

Notes to Guide Reading

Week 4, Section 1: Environmental Inequalities and Discrimination

Bullard, “Unequal Environmental Protection” (1994)

- Only read pages 237-252.
- Understand what we mean by “environmental discrimination” (what Bullard elsewhere refers to as “environmental racism”).
- Be able to explain how we can understand environmental protection as a right, and how we can understand environmental problems through the environmental justice framework Bullard discusses.
- Considering that Bullard’s central claim is that we must end the discrimination of vulnerable communities that experience greater exposure to environmental pollutants, be prepared to answer the following:
 - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Bullard 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 must be true for Bullard’s argument to be true.
 - How does Bullard’s argument for environmental justice relate to Young’s notion of structural injustices?
- Lastly, making specific reference to the components of the rhetorical situation—that is, contextual factors we as writers need to keep in mind as we decided how to present our arguments and engage our audience—as well as to rhetorical appeals—that is, strategies writers use to try to convince their audience of the truth of their claims—be able to explain who you believe Bullard’s target audience is, and whether an average CU student audience would find Bullard’s argument persuasive.

Shrader-Frechette, “Developing Nations, Equal Protection, and Limits of Moral Heroism” (2002)

- Shrader-Frechette explores four different arguments that defend the transfer of what she terms “hazardous technologies” (like pesticides, asbestos, and GMOs) from wealthier developed nations to poorer developing nations. Focus your reading on the “economic reality” argument, which is the only one she believes is defensible, and her response to this argument.
- Considering that Shrader-Frechette’s central claim is that we—corporations, governments, individuals, and NGOs—are morally obligated to prevent global environmental injustices (that is, to protect vulnerable communities in developing nations), be prepared to answer the following:
 - 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?
 - Think about the connection here (which Bullard also discusses) between economic inequalities—per the readings on distributive justice by Caney, Young, Singer, Hardin, and Sachs—and related environmental injustices: how can economic inequalities aggravate environmental inequalities and vice versa?
- Lastly, thinking about the components of the rhetorical situation and rhetorical appeals, be prepared to identify one positive and one negative aspect of Shrader-Frechette’s writing.