

## **Notes to Guide Reading**

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### *Week 4, Section 2: Collective Responsibility for Environmental Inequalities*

#### **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 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 her article.

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#### **Bartholomae, “Inventing the University” (1986)**

- Complementing the readings of Meyer/Smith and Sommers, who argue that it is necessary for inexperienced writers to develop the ability to engage in critically-reflective and substantive revision, Bartholomae claims that inexperienced writers need to learn how to write for an academic audience.
- Consequently, this article should also motivate you to critically reflect on how to improve your writing skills—and in this vein, keep the following considerations in mind:
  - Be able to explain in your own words Bartholomae means by a “discourse community,” and what some of the general conventions and expectations are of an academic discourse community.
  - Accordingly, be prepared to explain why it is important to know the conventions and expectations of any given discourse community. Also, be thinking about some of the conventions of good writing in your own field: what constitutes good writing in your major and why?
  - Moreover, what does Bartholomae mean by “sounding academic”—and how can inexperienced writers learn how to achieve this goal?
  - Lastly, be prepared to explain whether or not you agree with Bartholomae’s characterization of less experienced writers and his analysis about the importance of writing like an academic.