

SYLLABUS - Environmental Justice: The Science and Political Economy of Environmental Health and Justice

ENVS 1720, Spring 2011

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Course Description:

In this course, *Environmental Justice: The Science and Political Economy of Environmental Health and Justice*, students will learn about the disproportionate burdens of environmental contamination and about the health disparities affecting communities of color across the US and internationally. Since the early 1990's, an environmental justice movement in the US, led by many racially-diverse leaders, has achieved much progress in advocating for just forms of health research, improved environmental/health policies, and worker protections to remedy these harms of racial/cultural injustice. In this course, we will review environmental health/justice theories and perspectives as they bear on case studies of Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Latin American indigenous groups and Asian-Americans and how they have organized to improve health and justice in their rural/urban neighborhoods, reservations and cities. We will review programs that have been organized to address childhood asthma reduction, lead poisoning prevention, waste recycling, clean-up and restoration of contaminated sites, sustainable/organic agriculture, clean energy programs and cancer and health disparities research. Students will be asked to critically examine these efforts and also explore unresolved, chronic problems with environmental injustices and health impacts.

Course Learning Objectives:

- To understand the definitions, theories and history of environmental justice
- To review specific cases of environmental injustice and their intersections with race, class and health disparities
- To gain an understanding of forms of solidarity in communities so as to overcome environmental and racial injustices with contamination
- To study the particular contributions of racial groups and other organized communities in remedying environmental and health disparities
- To analyze and critique broader political economy issues involved with environmental health, environmentalism and contamination problems in communities of color

Required Texts:

Pellow, David and R. Brulle. 2005. *Power, Justice and the Environment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Carruthers, David. 2008. *Environmental Justice in Latin America*. MIT Press.

Sawyer, Suzana (2004). *Crude Chronicles*. Durham, NC: Duke University

Steve Lerner (2005): *Diamond: A Struggle for Environmental Justice in Louisiana's Chemical Corridor*. MIT

Many readings are on the MyCourse site for this course. On the syllabus, (WS) indicates that the reading is found in the MyCourses website for the class under weekly readings.

Course Requirements: Consistent class attendance, active class participation and volunteering for student-led discussions are required along with these assignments:

- Two short (3 pages) essay papers that will promote further reflection on class reading/lecture topics. Each essay requirement will be posted on MyCourses.
- Weekly oral reactions to readings. Each week EVERYONE will be expected to share thoughts, critiques and reactions to the readings. Since this class will have a seminar format, it is critical that everyone come to class prepared to discuss that week's readings and to help carry the conversation. For student-led discussions, students will volunteer to lead a discussion of a weekly reading.
- A term project comprised of: 1) prospectus; 2) a paper or service learning project completed in two parts; 3) a poster presentation (all discussed in more detail below).

Term Projects:

Students will also develop a term project consisting of either:

1) A traditional term paper on a current issue in the field of environmental justice such as methodological questions in research and data analysis, or a critique of policy tools to adequately address environmental justice concerns of diverse communities. The paper should be 25 pages.

2) Students may also develop a community service learning / research project to support a local community-based environmental justice campaign. Students choosing this option will be expected to write a background research paper (See Description below of Part I of term project). The second portion of the term assignment will consist of the product produced in consultation with the instructor and the community-based organization students are working with. Where appropriate, students may be asked to write up the results of their service work for Part II of their assignment. Please speak with the teaching assistant soon if you are interested in this option. A description of all service-learning projects is available on MyCourses.

3) A web-based project that provides a detailed analysis and a useful resource list related to an environmental justice policy issue or local campaign. Such projects could include an examination of environmental discrimination and public health, transportation equity, land-use issue, nuclear weapons health impacts, Brownfields redevelopment and environmental justice.

All term projects will be developed in consultation with the professor. Students will develop a prospectus for their term project to be reviewed by the professor. Term projects will be completed in four phases:

- Prospectus: A 2-3 page proposal with references showing you have done some preliminary research on your proposed topic for your term project;
- Part I—Description and analysis of the environmental justice issues you will be addressing either through a traditional term paper or a service learning project (10 pages).
- Part II—Includes: 1) revisions to Part I 2) An analysis of your proposed policy, organizing or regulatory solutions to the issue you wrote about in Part I. If you are doing a service learning project, you will do a short write-up about your project and turn this in with the product you produce for the organization you are working with. Both of these will constitute the final portion of your project (20-25 pages for service learning projects and 25 pages for term paper).
- Poster presentation on your term project to share with the class and solicit feedback.

Grading: Grading is scored according to these percentages:

25% - Class participation and discussion facilitation

20% - Short Essay Papers

5% - Prospectus

10% - Project presentation

40% - Term Project (Part I: 20% , Part II: 20%)

Academic Integrity Note: A note about plagiarism: Students should be aware that plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism entails appropriation of passages, words and phrases without credit, appropriation of both main and supporting ideas without credit, and paraphrasing without credit. Plagiarism also includes submitting a paper written by someone else. Ethical research requires that you properly document the sources you use. Even when you do not quote directly from another work, if reading that source contributed to the ideas presented in your paper, you should give the authors proper credit. If you have questions about how to cite your

sources appropriately, please purchase a reference guide to writing styles at the Brown Bookstore.

Class Schedule: *Students will need to read between 50-100 pages a week.*

Week 1, January 31, 2011: Introduction to the Class

Introduction to Environmental Justice

HANDOUT: “Principles of Environmental Justice”, Adopted at the People of Color Conference on Environmental Justice, Washington, D.C. 1991. Also available at:

<http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>

Class Discussion Handout: Cone, Marla, “Dozens of Words for Snow, None for Pollution.” *Mother Jones*, January/February 2005. Available at:

http://www.motherjones.com/news/feature/2005/01/12_402.html.

Week 2, February 7:

Racism, Corporate Pollution and Environmental Health/Justice Inequalities: A Focus on Oil Contamination

Readings Due for Class

*Steve Lerner (2005): *Diamond: a Struggle for Environmental Justice in Louisiana's Chemical Corridor*, MIT Press. Chapter Assignments for Class Presentation (Film Clip) *Also: S. Sawyer:

Skim: Part One: Two, Crude Excesses Read completely: Part Two:Three, Petroleum Politics – Neoliberal Ironies

Week 3, February 14: Framing Environmental Justice

Guest Speaker: Timmons Roberts, Environmental Justice and Siting Policy

Readings Due for Class:

**Pellow and Brulle Text: Chapter Two-* A Brief Comparison of the Civil Rights Movement and The Environmental Justice Movement

*Chapter Three: The Half-Life of the Environmental Justice Frame.

*Sawyer: Part One - One: Amazon Imaginaries

Skim:(WS) Roberts, Timmons and M. Toffolon-Weis. 2005. *Chronicles from the Environmental Justice Movement*, Chapter 2, Roots of Environmental Justice in Louisiana

Week 4: February 21: - No Class

***Prospectus (two copies) for Term Project is due on February 28, 2011

Week 5, February 28: Human Rights and Urban Neighborhood Disparities

*** *Guest Lecture:* Emily Godfrey, Childhood Lead Action Project, RI

Readings Due:

*Carruthers, D. Chapter 7, Environmental Justice in Mexico

***(WS)** Bullard, R. Chapter 6, Toxic Racism on a New Jersey Waterfront;

*Also: Pellow and Brulle text: Chapter 8 – Food and Justice

*****Short Essay One is due on March 7, 2011**

Week 6, March 7: Ethics/Discourse for Environmental Justice

Readings Due:

- *Pellow and Brulle text: Chapter 9, Pena, D. Autonomy, Equity and Environmental Justice
- *(WS) Ferretti, M. Risk and Distributive Justice: The Case of Regulating New Technologies
- *(WS) Parks, B. and T. Roberts. 2006. Globalization, Vulnerability to Climate Change and Perceived Injustice
- *Pellow and Brulle text: Chapter 14, Lee, Charles. Collaborative Models to Achieve Environmental Justice and Healthy Communities

Week 7, March 15: Environmental Justice Theory

Readings Due:

- *(WS) Morello-Frosch R and Lopez, R: "The Riskscape and the Colorline: Examining the Role of Segregation in Environmental Health Disparities," *Environmental Research*, 2006 102(2): 181-196.
- * Brulle and Pellow text: Chapter 12: Brown, Phil, Brian Mayer, Stephen Zavestoski, Theo Luebke, Joshua Mandelbaum, Sabrina McCormick. The Health Politics of Asthma: Environmental Justice and Collective Illness Experience in the US
- * Pellow and Brulle text: Chapter 17, Margoluis, C "Between Economic Justice and Sustainability"

*****Part One of Term Project is due on Monday, March 21, 2011**

Week 8, March 21: Conservation, Land Use Struggles and Environmental (In) Justice

Guest Lecturer: Nicole Poepping, Clean Water Action

Readings Due:

- *(WS) Pulido, Laura (1996) "Chapter 4: Ganados del Valle: Resource Management as Contested Terrain." *Environmentalism and Economic Justice*, In: *Environmentalism and Economic Justice*, pp. 125-190.
- *(WS) Dowie, Mark Conservation Refugees: "When Protecting Nature Means Kicking People Out." *Orion Magazine*, November/December 2005. Available at: <http://www.oriononline.org/pages/om/05-6om/Dowie.html>,
- *Carruthers, D. text: Chapter 3, Axcelrad, H. Grassroots Reframing of Environmental Struggles in Brazil

March 28: Spring Break - NO CLASS

Week 9, April 4: Native American and Latino EJ Struggles: Diverse Communities, Science and Contested Knowledge

Readings due:

*(WS) Corburn, Jason (2005): *Street Science: Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice*, MIT Press. Chapters to be assigned;

*(WS) Israel B, Schultz A, Parker EA, Becker A (1998): "Review of Community-based Research: Assessing Partnership Approaches to Improve Public Health." *Annual Review of Public Health* 19:173-202.

*(WS) Panikkar, B., D. Brugge, E. Yazzie. 2006. Ethics of Uranium Mining Health Studies

Week 10, April 11: Hurricane Katrina and 'Human-made' Disasters: Lessons for Environmental Justice

Film, *When the Levees Broke*, by Spike Lee

Readings due:

*(WS) Dyson, ME (2005) *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster*, pp. 1-34 and 178-213.

*(WS) Lowe, J. and T. Shaw. 2009. After Katrina: Racial Regimes and Human Development Barriers in the Gulf Coast Region

*(WS) Sullivan, J. et al (2009). Public Talks and Science Listens: A Community-Based Participatory Approach to Characterizing Environmental Health Risk Perceptions and Assessing Recovery Need in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina and Rita. *Environmental Health Insights*

*****Short Essay Two is due on Monday, April 18, 2011**

Week 11, April 18: The Political Economy of Waste, Recycling and Pollution

Guest Lecturer (tentative): TBA

Readings due:

*Carruthers, D. Text: Chapter 5, Moore, S. "Waste Practices and Politics: The Case of Oaxaca, Mexico

*(WS) Alastair Iles (2004), "Mapping Environmental Justice in Technology Flows: Computer Waste Impacts in Asia," *Global Environmental Politics*, vol. 4, no. 4, 76-107.

(WS) Pellow, David (2007): *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. MIT Press (Cambridge, Mass).

Week 12, April 25: Government Regulation and Legal Strategies

*****Guest Lecture: Steve Fischback: Rhode Island Legal Services**

Readings due:

*Pellow and Brulle text: Chapters 10 and 11: Environmental Justice and the Legal System and the States Comprehensive Approach to Environmental Justice

*(WS) Lowry, Alma (Winter 2002) “Environmental Justice Advocacy after Sandoval.” *Guild Practitioner*, Vol. 59 (1):37-43.

Skim: *(WS) Lewis, Sanford and Diane Henkels, “Good Neighbor Agreements - A Tool for Environmental and Social Justice,” Please skim this at:

<http://www.cpn.org/topics/environment/goodneighbor.html>

Week 13, May 2: International Environmental Justice and Occupational Health

Readings due:

*Carruthers, D. text: Chapter 11, McCaffrey, K. The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Vieques, Puerto Rico

*(WS) Pellow, David and Lisa Sun-Hee Park (2003) Chapter 5: The Political Economy of Work and Health in Silicon Valley. *Silicon Valley of Dreams: Environmental Injustice, Immigrant Workers, and the High Tech Global Economy*, New York University Press, pp. 85-111.

*(WS) Soriano, Jen “Globalization and the Maquiladoras” *Mother Jones Magazine* November 24, 1999, available on-line : <http://www.motherjones.com/wto/soriano1.html>

Week 14, May 9: Class Poster Presentations

*****Final Term Papers are due Monday, May 16, 2011.**