



Carnegie Mellon University

School of Architecture

College of Fine Arts, CFA 201

Carnegie Mellon University

Pittsburgh, PA 15213



A view of the Edgar Thomson Steel Works. Photograph by Edith Abeyta

48-699: Environmental racism, injustice, and unfreedom: Lessons for architects and designers

Units: 9

Instructor: Nida Rehman and Morgan Newman

Course Description

Environmental racism refers to the disproportionate concentration of environmental harms in low-income communities of color (particularly Black and indigenous communities) through the systematic workings — both historic and ongoing — of white privilege and white supremacy. More broadly, environmental injustices also include restrictions to environmental resources and infrastructures, and the unjust placements and displacements of communities of color resulting from uneven development.

In this seminar we will examine the histories of environmental racism and injustice through close reading of literature from a range of fields including Environmental Justice, urban political ecology, Black geographies, and indigenous studies. We will ground our conceptual understandings through a closer look at ongoing environmental justice issues in Braddock and North Braddock, including through dialogue with local advocates and community members. Through the course of the semester students will develop a case study focusing on air pollution in the Mon Valley region, working collaboratively to produce an annotated bibliography of atmospheric pollution and community action.