

Geography 353: Geographies of Environmental Justice
Tuesday, Thursday 12:30-1:50

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:30; Thursdays 10:00-11:30
or by appointment Tues., Wed., or Thurs. *only*

Course Overview

This course examines issues of environmental quality and social justice. It takes as axiomatic the premise that all people have a right to live in a clean environment free from hazardous pollution or contamination, and to the natural resources necessary to sustain health and livelihood. In some cases, these resources are air, soil or water. In other instances they may include healthy fisheries, forests, or land to farm or graze animals on. With this as our starting point, we will question why, and through what social, political and economic processes some people are denied this basic right. How is it that certain groups of people do not have access to basic resources, or are burdened with pollution or environmental hazards to a greater extent than other groups? What are the social relations of production and power that contribute to these outcomes? What can be done? We begin by examining the philosophical foundations and history of the environmental justice movement and associated concepts such as race and class. We then explore these concepts through a series of case studies, first from the U.S., and then from the 'Global South.' Through these case studies we will examine environmental justice issues in urban and rural settings; the strategies and politics of poor peoples' environmental justice movements; problems associated with protected areas (e.g. national parks) and local populations; indigenous rights struggles, and resource conflicts in Bolivia.

Required Texts

There are four required texts for the course:

- *People, Plants and Justice: The Politics of Nature Conservation*, edited by Charles Zerner (Columbia University Press, 2000) ["Zerner" in the course schedule below]
- *Power, Justice and the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement*, edited by David Naguib Pellow and Robert J. Brulle (MIT Press, 2005) ["P&B" in course schedule below]
- *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster*, Michael Eric Dyson (Basic Books, 2006) ["Dyson" in the course schedule, below]
- *Environmental Justice in Latin America: Problems, Promise and Practice*, edited by David V. Carruthers (MIT Press, 2008) ["Carruthers" in course schedule below]

There will also be a short course reader with additional readings, available at the University Bookstore.

The reading load for this class is moderate, and at times the readings will be difficult, and may require more time than you expect to fully understand (and be able to critique) the author's argument. The reading is also somewhat unevenly distributed during the semester. That is, some weeks there may be as much as 100 pages of reading, whereas in other weeks there will be very little or none at all. Because a significant portion of class time will be devoted to discussing the articles, **it is absolutely essential that you keep up with the readings on a weekly basis.** Part of your final grade for the class is based on your participation in class discussion. Thus, not only must you show up for class, you must show up having done the required readings, and ready to discuss them critically. You will also submit three reading response papers during the semester (see below).

Course Requirements

This course fulfills both critical reflections and intensive writing requirements for the College of Arts & Sciences. As such, there is a fair amount of writing required, including two take-home exams, a group research paper and presentation, and three short reading response papers. For the take-home exams, you will be given four questions, of which you will select two to answer. Your answers should be roughly 5 double-spaced pages each, and must be typed, fully referenced, free of grammatical and spelling errors, and include a bibliography. The exams will be based largely on the readings, and will require you to analyze and critique the arguments presented by the various authors. You will have one week to complete each exam (see course schedule, below). **Unless prior arrangements are made, late exams will be marked down one letter grade for every day they are late.**

You will also be expected to carry out a group research project on a New York state environmental justice topic of your choice. You will turn in a group paper and present your work in class. **Final group papers are due no later than Monday, December 8 by 4pm** (you can place them in my mailbox in the Geography Department office, 144 Eggers Hall). **Unless prior arrangements are made, late papers will be marked down one letter grade for every day they are late.**

Finally, you are required to submit three short critical readings responses papers. These papers are to be no more than two pages (space-and-a-half or double space), and should analyze and critique issues raised by the week's readings. You may sign up for the weeks to write your papers.

Statement on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious issue. The easiest way to think of plagiarism is the use of other peoples' ideas or words without proper citation. The university defines plagiarism as:

"The submission of any work by a student is taken as a guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are the student's own except when properly credited to another. Violations of this principle include giving or receiving aid in an exam or where otherwise prohibited, fraud, plagiarism, the falsification or forgery of any record, or any other deceptive act in connection with academic work. Plagiarism is the representation of another's words, ideas, programs, formulae, opinions, or other products of work as one's own, either overtly or by failing to attribute them to their true source" (Section 1.0, Syracuse University Academic Rules and Regulations).

Plagiarism is a very serious breach of academic honesty, and will not be tolerated in this class. **The first time a student is found to be plagiarizing, s/he will automatically receive a score of 0 for the plagiarized assignment. If the student is caught plagiarizing a second time, s/he will automatically receive an F for the course.** There will be no exceptions.

For more information on definitions and examples of plagiarism, and suggestions on how to avoid it while still referencing other peoples' work and ideas, see the website:
<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/faculty/merupert/Teaching/plag.htm>

Disability

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>.

Grading

Take-home Exam #1	100 points
Take-home Exam #2	100 points
Group Project Paper	100 points
Class Participation	25 points
Critical Readings Response #1	20 points
Critical Readings Response #2	20 points
Critical Readings Response #3	20 points
Group Project Presentation	15 points
TOTAL	400 points

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings
Week 1		
Aug 26	Course introduction	
Aug 28	What is (geographical about) Environmental Justice?	<i>Reader:</i> Bullard (1990), ch. 1-2 P&B ch. 1

Week 2

Sept 2	Race, class and justice	<i>Reader:</i> Jones Carruthers, ch. 1 (Sundberg)
Sept 4	Race, class and environment	<i>Reader:</i> Bullard (2007) Walker Eady Shepard

Week 3

Sept 9	Intentionality vs. Structural Bias: Legal Definitions and Institutions	P&B, ch. 10 <i>Reader:</i> Cole and Foster
Sept 11	Environmental Justice and the state, Policy, Politics and Practice	P&B, ch. 9, 11 <i>Reader:</i> Holifield

Also, read report at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05289.pdf>

And read through the websites:

<http://www.epa.gov/eftpages/envienviromentaljustice.html>

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/333.html>

Week 4

Sept 16	Environmental justice in activism and academia	P&B, ch. 2, 13 Carruthers, ch. 7
Sept 18	Environmental Justice and the City 1: Apartheid in Los Angeles?	<i>Reader:</i> Pulido (2000)

Week 5

Sept 23	Environmental Justice and the City 2: The Drowning of New Orleans	<i>Reader:</i> Colten Rydin Cutter Sze
Sept 25	Katrina, Racism and Justice - 1	Dyson, ch. 1-2,

Week 6

Sept 30	<i>Eid Ul-Fitr (no class)</i>	<i>no new readings</i>
Oct 2	Katrina, Racism and Justice - 2	Dyson, ch. 3-5

Week 7

Oct 7	Katrina, Racism and Justice - 3	Dyson, ch. 9-10, Afterword
Oct 9	<i>Yom Kippur (no class)</i>	<i>no new readings</i>

Week 8

Oct 14	Environmental Justice and the City 3: Site Selection, Sewage and Syracuse <i>Also see: www.peacecouncil.net/creek</i>	<i>Reader: Adams Carty Parsons</i>
Oct 16	Field Trip 1: Midland Avenue RTF	<i>Reader: POC (Executive Summary)</i>

Week 9

Oct 21	Native Americans and EJ: The Onondaga Nation Land Rights Action <i>See website: http://www.onondaganation.org/ and read all pages on link to "Land Rights"</i>	<i>Reader: LaDuke</i>
Oct 23	Native Americans and EJ: The Onondaga Nation Land Rights Action	<i>Reader: Onondaga Nation Land Claim</i>

Week 10

Oct 28	Field Trip 2: Onondaga Creek	no new readings
Oct 30	Environmental Justice in the Global South	Zerner, Introduction Carruthers, Introduction

Week 11

Nov 4	Urbanization in the Global South	Carruthers, ch. 5-6
Nov 6	Livelihood, nature, and justice: the politics of international development	<i>Reader</i> : Perreault 2003 Carruthers, ch. 9

Week 12

Nov 11	Nature conservation and social justice 1	Zerner, ch. 5 <i>Reader</i> : Wilshusen et al.
Nov 13	Nature conservation and social justice 2	Zerner, ch. 11 Carruthers, ch. 8 P&B, ch. 17

Week 13

Nov 18	Extractive industries and indigenous peoples - 1	Zerner, ch. 1 (Watts)
Nov 20	Extractive industries and indigenous peoples - 2	Zerner, ch. 3-4

Week 14

Nov 25	Resource politics in Bolivia	Carruthers, ch. 10 <i>Reader</i> : Perreault (2008) Hylton and Thomson Rivera Cusicanqui Arze and Kruse
Nov 27	Thanksgiving Break (no class ☺)	no readings

Week 15

Dec 2	Group presentations	no new readings
Dec 4	Group presentations	no new readings

Final Paper Due by Monday, December 8, no later than 4:00 pm!

Course Bibliography

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- Perreault, Thomas 2003. 'A people with our own identity': toward a cultural politics of development in Ecuadorian Amazonia." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21(5): 583-606.
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- POC 2006. Executive Summary, A study of environmental racism: new and significant information regarding Title VI Claim 03R-04-R2. Partnership for Onondaga Creek, Syracuse.
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- Shepard, Peggy M. 2007. Building community power for change. *The Crisis*, July / August, pp. 34-37.
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