

POLITICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Spring 2013

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Anna Julia Cooper Project on Gender, Race and Politics in the South

OBJECTIVES

This course will explore the intersection of social justice and environmental stewardship, with particular attention to issues of environmental justice. Students will learn the history of environmental justice and its relationship to the larger environmental movement. Students will also explore the political and ethical issues underpinning environmental justice work and develop the ability to reason about issues of environmental justice. This class will assist students in becoming familiar with the literature on and methods used to study environmental justice, understanding how studying the social sciences can help one become a more effective citizen, and learning how to apply the theories learned in class to real-world events.

ASSESSMENT

Two (2) short papers (5 pages) (20% each = 40%)

You must write two short papers focusing on the readings from one week in the first half of the semester and one week in the second half of the semester.

Participation in the Food Justice Project culminating in a poster and accompanying executive summary at student EJ conference at Tulane in May (40%)

Class discussion and participation (10%)

One (1) short reflection paper (2-4 pages) on a Beyond the Classroom experience (10%)

Honor Code

You are bound by the Tulane University Honor Code in all the work that you do for this course at this university. See <http://tulane.edu/college/code.cfm> .

****NOTE:** You will lose points if your papers or postings are late. 1/3 letter grade will be deducted for every 24 hours the assignment is late. No assignment will be accepted after 72 hours late without prior agreement.**

Students needing accommodations

Tulane University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students who need accommodations must be registered with the Office of Disability Services and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance. See <http://tulane.edu/studentaffairs/disability/index.cfm>

Required Texts:

Rechstchaffen, Clifford, Eileen Gauana, and Catherine O’Neill. *Environmental Justice: Law, Policy & Regulation: Second Edition*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2009.

Bullard, Robert, ed. *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2005.

Checker, Melissa. *Polluted Promises: Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town*. New York: New York University, 2005.

Pellow, David N. *Garbage Wars: The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago*. Sabon: The MIT Press, 2002.

Bullard, Robert and Beverly Wright, eds. *Race, Place and Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to Reclaim, Rebuild and Revitalize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2009.

Guthman, Julie. *Weighing In: Obesity, Food Justice and the Limits of Capitalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Auyero, Javier and Deobra A. Swistun. *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

*Additional readings are linked from the Blackboard site.

Learning Outcomes and Instruments of Assessment

Learning Outcome	Assessment Instrument
Knowledge of underlying themes of environmental justice, facts about environmental movements, ethics, evidence, and policy, and modes of political engagement in environmental justice movements.	Short papers and class discussion
Integration of classroom lessons with contemporary politics and media events.	Posters and Beyond the Classroom experiences.
Exposure to broader academic literature on gender and politics. Critical reasoning and research skills.	Posters and executive summaries.

INTRODUCTION

Week 1: Tuesday 1/15 **Class Introduction**

No readings. However, please come prepared to discuss this question: “What is the meaning of environmental justice?”

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Week 2: Tuesday 1/22 **Justice and Collective Responsibility**

Readings:

*Smith, Michael. “Environmentalism: Spiritual, Ethical, Political.” *Environmental Values*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Perspectives on Environmental Values: The Princeton Workshop (August 2006), pp. 355-363

*Smith, Kimberley. “Natural Subjects: Nature in Political Community.” *Environmental Values*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Perspectives on Environmental Values: The Princeton Workshop (August 2006), pp. 343-353

*Gardiner, Stephen. “A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics and the Problem of Moral Corruption.” *Environmental Values*, Vol. 15, No. 3, Perspectives on Environmental Values: The Princeton Workshop (August 2006), pp. 397-413

*Rasmussen, Larry L. Introduction to *Earth Community Earth Ethics*, 1-19. New York: Orbis Books, 1996.

Week 3: Tuesday 1/29 **Environmental and Racial Justice**

Readings:

*Cole, Luke W., and Sheila Foster. *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. New York: NYU Press, 2001.

Read: Preface, Chapter 1, Chapter 3

*Williams, Orrin. “Food and Justice: The Critical Link to Healthy Communities.” In *Power, Justice, and the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement*, edited by David Naguib Pellow and Robert J. Brulle, 117-130. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005.

*Smith, Kimberly. “A Land Cursed by Injustice.” In *African American Environmental Thought*, 39-67. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2007.

*Daniel, Pete. “African American Farmers and Civil Rights.” *Journal of Southern*

History 73 (Feb 2007): 3-26.

Week 4: Tuesday 2/5
Environmental Justice as Law

Readings:

Rechtstchaffen, Gauana & O'Neill, *Environmental Justice: Law, Policy and Regulation*
SIGN UP for leadership of specific chapters of this text

Week 5: Tuesday 2/12
Otherwise known as MARDI GRAS.
No class

CASE STUDIES

Week 6: Tuesday 2/19

IN CLASS Training for Service Learning Project

Week 7: Tuesday 2/26
Case Study: Chicago

Readings:

Pellow, *Garbage Wars*

Week 8: Tuesday 3/5
Case Study: Georgia

Readings:

Checker, *Polluted Promises*

Week 9: Tuesday 3/12
Case Study: New Orleans and Fence Line Communities

Readings:

Bullard and Wright, *Race, Place and Environmental Justice*
Quest, 4-6

Week 10: Tuesday 3/19
Case Study: Global

Readings:

Auyero and Swinburn, *Flammable*
Bullard and Waters, Chapters 11-14

Tuesday 3/26: SPRING BREAK
No class

FOOD

Week 11: Tuesday 4/2
Corporate Food Industry

In class viewing of film *Food, Inc.*

Readings:

Levkoe, Charles Z. "Learning democracy through food justice movements." *Agriculture and Human Values* 23 (2006): 89-98.

Week 12: Tuesday 4/9
Food, Labor and Values

Readings

Fitting, Elizabeth. "Importing corn, exporting labor: The neoliberal corn regime, GMOs, and the erosion of Mexican biodiversity." *Agriculture and Human Values* 23 (2006): 15-26.

Griffin, Mathew R. and Edward A. Frongillo. "Experiences and perspectives of farmers from Upstate New York farmers' markets." *Agriculture and Human Values*. 20 (2003): 189-203.

Rodriguez, Arturo, Alexa Delwiche and Sheheryar Kaoosji. "Cheap food: Workers pay the price." In *Food, Inc.: How Industrial Food is Making Us Sicker, Fatter and Poorer – and What You can do about it*. Public Affairs/Perseus Books, New York: 2009.

Lind, David and Elizabeth Barham. "The social life of the tortilla: Food, cultural politics, and contested commodification." *Agriculture and Human Values* 21 (2004): 47-60.

Week 13: Tuesday 4/16
Food Justice and Consumption

Readings

Guthman, *Weighing in*

Week 14: Tuesday 4/23

Guest Speaker TBA (This week is moveable to accommodate the speaker's schedule)

Week 15: Tuesday 4/30

EJ Conference: Poster Presentations