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***Diverse Environments* Rules**

**A card game about diversity in environmentally-themed board games**

**Designed by Scout Blum**

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A game for 2-4 players

Playing time: Approximately 20-30 minutes

Age:  8 and up

**NOTE:  Game design is an iterative process!  This is a working prototype, so it needs a lot of playtesting and feedback!  That's where you come in.  Play the game and let me know what you think – what works, what doesn't, what is hard to follow and where improvements can be made!  I'll update the rules and documents.  (Email is scoutblum@gmail.com )**

As an enterprising environmental history professor, you've noticed that it's harder to engage your students with academic material.  So you've decided to spice things up a bit by bringing tabletop games into the classroom.  In the spirit of The Syllabus Project, however, you want to make sure that you present a diverse array of games for your students to analyze.  This is no easy task, as you know from reading Tanya Pobuda's work that board games are dominated by white men – as designers and artists.

In *Diverse Environments*, you will work to create a diverse selection of eight games for your syllabus.   You've got colleagues working on the same thing, though, and you don't want to duplicate their efforts.

The game utilizes set collection, closed drafting, and hand management mechanics modelled on the popular Sushi Go card game.

**Components**

--- Game Cards

4 sets of Round Cards (numbered 1-4 in 4 different colors; "round" meaning part of a turn, not the shape!)

Counters of some kind – about 20 (pennies, paperclips, buttons will work); and one unique token/item to act as first player designation.

> Note: The cards are included as a print-and-play game.  Just open the file and print the cards out.  I suggest using cardstock so they feel more like cards.  You can also print them on large sticker paper, cut them out, and stick onto a deck of regular playing cards.  If you want to save

printer ink, then don't print the backs of the cards (and/or print in black and white).

**Objective:** Your goal is to produce the most diverse array of games for your syllabus. To do this, you'll collect pairs of cards with certain diversity criteria matched. Different criteria are worth different amounts of points. At the end of the game, the player with the most points wins.

**Card Descriptions**

**Round Cards:** The cards with colored numbers (1-4) on them are called "Round Cards." They form a very basic "board" for the game. Each turn, you'll place your matched pair on the round cards to show what you did that round.

**Game Cards:** Each card represents an actual environmentally-themed board game. (For more info on the games, search for them on www.boardgamegeek.com). The cards have icons representing several aspects about the game's level of diversity in gender and race/ethnicity of the designer, topic, perspective, and level of critique of society.
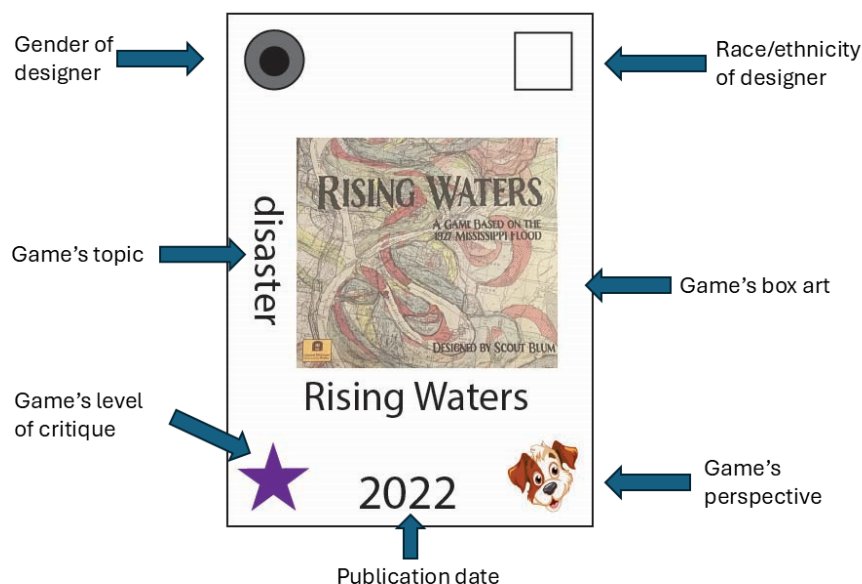


**Gender of designer** (located on the top left of the card)

| Male | Female | LGBTQ+ |
|------|--------|--------|
|      |        |        |

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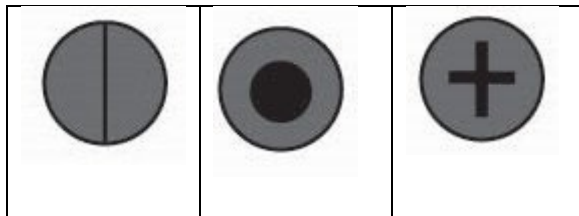
**Race/ethnicity of designer** (located on the top right of the card)

| White | Person of Color |
|-------|-----------------|
|  |  |

**Game's topic**: (located on the left side of the card) The general topic within environmental history of the game

**Game's box art:** (located in the middle of the card) The cover of the box for the game. Collected from the game's entry on boardgamegeek.com

**Game's level of critique**: (located on the bottom left of the card) This symbol represents the depth of societal critique the game includes. Many games include no critique, while others have deep-seated examinations of race, class, capitalism and industry, and consumerism. Others are more complicated: In *Oil Spill* for example, a game designed in the wake of the Exxon Valdez spill, the designer has players pretend to be oil tanker captains trying to deliver their cargo safely. There's no real critique of the fossil fuel industry, energy use, or mention of other dangers from oil.

| No critique | Minimal or "it's complicated" | Extensive (at least two major areas of critique) |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |

**Game's perspective**: (found at the bottom right of the card) Designers have a wide array of choices when choosing perspective. I've divided these up into "underdog" – meaning a bottom up perspective, where players play as ordinary people or underrepresented groups (which can include anything from a cloud, an insect, a national park visitor, or an African American sharecropper); or the more common "elite" or "boss" characters, which sometimes can even be godlike, represented by a briefcase in the game.

| Underdog | Elite/Boss |
|----------|------------|
|  |  |

(icons taken from freepik.com)

**Publication date:** (found on the bottom middle of the card). The initial date of publication of the game, as found on boardgamegeek.com

**EXAMPLE**
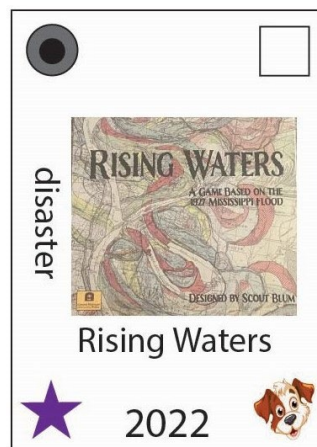


So for this game (a really good one!), the card tells us that it was designed by a white woman, published in 2022, is about a disaster from the underdog perspective, and has an extensive critique of society.

**Set Up**

Pick a first player (the person who most recently played a board game if you can't decide) and give them a unique token of some sort.

Each player is dealt 4 game cards from the deck and given the four matching round cards (with numbers 1-4).  Take the game cards into your hand and don't show anyone.  Lay the four round cards on the table in front of you, numbers facing up so everyone can see.

Place the counters  (pennies, etc) in a pile where everyone can reach them.

Add one to the number of players in the game.  Deal that many game cards face up on the playing surface. (So, if there are 3 players, deal out 4 game cards face up in the middle.)

Here's what this should look like for a 3 player game.
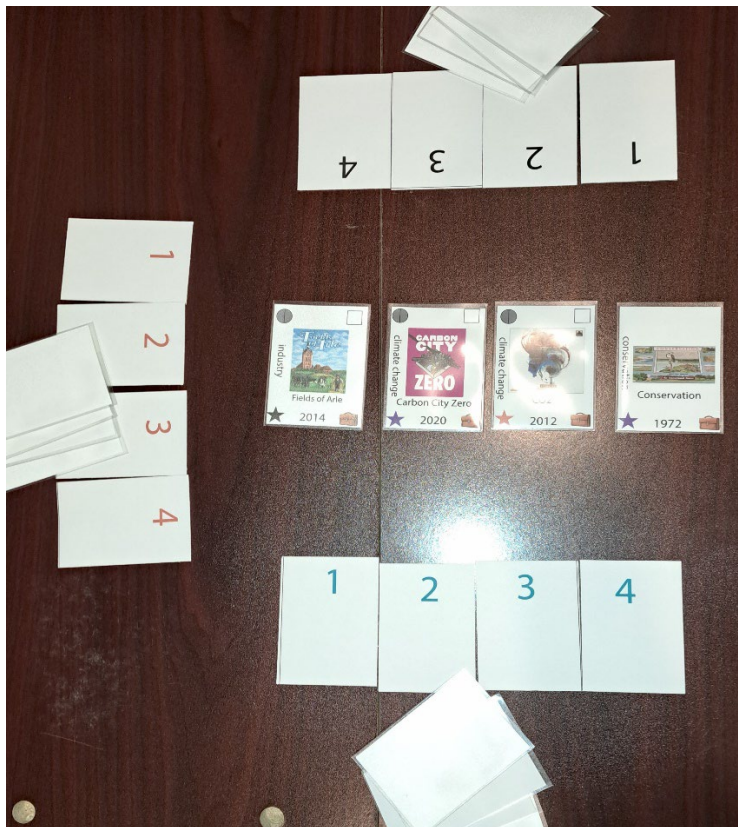


### Rules

The game is played over four rounds (A round is a series of actions that a player takes).

**Each round consists of the following:**

The first player will take a game card from the face up row of game cards.

The first player will then place a pair of cards that match with one criteria (gender, race, topic, publication date, perspective, or critique) on their "1" round card and place a counter over that criteria on the card. This is a memory aid to remind everyone which category you matched.

It looks like this:



This player chose to match the "topic" category in the first round (although they could also have picked "gender" – topic has a higher point value).   The player can only match each diversity category once in a game.  They also cannot match what any other player matches during that specific round.

Some important notes:

- You do not have to immediately play the card you pick up from the face up game cards.
- Publication date just needs to match by the 10s digit (so 2010 is a match with 2016).
- If a card has two gender icons (meaning a male and female designed it), then that may be used as either gender for matching purpose.
- If a card has no gender or race icon, that card cannot be matched with any other card with those categories.

The player to the first player's left (clockwise) will then choose a face up card from the table and play a pair, placing a counter on the matched pair.  This process continues until all players have placed one pair down on their "1" round card.  After all players have placed a matched pair, move the first player token to the next player.  Discard the card remaining on the table.

- No player may duplicate a category they've already matched or a category any other player has matched in that specific round.  (Other players choices in round 1 do not

matter when round 2 begins.) A player's own choices will continue to be restrictions.

At the end of the fourth round, the last player will lay down their last pair (or their last single card, if they can't make a pair) and the game is over.



Here's what the game looks like at the end of round 1. Notice that each player has picked a different category to match. This limitation resets at the beginning of each round, so the first player of round two only has to worry about the category they picked in round 1. So, for example, the player at the bottom of the image cannot pick the "topic" category to match for the rest of the game, but the player on the left CAN pick "topic" as their next match for round 2.

**Points**

After the last player has played their final card, all players should add up their points.

| Types of pairs | # of points |
|---|---|
| Single cards | 0 points |
| Pairs of male, boss, no critique, or white race cards | 1 point |
| Pairs of underdog, decade, topic, or minimal critique cards | 2 points |
| Pairs of female, extensive critique, person of color, or exact year match cards | 3 points |

| If all categories on a pair are different except for the one you matched | 5 points (in addition to the pair's points) |
|---|---|

**End of the game:** The player with the most points wins!