
- Shrader-Frechette has two central claims, both of which are conditional—if x, then y—statements. First, she claims that *if* citizens have benefited from “pollution arrangements” (and thus contributed to) environmental injustice, then they bear an *ethical* responsibility to help reform status quo (115). Second, she claims that *if* citizens are able to influence government, then they bear a *democratic* responsibility to help reform status quo (115).
  - Given these two central claims, be prepared to answer the following for one of these central claims:
  - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Shrader-Frechette uses to support the truth of her central claim?
  - What might the warrant for her argument be? That is, you should be able to articulate what you think the bedrock justification is for her argument in this section—and this will require you to identify some fundamental value or idea that Shrader-Frechette could rest her argument on.
  - Also, which argument do you think is more compelling and why?
- Finally, referencing 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 you see in Shrader-Frechette’s article.

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#### Young, “Responsibility and Global Labor Justice” (2004)

- Be able to define what Young means by “structural” injustices: how is this concept different from the sort of (general) injustices we’ve been discussing this term?
- Also, be able to define what we mean by “moral responsibility” (what Young refers to as the conventional liability model of responsibility).
  - In this vein, also be prepared to explain *at least* one problem with the conventional “liability model” of responsibility, which motivates Young to propose a different theory of responsibility.
  - In other words, be able to explain at least one reason why the conventional liability model cannot assign responsibility for structural injustices.
- Young’s central claim is that we have a shared (political) responsibility to reform structural processes that harm others. More specifically, she argues that “To the extent that [we] participate in the

production and reproduction of structural processes that condition the lives of people far away,” we have a responsibility to work collectively to eliminate structural injustices.

- Given this central claim, be prepared to answer the following:
  - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Young uses to support the truth of her central claim?
  - What might the warrant for her argument be? That is, you should be able to articulate what you think the bedrock justification is for her argument in this section—and this will require you to identify some fundamental value or idea that Young could rest her argument on.
- Additionally, think through one objection you could level against Young’s argument: how would Young respond to this counterargument?
- Finally, referencing 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 Young’s article.