

Joanna L. Dyl
Sample syllabus

Environmental Justice

Course Overview

Why do some people have access to a clean and safe environment, and not others? Who decides and why? For thirty years, studies have shown that people of color and poor people suffer from disproportionate exposure to environmental risks such as pollution. This course examines the problems of environmental racism and environmental injustice through an interdisciplinary lens. We will explore patterns of environmental inequity both historically and in current practices, including how inequities have developed along lines of race, class, and gender as well as internationally. We will discuss environmental justice movements and government policies that have identified and challenged those inequities with varying degrees of success. Case studies will include toxic contamination, air pollution, pesticides, uranium mining, and problems associated with protected areas, among others.

After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. Summarize and critically evaluate scholarship on environmental racism and environmental justice in social science disciplines;
2. Understand environmental justice issues and movements in historical and cultural context;
3. Write papers analyzing and comparing scholarly readings;
4. Conceptualize and write an environmental studies research paper, including developing a topic and hypothesis, finding both primary and secondary sources, and analyzing primary sources.

Books Assigned

- Karen Brodtkin, *Power Politics: Environmental Activism in South Los Angeles* (Rutgers University Press, 2009)
- Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (University of California Press, 2001)

These books will be available at the bookstore. They should be purchased through the bookseller of your choice by the end of the sixth week of class. They will also be on reserve at the library for anyone for whom purchasing books is a financial hardship. Other assigned readings will be available on the web, on Moodle, or through the library website.

Course Format

This course is a discussion-based class. This means that the majority of the learning process takes place through in-class discussion of the readings. It is essential that you bring the day's readings (both books and shorter pieces from Moodle or the web) to each class session so that we can easily reference specific quotes and sections during our discussions. The success of our discussions depends largely on your careful reading of texts, consistent attendance, and engagement with each other during class.

Obviously, a prerequisite to good discussions is a basic respect for others and their opinions. The topics of this class are challenging and may at times be emotional, and our goal is to engage in constructive dialogue about those topics. Disagreement is fine (even good), but please remember to be courteous and respectful toward your classmates at all times. Respect for the instructor and your classmates also demands that you: 1) be on time to class; 2) remain silent when others (including the professor) are speaking; 3) refrain from eating during class; 4) minimize disruptions by turning off your cell phone and using your laptop only to take notes and access course materials. As college students, I expect you to behave like courteous adults and will treat you like adults in turn.

For any of you who are uncomfortable with participating in class because of shyness or other concerns, please come and speak to me. Because class participation is a major part of the course – and because the ability to articulate your ideas verbally is an important skill to develop – you will need to work to overcome your discomfort. However, I am happy to make accommodations to help you feel more comfortable with speaking up or demonstrate that you are participating as a listener even if you are quiet in class.

Students with disabilities (visible or invisible) are encouraged to consult with me as soon as possible, particularly if accommodations are needed.

I encourage all students to take advantage of my office hours. If you are not available during office hours, I am happy to schedule another time to meet with you. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have questions about course material, assignments, your progress, or other topics related to the course or your studies.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. You may be able to make up excused absences (those cleared with me in advance and resulting from illness, religious observances, family emergencies, or travel for college activities). Arrangements for make-up work should be made with me individually and will usually involve an additional writing assignment. Unexcused absences and absences that are not made up will have a significant impact on your grade. Because this is a discussion-based course, if you accumulate more than seven absences for any reason over the semester, you will fail the course.

Assignments

1.) Participation – 25 percent

Class participation represents 25 percent of your grade in this class. Your grade will be based on evidence of your reasoned engagement with course materials throughout the semester. Posing useful questions is often more valuable to good discussion than having the “right” answer, and evidence of listening to your classmates and engaging with their questions will boost your grade at least as much as the frequency of your comments.

We will begin most class sessions with the “minute around” in which each student has one minute to present her or his reactions to the week’s material. What did you find most interesting in the readings? What did you find confusing or surprising? How does this material relate to readings from previous weeks? This is your chance to have the floor to raise issues for discussion, and your comments during the “minute around” will contribute to your participation grade for the week.

At times, I may incorporate in-class quizzes on the readings (either announced or unannounced) and/or other in-class exercises, which will contribute to your participation grade.

2.) Two short papers - 30 percent (15 percent each)

You will write two papers on the assigned readings for this course. These papers should be analytical essays that identify each author’s argument(s) about the topic you are focusing on and analyze the approaches and conclusions of the author(s). You may wish to analyze aspects such as the sources or data used by the authors, their methodologies, their intellectual influences, their conclusions, and/or their rhetorical approach. Your essays should demonstrate a thoughtful engagement with the readings and should represent an extension of our in-class discussions. I will provide more detailed prompts closer to the due date for each paper.

3.) Role play briefing and participation – 10 percent

During week 5, we will engage in a role play of a debate around an environmental justice issue. You will put together a briefing paper based on your assigned role, which you will use as the basis for your participation in the role play and turn in afterwards. I will provide more details as we get closer to the date.

4.) Research paper – total 35 percent

- a. Topic proposal (5 percent combined with preliminary bibliography)
- b. Preliminary bibliography, including both secondary literature and potential primary source material (historical sources, data sets, policy documents, etc.) (5 percent combined with topic proposal)
- c. Participation in primary source workshop and draft analysis of one or two primary sources or pieces of data (5 percent)
- d. Final research paper (20 percent)
- e. Presentation (5 percent)

The primary assignment for this class is a short research paper on a topic of your choice related to environmental justice. You will develop your topic and your paper through guided steps over the course of the semester. I will provide more details on the research paper later in the semester.

Two of the final class sessions will be devoted to student presentations. You should prepare an organized presentation describing your research project. Your presentation will be evaluated for both content and presentation quality.

Grading

GRADING SCALE

4.0	=	A	=	93 – 100 %	2.0	=	C	=	73 – 76 %
3.7	=	A-	=	90 – 92 %	1.7	=	C-	=	70 – 72 %
3.3	=	B+	=	87 – 89 %	1.3	=	D+	=	67 – 69 %
3.0	=	B	=	83 – 86 %	1.0	=	D	=	63 – 66 %
2.7	=	B-	=	80 – 82 %	0.7	=	D-	=	60 – 62 %
2.3	=	C+	=	77 – 79 %	0.0	=	Fail	=	0 – 59 %

My intention with graded work is to challenge you and provide you with an honest evaluation of your performance and your progress. Grades in the A-range represent excellent work, those in the B-range reflect good work, and those in the C-range represent satisfactory work. Work that is submitted late will lose 1/3 of a grade for each day it is late (for example, from a B+ to a B), unless I have granted an extension in advance.

I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic integrity lies at the foundation of the learning process and is central to the mission of critical inquiry within higher education. It is also, of course, a matter of personal ethics. Cases of plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the assignment and will be reported.

Course Schedule

Please note that the course schedule and readings may evolve in response to unforeseen circumstances or pedagogical needs. All updates and changes will be posted on Moodle and discussed in class. You should complete the readings listed for each day prior to that day's class.

Defining and Theorizing Environmental Racism

Week 1

1/9 *Introductions*

1/11 *What Are Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice?*

Robert D. Bullard, "Environmental Justice in the Twenty-First Century," in *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution* (2005): 19-42. (Moodle)

Danya Al-Saleh and Mohammed Rafi Arefin, "Doing Environmental Studies During Times of Racialized Violence," *Edge Effects* (December 9, 2014).
<http://edgeeffects.net/environmental-justice-race-violence/>

Week 2

1/16 *Race and Inequality*

Ann Morning, "Keyword: Race," *Contexts* 4 (2005): 44-46. (Moodle)

John A. Powell, Hasan Kwame Jeffries, Daniel W. Newhart, and Eric Stiens, "Towards a Transformative View of Race: The Crisis and Opportunity of Katrina," *There is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina*, eds. Chester Hartman and Gregory D. Squires (2006), 59-84. (Moodle)

1/18 *Socioeconomic Class, Global Inequality, and Environmental Organizing*

"Let them eat pollution," *The Economist*, February 8, 1992. (Moodle)

Ramachandra Guha, "The Environmentalism of the Poor," in *Debating the Earth: The Environmental Politics Reader*, second edition, eds. John S. Dryzek and Davis Schlosberg, 463-480. (Moodle)

Week 3

1/23 *Gender and Intersectionality*

Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "Integrating Race and Gender," *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (2002): 6-17. (Moodle)

Virginia Scharf, "Man and Nature! Sex Secrets of Environmental History" in *Seeing Nature Through Gender*, ed. Virginia Scharf (2003): 3-19. (Moodle)

Robert R.M Verchick, "Feminist Theory and Environmental Justice," in *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism*, ed. Rachel Stein (2004): 63-77. (Moodle)

1/25 *Slow Violence*

Rob Nixon, "Introduction," and "Ecologies of the Aftermath," *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, 1-44, 199-232. (Moodle)

Historical Roots of Environmental Racism

Week 4

1/30 *Culture, History, and Perceptions of Nature*

Mart A. Stewart, "Slavery and the Origins of African American Environmentalism," *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*, eds. Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll (2006): 9-20. (Moodle)

Barbara Deutsch Lynch, "The Garden and the Sea: U.S. Latino Environmental Discourses and Mainstream Environmentalism," *Social Problems* 40 (1993): 108-124. <http://0-www.jstor.org.books.redlands.edu/stable/3097029>

Linda Robyn, "Indigenous Knowledge and Technology: Creating Environmental Justice in the Twenty-First Century," in *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, eds. Louis P. Pojman, Paul Pojman, and Katie McShane, 367-383. (Moodle)

2/1 *Histories of Pollution*

Joel Tarr, "The Search for the Ultimate Sink: Urban Air, Land, and Water Pollution in Historical Perspective," *The Search for the Ultimate Sink*, 7-35. (Moodle)

Andrew Hurley, "Preface" and "The Social Geography of Pollution and the Politics of Sand," *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980*, xiii-xv, 154-174. (Moodle)

2/3 *First paper due*

The Development of the Environmental Justice Movement

Week 5

2/6 *Pesticides and Environmental Health*

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 1-23 (Moodle).

Cesar Chavez, "The Wrath of Grapes Boycott Speech" (1986) (Moodle)

Jim Tarter, "Some Live More Downstream Than Others: Cancer, Gender, and Environmental Justice," in *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, and Pedagogy*, eds. Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein (2002): 213-228. (Moodle)

2/8 *Seeing All Sides*

Role play: Pesticide regulation and environmental justice

Briefing due

Week 6

2/13 *Warren County and the Roots of Environmental Justice Organizing*

Eileen Maura McGurty, "From NIMBY to Civil Rights: The Origins of the Environmental Justice Movement," *Environmental History* 2, no. 3 (July 1997): 301-323.
<http://0-www.jstor.org.books.redlands.edu/stable/3985352>

First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, "Principles of Environmental Justice" (1991) (Moodle)

2/15 *Defining Environmental Justice*

David Schlosberg, "Reconceiving Environmental Justice: Global Movement and Political Theories," *Environmental Politics* 13, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 517-540.

2/17 Initial topic proposal for research project due

Week 7

2/20 Workshop on research methods with Les Canterbury, Reference Librarian (tentative date)

2/22 *Pollution and White Privilege*

Manuel Pastor Jr., James L. Sadd, and Rachel Morello-Frosch, "Environmental Inequity in Metropolitan Los Angeles," in *The Quest for Environmental Justice*, ed. Bullard (2005): 108-124. (Moodle)

Laura Pulido, "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90 (2000): 12-40.

<http://0-www.jstor.org.books.redlands.edu/stable/1515377>

Spring Break: No class 2/27 and 3/1

Conservation and Injustice

Week 8

3/6 *Yellowstone*

Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, preface, 1-7, 81-146.

“Mr. A.A. Anderson, Special Supervisor of the Yellowstone and Teton Timber Reserves, Talks Interestingly of the Summer’s Work,” “Charles Askins Describes Game and Hunting Conditions in the South,” and “Ben Senowin testifies about being apprehended for game law violations,” *American Environmental History*, 202-211. (Moodle)

3/8 *The Grand Canyon and Resource Policy in the American West*

Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, 149-198.

3/10 *Revised topic proposal and preliminary bibliography for research project due*

Week 9

3/13 *Conservation and Injustice in the 21st Century?*

Alejandra Orozco-Quintero, Catie Burlando, and Lance W. Robinson, “Just Conservation? Justice, Conservation and the Protected Areas Establishment Frenzy,” *IC Magazine* (November 2, 2015).

<https://intercontinentalcry.org/just-conservation/>

Maria Varela, “Collaborative Conservation: Peace of Pacification? The View from Los Ojos,” *Acros the Great Divide: Explorations in Collaborative Conservation and the American West*, eds. Philip Brick, Donald Snow, and Sarah Van de Wetering (2001): 228-235. (Moodle)

Brent Zundel, “Ted Turner's vague, quixotic quest to save the West,” *The Bozeman Magpie* (February 25, 2014).

http://www.bozeman-magpie.com/perspective-full-article.php?article_id=1160

Recommended readings:

Katie Rogers, “American Hunter Killed Cecil, Beloved Lion Who Was Lured Out of His Sanctuary,” *New York Times*, July 28, 2015.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/29/world/africa/american-hunter-is-accused-of-killing-cecil-a-beloved-lion-in-zimbabwe.html?action=click&contentCollection=U.S.&module=RelatedCoverage®ion=Marginalia&pgtype=article>

Alex Magaisa, “Cecil who? Zimbabweans ask,” *Al Jazeera America*, August 2, 2015.

<http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/8/cecil-who-zimbabweans-ask.html>

Modern Environmental Justice Struggles in the U.S.

3/15 *Native American Struggles*

Traci Brynne Voyles, "Introduction: Sacrificial Land" and "Monsters and Mountains: Competing Geographies of Uranium," *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 1-26, 151-184. (Moodle)

Winona La Duke, *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (1999), 195-200. (Moodle)

Week 10

3/20 Workshop: Contemporary Environmental Justice Issues

Readings TBA

3/22 *Activism in Los Angeles*

Karen Brodtkin, *Power Politics: Environmental Activism in Los Angeles*, 1-94.

Week 11

3/27 *Activism in Los Angeles, part 2*

Brodtkin, *Power Politics*, 95-211.

3/29 Workshop: Primary Source Analysis

3/31 *Second paper due*

Global Environmental Justice Struggles

Week 12

4/3 *Borderlands and Sustainability*

Melissa A. Johnson and Emily D. Niemeyer, "Ambivalent Landscapes: Environmental Justice in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands," *Human Ecology* 36, no. 3 (June 2008): 371-382.

Peter Newell, "Contesting Trade Politics in the Americas: The Politics of Environmental Justice," *Environmental Justice in Latin America: Problems, Promise, and Practice*, ed. David V. Carruthers (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2008), 49-73. (Moodle)

4/5 *Climate Justice*

Film – *Sun Come Up*

Laurie Mazur, “Cap-and-trade? Not so great if you are black or brown,” *Grist.org*, September 16, 2016.

<http://grist.org/justice/cap-and-trade-not-so-great-if-you-are-black-or-brown/>

Brian Tokar, “Toward a Movement for Climate Justice,” *Toward Climate Justice: Perspectives on the Climate Crisis and Social Change*, rev. ed. (New Compass Press, 2014), 71-91. (Moodle)

Draft primary source analysis due

Week 13

4/10 Student presentations of research

4/12 Student presentations of research

Final research paper due Monday, 4/17 at 2:30pm (during final exam period)