

Environmental Justice

Environmental and Sustainability Studies 3365-001

3 credits * Fall Semester 2014

Hybrid course meets Tuesdays OR Thursdays 12:25 – 1:45

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the proposition that communities of color experience disproportionate impacts of environmental and health hazards that result from social, political, and economic practices. We will explore, for example, the confiscation of land and water from native communities, the placement of toxic waste-producing facilities in communities facing poverty, and the lack of access to healthy food, air and water in communities that lack the political access and financial resources to fight for them. We will critically reflect on these issues, explore the economic practices and governmental policies that sustain them, and challenge ourselves to become aware of the ways that personal and societal choices can result in inequities for diverse groups.

We will explore the theories and concepts of environmental justice, assess the empirical research on the subject, and examine specific case studies and policies. Finally, the course will explore ways to achieve environmental justice for all people regardless of race, gender, ethnic heritage, and income level. The overall goal of the course is to use an transdisciplinary approach to understand how a multi-cultural democratic society can achieve environmental sustainability within a framework of justice and equality for all. This course is a hybrid course in which students will participate in online course readings and videos each week in addition to having an 80-minute face-to-face seminar.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Examine local and regional examples of environmental injustice.
- Distinguish between different types of environmental injustices.
- Assess political and economic structures of U.S. society that maintain environmental inequities.
- Analyze how personal choices and positionality affect equity and justice for diverse populations.
- Evaluate sustainability as a tool to promote justice and equality for all populations.
- Reflect on participation in community-driven environmental justice projects using both practical and theoretical lenses.

READINGS

There are three texts required for this course and you will be directed to articles, text excerpts, online books, web links, etc., each week as needed in Canvas.

- Flight Behavior (2012) by Barbara Kingsolver
- Do It Anyway (2010) by Courtney Martin
- Environmental Justice: Concepts, Evidence and Politics (2012) by Gordon Walker

TEACHING METHODS

The course uses readings, video, reflection, discussion, online research and resources, written work, peer review, and community-engaged learning to achieve learning objectives.

COURSE SCHEDULE

	Topic	Readings/Video	Assignment
Introduction Environmental Justice: What's it look like?			
Week 1	Course intro	Ground Up Preface <i>Tar Creek</i>	Critical Analysis form
Week 2	Cast study 1	EJ text Ch 1 <i>Split Estate</i>	Critical analysis form -
Week 3	Case study 2	EJ Text Chs 2&3 Nature as Community - DiChiro	Critical analysis form
Week 4	Framing EJ	Blink Excerpt Invisible Knapsack Wise Video	Critical analysis form
Theoretical Framework for Environmental Justice – How does it happen?			
*Week 5	Privilege / EJ simulation all meet Thursday 12 – 3. No Tuesday meeting.	Pellow EIF	Critical analysis form Simulation reflection Complete CEL contract
Week 6	Privilege	Schlosberg From the Ground Up Chapter 2	Critical analysis form
Week 7	Inequality Formation and definitions	Faber's Capitalizing on EI – ch 1 World Water Wars	Critical analysis form
<i>Week 8</i>		FALL BREAK	
Environmental amenities and disamenities			
Week 9	Privatization	Waste citing EJ - Textbook Ch 4 “Environmental Justice and the Skull Valley Goshute Indians' proposal to store nuclear waste” and “From discourse in nuclear power’s wasteland to waste site: the role of environmental injustices”	Critical analysis form -
Week 10	Danielle Endres - Goshutes	Air quality EJ Textbook Ch 5 SLC inversions and justice implications Flight Behavior – chapters 1-5	Critical analysis form
Week 11	EJ sustainability gallery	Urban Greenspace EJ Textbook CH 7, Living in Public Space Prezi video Flight Behavior – chapters 6 -10	Critical analysis form
Week 12	Greenspace	Food Justice <u>Bad Sugar</u> , FJ text, TED talk Finish Flight Behavior	Critical analysis form CEL project papers
Week 13	Final CEL Projects Peer Review	Climate Justice EJ Textbook Ch 8 <u>Fairness in adaptation to CC</u> <u>Bidder 70</u>	Critical analysis form

Pathways for Environmental Justice and Sustainability			
Week 14	Final Projects Presentations	<i>From the Ground Up</i> – Chapters 5 & 7 Do It Anyway	Critical analysis form
Week 15	Final Projects Presentations	EJ text Ch 9 Finish Do It Anyway	Critical analysis form
Finals week			Final CEL presentations and revised papers due

CONSULTATION

If you need help, by all means ask for it, Ian or I will be happy to assist you. Email is the best way to reach me to set up an appointment or you may drop by during office hours.

LATE WORK

Much of our work in this class will be discussion-oriented and in order to maintain a productive learning community must be completed on time. If there are extenuating circumstances and we are made aware of them in advance, we may be able to find a solution. Otherwise, late assignments will be accepted at 50% of their original point value

CHOICES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Each student will be expected to engage weekly in the discussions of assigned readings, videos and recorded talks. Your participation in discussions should reveal that you have read and viewed the required material and can participate in an informed discussion. You are responsible to create and maintain a respectful demeanor as we grapple with difficult and at times uncomfortable issues sharing our opinions and personal perspectives.
2. Each student will complete a critical analysis form each week and we will use the questions section of that form to help drive discussions on our Tuesday meetings. These forms will help you read critically and articulate your questions, reactions, and potential or actual roles in these issues.
3. Final community engaged research or learning project. You will work on an environmental justice-related project either by working with a local organization involved in EJ issues or through a local research project that explores an environmental justice issue. You will then complete a paper that integrates your class experience with your community engaged learning experience by reflecting on:
 - What you actually did and/or found
 - How this project you chose is an example of environmental justice from a theoretical perspective
 - In what ways your project explored or implemented sustainable approaches to environmental justice
 - In what ways this experience enhanced your understanding of environmental justice

These ideas will be presented in class on weeks 14 & 15. You may do this project in groups of up to 3 with instructor permission.

You must complete a project proposal by week 5, on which you will receive feedback. The final project report and presentation is due on week 14.

GRADING:

Discussions:	30% of the final grade
Critical analysis forms	40% of the final grade
Final Project:	30% of the final grade

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

If you are experiencing technical problems using Canvas or the on-line features of the course, you can get help at: www.uonline.utah.edu. If you want to ask a specific question, you can send an email to: info@uonline.utah.edu or call (801) 585-5959

ONLINE/HYBRIDCOURSE GUIDELINES

Electronic or equipment failure:

1. It is your responsibility to maintain your computer and related equipment in order to participate in the online portion of the course.
2. Equipment failures will not be an acceptable excuse for late or absent assignments.
3. You are responsible for making sure your assignments, including attachments, are received before the deadline.

LEGAL MATTERS:

1. Reasonable Accommodation:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 801-581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodation. Such accommodation will be afforded based on the specific disability and as agreed in writing.

2. Academic Dishonesty:

Any act of academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of E and a recommendation of additional disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes:

Cheating: giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on any academic work.

Plagiarism: presenting the language, structure or ideas of another person as one's own original work.

Falsification: any untrue statement, either oral or written, concerning one's own academic work or the academic work of others, or the unauthorized alteration of any academic record.

Original work: all academic work undertaken in this course must be original, i.e. it must not have been submitted in a prior course or be submitted in a course being taken concurrently.

Let me make this clear: if you engage in any of these behaviors, you fail the class, no exceptions.

3. Faculty and Student Responsibilities

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

Note: The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. The instructor may modify it when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.