

AN208

Environmental Problems in the Americas

Instructor: Joshua Holst
E-Mail: joshua.holst@coloradocollege.edu
Cell: 213-840-9866 **download Signal**
Office: Barnes Science Center #308
Office Hours: TBA

Overview

This course explores some of the most pressing environmental issues facing the Americas with a special emphasis on the experiences of the most vulnerable communities. After unpacking the interrelations between colonialism, racism, and environmental crisis from past to present, the class will explore the political arenas in which nonprofits, civil society organizations, and grassroots activists compete to define environmental policy and the meaning of environmentalism itself.

Goals

At the end of this course you should have gained:

- A basic understanding of the human rights issues surrounding development and globalization
- Anthropological tools to critically analyze development interventions
- The skills to propose your own applied projects

Required Readings

All readings supplied as PDFs. Files are named by chapter author (not the book editor). There are three full books uploaded (*Losing Ground*, *Inside a Champion* and *Environmental Politics in Latin America*) as well as various articles. **Please review syllabus to see if some of the readings might be useful for your project.** There are a large number of (optional) readings specifically uploaded to help you in case your research project overlaps with a class topic.

Materials

All of the materials for this class are available as videos streamed online, articles available online, or PDFs and movies that can be downloaded from canvas.

Evaluation & Milestones

Daily: Class Participation (35%)

Class participation will be conducted in threads at rethinkpolitics.org. See Appendix for details

Daily (11AM): Reading Responses (10%)

See Appendix for details.

Special Class Exercises (20%)

March 31: Environmental Problems
April 1: Environmental Organization
April 3: Report in on Topics
April 9: Draft Workshop
April 17: Present Research
See Appendix for details.

April 13: Research Paper (25%)

10 page paper. See Appendix.

April 17: Op-ed (10%)

See Appendix for details

Outline

1. Introduction to Environmental Issues
2. Anatomy of the US Environmental Movement
 - A. Major Organizations
 - B. Colonialism
 - C. Environmental Justice
 - D. Corruption and NGOs
3. The Latin American Perspective: Colonialism, Class, and Environmental Conflict
4. Consultation: Divide and Conquer or Resistance Strategy?
5. The Carbon Trade
6. Water, Soy, Deforestation, Violent Conflict
7. Alternative Imaginaries and Sustainable Pathways
8. Human Rights: Defending the Environmental Defenders
9. Presenting Your Projects

Evaluation Overview

Participation (35%)

- You must do 3 posts each day in each thread (see Appendix—not all posts will count). Extra credit for extra participation is available

Reading Responses (10%)

- You must follow *all* instructions to get credit. You may skip one day. They are due at 11AM each morning.

Special Class Exercises (20%)

- Environmental issue (3%)
- Environmental organizations (3%)
- Report in (3%)
- Workshop your draft (6%)
- Present your research (5%)

Research Paper (25%)

- You must bring the perspective of a social movement to bear on an environmental policy and problem.

Op-ed (10%)

- Convert your research into an op-ed and submit it.

Course Schedule

WEEK 1

Monday March 30th	<p>On Zoom at 11AM we'll talk about the following:</p> <p>Introductions Course overview</p> <p>Explanation of Assignments: Reading Summaries, Thread Participation, Final Projects, Environmental Issues exercise for Tuesday, NGO Mapping Exercise for Wed</p> <p>Online:</p> <p>Today is sort of a warm-up. **For today only you do not need to do reading summaries, and you will only need to do 2 forum posts instead of 3.**</p> <p>1. Ecological footprint</p> <p>Lenzen, M, D Moran, K Kanemoto, B Foran, L Lobefaro and A Geschke. 2012. "International trade drives biodiversity threats in developing nations" <i>Nature</i> 486: 109-112.</p> <p>Plunder of the Earth's natural resources up 200% in 40 years https://theecologist.org/2016/jul/26/plunder-earths-natural-resources-200-40-years</p> <p>(optional) Rees, William and Mathis Wackernagel. 1996. <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>. 16: 223-248.</p>
Tuesday March 31st	<p>On Zoom at 11AM:</p> <p>Exercise: Environmental Issues Pick an environmental issue that matters to you and tell us about it for a few minutes. Ideally this will be the topic of your final paper, but you can still change it later if you want</p> <p>Online:</p> <p>2. Environmentalism in the United States</p> <p>Watch <i>If a Tree Falls</i>: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmZkNNJqr1I</p> <p>Dowie, Mark. 1995. "Preface" <i>Losing Ground</i>.</p> <p>Dowie, Mark. 1995. "1: The Environmental Imagination" <i>Losing Ground</i>.</p> <p>Dowie, Mark. 1995. "2: The Culture of Reform" <i>Losing Ground</i>.</p>

<p>Wednesday April 1st</p>	<p>On Zoom at 11AM:</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Emily Miggins https://www.linkedin.com/in/emilymiggins/</p> <p>Online:</p> <p>Exercise: Environmental Organizations You must add an environmental organization to the Environmental Resources Page (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T3TpAwf9fSjyfw6H1kc_85zS5txx_K0K2nbj3zeP_E/edit). Tell us a little bit about the organization (2 sentences max on the google doc). Look them up on www.thewrongkindofgreen.org to see criticisms of the organization before writing.</p> <p>3. Elites and Environmental Antagonists</p> <p>Dowie, Mark. 1995. "3: Fix Becomes Folly" <i>Losing Ground</i>.</p> <p>Dowie, Mark. 1995. "4: Antagonists" <i>Losing Ground</i>.</p> <p>Bull, Benedicte. "2: Elites, classes and environmental governance" in <i>Environmental Politics in Latin America</i> by Benedict Bull and Mariel Aguilar-Stoen (eds).</p> <p>Watch: "Class Wars" from the Word People's Conference https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2FN_Kt3xsI</p>
<p>Thursday April 2nd</p>	<p>Online:</p> <p>4. The Wilderness was Never Empty</p> <p>Watch <i>Awake</i> (you need to use your CC login to watch it) https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/f630c384-a8fe-40aa-a1ad-f8332c8a82c9</p> <p>Lewis, David Rich. 1995. "Native Americans and the Environment: A Survey of Twentieth-Century Issues," <i>American Indian Quarterly</i> 19(3): 423-450.</p> <p>Sandlos, John and Arn Keeling. 2017. "The Giant Mine's Long Shadow: Arsenic Pollution and Native People in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories," pp 280-312 in <i>Mining North America: An Environmental History since 1522</i> by J.R. McNeill and George Vrtis (eds).</p> <p>(optional) Mann, Charles C. 2002. "1491" <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>.</p> <p>(optional) Holst, Joshua. 2016. "Colonial Histories and Decolonial Dreams in the Ecuadorean Amazon: Natural Resources and the Politics of Post-Neoliberalism" <i>Latin American Perspectives</i> 43: 200-220.</p> <p>(optional) Survival International. <i>Progress Can Kill</i></p>

	<p>(optional) Watch <i>Force/Resistance: From Standing Rock to Colorado Springs</i> https://youtu.be/3VGC4NQK03I</p>
<p>Friday April 3rd</p>	<p>On Zoom at 11AM:</p> <p>Exercise: Report in on your Topic Discuss the topic you've chosen with the class, and an outline of the approach you plan to take with your final paper. Offer each other feedback and support. We might do this twice.</p> <p>Online:</p> <p>5. Green Greed:</p> <p>Dowie, Mark. 1995. "5: The Third Wave," <i>Losing Ground</i>.</p> <p>Spash, Clive. 2017. "Environmentalism and Democracy in the Age of Nationalism and Corporate Capitalism," <i>Environmental Values</i> 26(4):403-412.</p> <p>Chapin, Mac. (2004). "A Challenge to Conservationists," <i>WorldWatch Magazine</i>. 17-31.</p> <p>Way Beyond Greenwashing: Have MNCs Captured Conservation? https://www.independentsciencenews.org/environment/way-beyond-greenwashing-have-multinationals-captured-big-conservation/</p> <p>(optional) Watch Silence of the Pandas https://redd-monitor.org/2011/07/27/wwf-scandal-part-1-bears-feeding-on-toxic-corporate-waste/</p> <p>(optional) Dowie, Mark. 2005. "Conservation Refugees," <i>Orion</i> (Nov-Dec): 16-27.</p>

WEEK 2

<p>Monday April 6th</p>	<p>On Zoom at 11AM:</p> <p>Exercise: Report in on your Topic Discuss the topic you've chosen with the class, and an outline of the approach you plan to take with your final paper. Offer each other feedback and support. We might do this twice</p> <p>Online:</p> <p>6. Environmental Justice</p> <p>Bullard, Robert. 2005. "1. Enviornmental Justice in the Twenty-first Century" in <i>The Quest for Environmental Justice</i>, Robert Bullard (ed).</p>
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	<p>Santana, Deborah. 2005. "11. Vieques: The Land, the People, the Struggle, the Future" in <i>The Quest for Environmental Justice</i>, Robert Bullard (ed). (same book as above)</p> <p>Watch <i>If You Love This Planet</i> https://youtu.be/7FjgBBQFmGs</p> <p>Dowie, Mark. 1995. "6: Environmental Justice," <i>Losing Ground</i>.</p> <p>Human Rights Watch Report on Flint: https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/10/23/human-right-water/guide-first-nations-communities-and-advocates</p> <p>(optional) Pulido, Laura. 2017. "Geographies of race and ethnicity II: Environmental racism, racial capitalism and state-sanctioned violence," <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> 41(4): 524-533.</p> <p>(optional) Roberts, Elizabeth. 2017. "What Gets Inside: Violent Entanglements and Toxic Boundaries in Mexico City" <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 32(4)</p> <p>(optional) "The Cancer Capital of America" https://theoutline.com/post/7457/the-cancer-capital-of-america?zd=1&zi=6wnmom6h</p>
Tuesday April 7th	<p>Online:</p> <p>7. The View from Latin America</p> <p>Watch <i>Two Worlds Collide</i> on Netflix.</p> <p>Alimonda, Hector. 2012. "Debating Development in Latin America" <i>Inside a Champion</i> (actually, read the "Introduction" for the book too, but don't make a separate reading summary)</p> <p>Bebbington, Anthony. 2014. "2. New Geographies of Extractive Industries in Latin America" in <i>Subterranean Struggles</i>.</p> <p>(optional) Sawyer, Suzana. 2004. "3. Neoliberal Ironies" in <i>Crude Chronicles</i>.</p>
Wednesday April 8th	<p>Online:</p> <p>8. Consultation: Divide and Conquer or Resistance Strategy?</p> <p>Watch: "Children of the Jaguar" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ma1QSmtuiLQ</p> <p>Sawyer, Suzana. 2004. "2. Crude Excesses" in <i>Crude Chronicles</i>.</p> <p>Figuerola, Isabela. 2006. "Indigenous Peoples versus Oil Companies: Constitutional Control Within Resistance." <i>Sur: International Journal on Human Rights</i> 3(4):51-79.</p> <p>"Waroani People win Landmark Legal Victory" https://www.amazonfrontlines.org/chronicles/waorani-victory/</p>

	<p>Schilling-Vacaflor, Almut and Jessika Eichler. 2017 “The Shady Side of Consultation and Compensation: ‘Divide-and-Rule’ Tactics in Bolivia’s Extraction Sector.” <i>Development and Change</i> 48(6):1-25.</p> <p>(optional) Torres Wong, Marcela. 2019. <i>Natural Resources, Extraction and Indigenous Rights in Latin America: Exploring the Boundaries of Environmental and State-Corporate Crime in Bolivia, Peru and Mexico</i>. (excerpts: “Introduction” and “Chapter 1” are one file, “Chapter 4” is another file)</p>
<p>Thursday April 9th</p>	<p>Exercise: Workshop Your Draft</p> <p>You will be assigned into groups of three. You cannot choose your partners. Share rough drafts of your research paper on google docs. Ask these questions as you review each other’s paper:</p> <p>Content: Does the paper demonstrate knowledge of an environmental issue, knowledge of policies surrounding that issue, and knowledge of a social movement perspective on the issue?</p> <p>Organization: Is the introduction clear, with a clear thesis statement? Does it link to the conclusion? Do the supporting paragraphs make the case for the argument advanced in the introduction and the conclusion? At the paragraph level: Are the main ideas of each paragraph supported by evidence in the rest of the paragraph? Does the paper flow logically?</p> <p>No reading and no online participation required.</p>
<p>Friday April 10th</p>	<p>Online:</p> <p>9. Environmental issues in the Americas: a broad view</p> <p>Choose any 3 articles/chapters:</p> <p>Soy</p> <p>“4. Bolivia: emerging and traditional elites and the governance of the soy sector” in <i>Environmental Politics in Latin America</i> by Benedict Bull and Mariel Aguilar-Stoen (eds).</p> <p>“5. Argentina: government-agribusiness elite dynamics and its consequences for environmental governance” in <i>Environmental Politics in Latin America</i> by Benedict Bull and Mariel Aguilar-Stoen (eds).</p> <p>“6. Ecuador: changing biosafety frames and new political forces in Correa’s government.” in <i>Environmental Politics in Latin America</i> by Benedict Bull and Mariel Aguilar-Stoen (eds).</p> <p>Fumigation and the War on Drugs</p>

	<p>Lyons, Kristina. “Decomposition as Life Politics” <i>Cultural Anthropology</i>.</p> <p>Water</p> <p>Piper, Karen. “2. How a Coup Opened Chile’s Water Markets” <i>The Price of Thirst</i>.</p> <p>Armoudian, Maria. “The Quiet Dismantling of Clean Water Regulations”</p> <p>World Commission on Dams <i>Dams and Development</i>. (this is a 356 page report, but I wanted to include it for reference as it is the definitive document on the impacts of hydroelectric power. Feel free to read as little or much of it as you want, and count it for 1-3 articles depending on how much you read)</p> <p>Deforestation</p> <p>Bates, Diane. “Deforestation in Ecuador” <i>The Ecuador Reader</i>.</p> <p>“11. State governments and forest policy: a new elite in the Brazilian Amazon?” in <i>Environmental Politics in Latin America</i> by Benedict Bull and Mariel Aguilar-Stoen (eds).</p> <p>Chiapas</p> <p>Howard, Philip. “The History of Ecological Marginalization in Chiapas” <i>Environmental History</i>.</p> <p>Collier, George. <i>Basta!</i> (multiple chapters)</p> <p>Barry, Tom. <i>Zapata’s Revenge</i>. (multiple chapters)</p> <p>This class was originally meant to be much longer. Discuss what you read in thread. Your first post can be what you read, but following that respond to each other.</p> <p>Climate Change</p> <p>Goldenberg, Suzanne (2013) “America’s First Climate Refugees” <i>The Guardian</i> https://www.theguardian.com/environment/interactive/2013/may/13/newtok-alaska-climate-change-refugees > these are short, you need to follow the links to all the parts in order for it to count as a single article.</p>
<p>Saturday April 11th</p>	<p>Alternative Date: Workshop Your Draft If you couldn’t workshop your date on Thursday, do it on today.</p>

WEEK 3

Monday April 13th	YOUR RESEARCH PAPERS ARE DUE TODAY
Tuesday April 14th	<p>Online:</p> <p>10. Carbon Trade</p> <p>Watch: <i>Carbon Rush</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPfTUrQLARw</p> <p>Moreno, Camila. 2012. "Green Economy and Development(alism) in Brazil." <i>Inside a Champion</i></p> <p>Packer, Larissa. 2012. "From Nature to Natural Capital." <i>Inside a Champion</i>.</p> <p>Aguilar-Stoen, Mariel and Cecile Hirsch. 2015. "10. REDD+ and forest governance in Latin America: the role of science-policy networks." in <i>Environmental Politics in Latin America</i> by Benedict Bull and Mariel Aguilar-Stoen (eds).</p> <p>(optional) Cushing, Lara et al. 2016. "A Preliminary Environmental Equity Assessment of California's Cap and Trade Program"</p>
Wednesday April 15th	<p>Online:</p> <p>11. Alternatives</p> <p>Caccia Bava, Silvio. 2012. "Short Circuits of Production and Consumption." <i>Inside a Champion</i>.</p> <p>Fontenelle Pacheco, Fabio Pierre. 2012. "A Brazil Unknown to Many Brazilians—Agroecology as a Solution to the Food, Ecological and Social Crises" <i>Inside a Champion</i></p> <p>Acosta, Alberto. 2012. "The <i>Buen Vivir</i>—An Opportunity to Imagine Another World." <i>Inside a Champion</i>.</p> <p>Rodriguez, Iokine and Mirna Lis Inturias. "Conflict transformation in indigenous peoples' territories: doing environmental justice with a 'decolonial turn'." <i>Development Studies Research</i> 5(1): 90-105.</p>
Thursday April 16th	<p>Online:</p> <p>12. Human Rights: Defending the Defenders</p>

	<p>Note: You have 2 days to complete this online discussion and reading. This can be done on Friday. The reading will summaries will count as two days worth.</p> <p>Watch: <i>The Burning Season</i> https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/50b65bcc-22d2-4909-b094-5861ac70de50 (you will need to use your CC login)</p> <p>Watch: Rainforest Mafias https://youtu.be/yz80DLRtt8U</p> <p>Why Do Environmentalists Keep Getting Killed Around the World? https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/why-do-environmentalists-keep-getting-killed-around-world-180949446/</p> <p>The Second Death of Chico Mendez https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/03/06/second-death-chico-mendes/</p> <p>Latin America saw the most murdered environmental defenders in 2018 https://news.mongabay.com/2019/08/latin-america-saw-most-murdered-environmental-defenders-in-2018/</p> <p>Enemies of the State https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/enemies-state/</p> <p>Amazonians on Trial https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/03/26/amazonians-trial/judicial-harassment-indigenous-leaders-and-environmentalists</p> <p>Glazebrook, Trish and Emmanuela Opoku. “Defending the Defenders: Environmental Protectors, Climate Change and Human Rights.” <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> 23(2):83-109.</p> <p>(optional) Article 19. 2016. <i>A Deadly Shade of Green: Threats to Environmental Human Rights Defenders in Latin America</i>.</p> <p>(optional) De Paula, Marilene. 2012 “Obstacles for Development? Human Rights, Infrastructure Policies, and “Mega-events” in Brazil” <i>Inside a Champion</i>.</p> <p>(optional) After Chico Mendez https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2013/apr/02/chico-mendes-killings-amazon</p>
<p>Friday April 17th</p>	<p>YOUR OP-ED IS DUE TODAY</p> <p>On Zoom at 11AM:</p> <p>Present Your Research On the final day of class you will tell us about what you found in your research. Be prepared to ask each other questions</p> <p>Online:</p>

	Continue the discussion from yesterday in thread 12.
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READING RESPONSES

Purpose:

The purpose of this exercise is twofold:

1. To ensure that you have both read/watched class materials *and thought about them*.
2. To provide a resource for you, should you want to use these materials in future class papers/articles/theses

Product:

For each chapter, article **and movie**, write a summary. They are due at 11AM and you can skip one of them. I have a lot of these to grade, so I absolutely need you to follow the following format very closely. *If you don't follow this format, you'll get zero points.* You can skip one day. I'm essentially giving you permission to not do the reading one time. This can essentially be your "absence," no questions asked. (You still need to participate in all the discussion threads though.)

[YOUR NAME AND DATE]

Summaries

[Citation—ie: Dowie, Mark. 1995. "Preface" *Losing Ground*. Note: each chapter is a separate citation.]

3-4 Sentences: What was the author's purpose? Summarize the Reading.

[Next citation—ie: Dowie, Mark. 1995. "Chapter 1: The Environmental Imagination" *Losing Ground*.]

3-4 Sentences: What was the author's purpose? Summarize the Reading.

Response:

½ page or more. This is a freeform reflection on the reading. It can be as long as you want. Feel free to include quotes and page numbers that you might want to reference later.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Purpose:

To discuss the readings, further your thinking on class topics, share each other's unique perspectives, and grow our understanding of these issues together.

Product:

Each day, there will be a new thread in www.rethinkpolitics.org/thinktank

To get full points, you must make three substantial posts.

- 1) The posts must be a response to either the original post in the thread, or one of your classmates
- 2) You are encourage to post things like “tell me more” or “good point”—please do!!!!—but those won't count toward your participation grade. You need to write 1-2 paragraphs (6 sentences minimum) for the post to count.
- 3) You are free to double-post (or triple-post or quadruple-post) but it will only count as a single post. ie. If you jump on and make three posts all at once, it will only count as having made one post. I want the discussion to be interactive, not just posting for points.
- 4) If a conversation is really interesting to you, and you've participated above and beyond the three posts, you can be eligible for extra credit. Extra posts will be worth 0.2 points to a maximum of 1 extra credit point per thread. There will also be an extra credit thread you can post in which will have a maximum of 5 extra credit points.
- 5) Try to be on from 11-2 MT to make it easier, but you are free to post earlier or later if you want to. If a conversation is interesting, there's no need to end it either. It can go on forever. But I will need to count them each day. So at the end of the class, I might need your help checking your participation grade to make sure I've caught everything.

EXERCISES

Exercise 1: Environmental Problems

Research an environmental problem of interest to you and give a short presentation to the class. Your presentation can be 2-5 minutes, and will be followed by interaction from the rest of the class. It would be a good idea to select an environmental problem that will be the focus of your final paper, but you can feel free to change topics if you need to.

Exercise 2: Environmental Organizations

You must add an environmental organization to the **Environmental Resources Page** (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T3TpbAwf9fSjyfw6H1kc_85zS5txx_K0K2nbj3zePE/edit). Tell us a little bit about the organization (2 sentences max on the google doc). Look them up on www.thewrongkindofgreen.org to see criticisms of the organization.

Exercise 3: Report In on Your Topic

Discuss the topic you've chosen with the class, and an outline of the approach you plan to take with your final paper. Offer each other feedback and support. We might do this twice

Exercise 4: Workshop Your Draft

You will be assigned into groups of three. Share rough drafts of your paper on google docs. Ask these questions as you review each other's paper:

Content: Does the paper demonstrate knowledge of an environmental issue, knowledge of policies surrounding that issue, and knowledge of a social movement perspective on the issue?

Organization: Is the introduction clear, with a clear thesis statement? Does it link to the conclusion? Do the supporting paragraphs make the case for the argument advanced in the introduction and the conclusion? At the paragraph level: Are the main ideas of each paragraph supported by evidence in the rest of the paragraph? Does the paper flow logically?

Exercise 5: Present your Research

On the final day of class you will tell us about what you found in your research. Be prepared to ask each other questions.

Note: Additional exercises may be added or existing ones subtracted as the instructor sees fit.

RESEARCH PAPER

The final paper of this class will be about bringing the perspective of a local, grassroots organization or social movement to bear on environmental policy. This will require 1) understanding the environmental issue you've selected 2) understanding the policies in place affecting that issue and 3) understanding the critiques, goals and counter-proposals of the social movement you've selected. Ideally you'll get to the third element through reaching out to members of a social movement: community members, activists, etc via email, facebook, linked in, calling them on the phone etc. ***You have only 2 weeks to finish this paper, so you should get started reaching out right away.*** If this fails, social movement perspectives outlined in the news or in academic research can be a substitute, but it's not an ideal one. *Not including a social movement perspective will result in failing the assignment. The goal of this class is to emphasize the importance of the on-the-ground perspective.*

In addition to your knowledge of the subject matter, your paper will be evaluated by organization: Is the introduction clear, with a clear thesis statement? Does it link to the conclusion? Do the supporting paragraphs make the case for the argument advanced in the introduction and the conclusion? At the paragraph level: Are the main ideas of each paragraph supported by evidence in the rest of the paragraph? Does the paper flow logically?

The paper should be 10 pages including your bibliography.

OP-ED

The final assignment of this class will require converting your research paper into an op-ed, which you will submit to a news outlet. Op-eds are short, typically between 750-800 words. The word limit is strict. *If your op-ed is too long it will not be publishable.*

Op-eds:

- Are 750-800 words
- Open with a strong hook
- Are conscious of their audience
- Have a clearly defined point
- Validate that point with a clear point of view
- End with a strong call to action

If you feel you need more guidance on op-eds, you can look here: <https://www.theopedproject.org/>

When you turn in your op-ed, you must also tell me where you have submitted it. If the submission guidelines for the online or print outlet you have selected differ from mine, follow the submission guidelines instead. Be sure to inform me if that is the case.