This course examines what the world looks like from the vantage point of its diverse waste streams. Waste is all around us. A product of everyday life, of economic activity, of regimes of bodily care and hygiene, waste is an inescapable aspect of contemporary culture and a central element in the constitution of cultural difference. Taking up classic and contemporary anthropological approaches to waste, the course asks where is "away" when we throw things away? How does the production, disposal, and management of waste contribute to the construction of social differences of race, class, and gender? Waste has also captured the imagination of contemporary artists, film-makers, journalists, activists, and humanitarians, becoming the subject of Oscar-winning films and large scale urban reforms. The course explores case stories--from the waste pickers in Rio de Janeiro and Delhi, to Food Not Bombs activists in New York, from Environmental Justice in the US South, to the Pacific garbage patch, from the sewers of 19th-century London to wastelands at the edge of empires--to animate the core concepts of discard studies: disposability, pollution, body-burdens, and externalities. Through readings, films, and independent research, students will explore and learn to critically analyze the diverse and dramatic worlds of waste.
Required Texts:
- Available for Purchase at Broad St. Books. All other readings will be available on Moodle and in a two-volume course pack. To order: log into your student portfolio and click on “Course Pack” under Academic Resources. Films and books are on reserve at Olin.

Assignments and Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>In-Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Writing</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab Assignments &amp; Reports</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnographic Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Turn in all assignments via Moodle

Participation:
This class will incorporate discussion and “labs.” As such your participation is crucial. It is your responsibility to come to class prepared. This means having read the assigned materials carefully, taking time to reflect on them, selecting key concepts and passages you would like to discuss. This will allow you to be an active participant during class discussions. Remember that quality is more important that quantity in class discussion and that listening to and responding to your peers is vital for successful discussion.

Weekly Writing: 200-300 words
From the week’s readings, select two passages from different texts (or films) that you find compelling (this can be something exciting, insightful, infuriating). Write a short reflection on the ideas, concepts, arguments, narratives, that puts explains the idea, puts the two texts in conversations, and poses at least one discussion question for the class. These reflections should be posted to Moodle by 5pm the day of class. You must complete ten weekly writing papers throughout the semester.
Lab Assignments & Reports: 2 pages (700-1,000 words) Due: Weekly

The second half of each class session will be dedicated to an in-class lab during which we will apply the conceptual tools and interpretive analytical skills provided by the readings. Most weeks’ labs require some preparation of your behalf, either individually or in groups. These assignments will be detailed the previous week. To follow-up each lab, you will write a short lab report summarizing your process, your findings, and interpretive reflections. The specific requirements for each report will be detailed in class weekly. Lab reports are due the Thursday after the lab by 10pm.

Ethnographic Paper: 7 pages (2,500-2,800 words) Due: Nov 22 (by 10pm)

Two of our lab exercises will require you to conduct fieldwork on different aspects of discard culture in and around campus and Middletown. Based on your interview and field notes you will write a short micro-ethnography of American discard culture. The paper should use your ethnographic materials (and other lab assignments, if applicable) to answer an empirical question (we will discuss this in class) and draw on at least two relevant course materials, either to help interpret your material, or using your materials to critique/extend the authors’ arguments.

Film Paper: 8 pages (2,700-3,000 words) Due: Final Exam (TBA)

Select three films (one or two assigned, one or two from the list below). Write an essay that critically engages the three films to advance an original argument. Consider how the films define key terms like waste, filth, cleanliness etc. How do they define the problem of waste? Where (or, to whom) do they attribute responsibility? What solutions do they propose? What assumptions underpin their problematization and their solution? What are the limits or contradictions of the films point of view? What techniques do the filmmakers use to make waste visible? Are these effective? What tropes recur? In your analysis of the films, draw on at least five readings from the syllabus.

Plastic Paradise
The Clean Bin Project
The Gleaners and I
Trash Dance
Wall-E
Other films of your interest by request

Trashed
Beijing Besieged by Waste
Ghana: Digital Dumping Ground
Estamira
This American Life Episode 249 “Garbage”
Course Schedule:

Tuesday, Sept 6  Seeing Waste
Tuesday, Sept 13  Symbolic Pollution
   -Mary Douglas - *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Chapters: intro, 2, 3, 7, 10)
   -Victor Turner - “Liminality and Communitas” (pgs 94-113 & 125-130)
   -Maria Lugones - "Purity, Impurity, and Separation"
   -Lab Assignment: Prepare Discard Interview

Tuesday, Sept 20  Waste and Property
   -John Locke – *Second Treatise on Government* (Chapters: 1-5)
   -Alex Barnard – *Freegans: Diving Into the Waste of Food Wealth in America* (Chapters: Intro, 1 & 3)
   -Film: *Dive!*
   -Lab Assignment: Discard Interview

Tuesday, Sept 27  Indigenous Politics and Environmental (In)Justice
   -Traci Vokes – *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country* (Chapters: preface, intro, 1-3)
   -Deborah Bird Rose - "Decolonizing the Discourse of Environmental Knowledge in Settler Societies"
   -Lab assignment: Nuclear Waste

Tuesday, Oct 4  Colonial Cleanliness
   -Anderson, Warwick - "Excremental Colonialism: Public Health and the Poetics of Pollution"
   -Clapperton Mavhunga – "Vermin Beings: On Pestiferous Animals and Human Game"
   -Linda Nash - "Body and Environment in an Era of Colonization"
   -Anne McClinton – “Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising”
   -Lab Assignment: Cleanliness in Advertising
Tuesday, Oct 11  
**Toxic Exports**
- Robert Bullard - *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (Chapters: 2 & 3)
- David Pellow - “The Global Village Dump”
- Nicky Gregson et. al. - “Following Things of Rubbish Value: End-Of-Life Ships, 'Chock-Chocky' Furniture and the Bangladeshi Middle Class Consumer”
- Film: *Exporting Harm: The High Tech Trashing of Asia*
- Lab Assignment: Mapping Waste

Tuesday, Oct 18  
**From Abjection to Transgression**
- Julia Kristeva – *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (pgs 5 -17)
- Stallybrass and White – “The City: the Sewer, the Gaze, and the Contaminating Touch”
- Max Liboiron, Max - “Tactics of Waste, Dirt and Discard in the Occupy Movement.”
- Lab Assignment: Filthy Protest

Tuesday, Oct 25  
Fall Break, no class

Tuesday, Nov 1  
**The Sticky Slope to the Landfill**
- Nicky Gregson et al – “Identity, Mobility, and the Throwaway Society”
- Sophie Woodward - “The Hidden Lives of Domestic Things: Accumulations in Cupboards, Lofts, and Shelves”  See also: *Dormant Things* project (link on Moodle)
- Kevin Hetherington - "Secondhandedness: Consumption, Disposal, and Absent Presence"
- Britt Halvorson - "'No Junk for Jesus': Redemptive Economies and Value Conversions in Lutheran Medical Aid”
- Film: *T-Shirt Travels*
- Ethnographic exercise: Second-hand Ethnography
Tuesday, Nov 8  
**Calibrating Consumption: Hoards and Purges**
- Marie Kondo – *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up* [selection]
- Taffy Brodesser-Akner - "Marie Kondo and the Ruthless War on Stuff"
- Scott Herring - *The Hoarders: Material Deviance in American Culture* [selections: “Introduction” and “Clutterology”]
- Rosie Cox - “Dishing the Dirt: Dirt in the Home”
- Lab Assignment: The Spectacle of Hoarding

Tuesday, Nov 15  
**Seeing Waste**
- Gaston Gordillo - "Ships Stranded in the Forest: Debris of Progress on a Phantom River"
- Mike Crang – “The Death of Great Ships: Photography, Politics, and Waste in the Global Imaginary”
- Dora Apel - "The Ruins of Capitalism"
- Film: *Wasteland*
- Lab Assignment: The Art of Garbage

Tuesday, Nov 22  
DUE: ETHNOGRAPHIC PAPER

Tuesday, Nov 29  
**Cleaning Cities**
- D. Asher Ghertner – *Rule by Aesthetics: World Class City Making in Delhi* (Chapters: 1, 3-5)
- Teresa Gowan - “The Old Runaround: Class Cleansing in San Francisco”
- Film: *Dogtown Redemption*
- Lab Assignment: Garbology

Tuesday, Dec 6  
**Life in Refuse**
- Anne Lovell - "Hoarders and Scrapers"
- Melanie Samson - "Accumulation by Dispossession and the Informal Economy - Struggles over Knowledge, Being and Waste at a Soweto Garbage Dump"
- Fergutz, Dias, and Mitlin - "Developing Urban Waste Management in Brazil with Waste Picker Organizations"
- Alma Guillermoprieto – “Garbage”
- Film: *Garbage Dreams*
FINE PRINT

Electronics Policy
Electronic devices (laptops, phones, tablets etc) may not be used during class discussions without express permission. This means you must use the course pack or print course readings. Printed readings make it easier to mono-task, reading with fewer distractions and focusing on argumentation. Labs will often require laptops.

Attendance and Punctuality
Class attendance is expected, arrive on time and ready to begin. Late arrivals and tardiness will count against your participation grade.

Late Work
If you turn in work late without approval, you will lose one letter grade for every 24-hour period beyond the deadline. If you contact me at least 48 hours prior to a deadline it may be possible to find a new timeframe. Deadlines for lab assignments are not flexible. You will be graded on 10 (of 12 possible) weekly writing assignments, any of these turned in late will not be accepted.

Style Guide
Format 12 point times new roman font, double spaced, 1” margins, paginated
Citations Use in-text citations following the Chicago Manual of Style (see Moodle)
Your works cited should be listed at the end of the text, it does not count towards the page/word limit.

Academic Integrity
Wesleyan’s values and standards of academic conduct are embodied and detailed by the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code, such as giving or obtaining assistance without acknowledgement, plagiarism, and the willful falsification of data, information, or citations, are reported to and dealt with by the Honor Board. We will cover using citations in researched work during class on November 1. For details regarding the Honor Code, Honor Board, and judicial procedures, see: http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html
For details about what constitutes plagiarism and illustrative examples, see: http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/plagiarism.html

Students with Disabilities
Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible.
If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey [patey@wesleyan.edu] in Disability Resources located in North College, room 021, or call 860-685-5581 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.