

Group Assignment: Virtual Toxic Tour

As one form of activism, many environmental justice groups put together toxic tours that examine the environmental inequalities and disproportionate environmental burdens confronting marginalized communities. For this group assignment, you will work together with your group to assemble a *virtual toxic tour*. Your group will research a site in the Twin Cities that you think would be important to explore if you were developing a toxic tour of this area.

For this assignment, your group will deliver a **20-minute, in-class presentation** about your site. You should also develop whatever supporting materials your group decides are appropriate. These materials may take the form of a mock website, a poster, handouts, slides, videos, a written report—creativity here is encouraged!—with the aim of supplementing and enriching your oral presentation.

All group presentations should include the following information:

1. An exploration of the history of the site;
2. A discussion of current status of the site;
3. Examples of political organizing around the site (if any).

Other than that, however, you are free to shape your tours as you wish—again, creativity here is encouraged! You may, for example, set the scene for the class: The classroom is a bus, the presenters are at the front with a microphone, and the slides on the screen are what we're seeing as a group out of the windows and at stops along the route. Or: You've landed a 20-minute meeting with Mayor R. T. Rybak and his key advisors—or Mayor Chris Coleman, or key members of the Met Council, or the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency—to discuss your site. How do you make your case? What supplementary materials do you distribute? How do you give your audience a sense of place—and environmental injustice? Or: You've been retained by environmental justice group X to create a website that highlights the key toxic sites and issues confronting a particular neighborhood, and....

As you proceed, do not be shy about drawing on the key insights of course readings. Think about how sites such as yours have emerged through the dynamic relationships among race, class, gender, power, and exploitation. Think about how communities are organizing for change and reflect on the obstacles they face in doing so. How might you assemble various ideas and arguments into a toxic tour that advances their agenda?

Some particular places to consider:

- 3M PFCs in Twin Cities landfills
- CMC Heartland Lite Yard site
- Ford plant
- Green Institute
- I-35W bridge
- University's Avenue's Central Corridor light rail line

Some resources to review:

- Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota: <http://www.ejamn.org/>
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's environmental justice website:
<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/about-mpca/assistance/mpca-and-environmental-justice.html>
- Headwaters Foundation for Justice <http://www.headwatersfoundation.org/>
- Alliance for Metropolitan Stability: <http://www.metrostability.org/>