

# **Introduction to Environmental Justice: Theory, Case Studies and Applications**

Dr. April Karen Baptiste

## **ENST 232 Environmental Justice: Theory, Case Studies and Applications**

Professor April Karen Baptiste

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**Office Hours:** TR 11.15 am – 12.05 pm; 1.30 to 2.30 pm or by appointment

**Class Location and Time:** Ho 326, TR 9.55 – 11.10 am

### **Course Overview**

This course introduces students to the key concepts of Environmental Justice. It evaluates the beginnings of Environmental Justice as a concept and examines its development into an emerging field. The course is based on the premise that all people have a right to live in a clean environment free from hazardous pollution and contamination. This course examines mainly issues within the US context in order to analyze the factors that contribute to the constellation of issues labeled as environmental justice. Students will be allowed to critically analyze examples of environmental justice cases, while seeking to develop an understanding of the complex relationships among actors and the social, political and economic processes that lead to environmental injustices. We begin this course by examining the foundational principles and history of the environmental justice movement as well as the concepts of justice, race and class. We will then explore a series of case studies of environmental (in)justices in the US context taking urban, rural and indigenous populations into consideration. Finally we will explore the issues of climate justice on the global level as well as the activity of grassroots organizations as they propel the EJ movement forward.

This course seeks to address a number of broad questions:

1. What is environmental justice?
2. Why and through what social, economic and political processes are some groups denied access to a clean environment?
3. What is currently being done or can be done to address these concerns?

### **Required Readings**

**There is one required text for this course:**

#### ***Text***

Pellow, D.N. & R.J. Brulle. (2005). *Power, Justice and the Environment: A Critical Appraisal of the Environmental Justice Movement*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

#### ***Other readings***

These will be both journal articles and other materials that will be posted on Moodle or will be on reserve in the Library for this course.

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On Moodle these resources will be listed under the topic that is being discussed by Author's last name and the year of publication.

Please note that the reading load for this class is moderate and at times the readings will be difficult and require more time than you expect in order to fully understand and therefore be able to critique the author's argument. The readings are also somewhat unevenly distributed during the semester. For example some weeks there maybe as much as 100 pages of readings whereas in other weeks there will be very little to no readings. As a significant portion of this class is based on discussing the articles that are assigned, **it is imperative that you keep up with the readings on a weekly basis**. As part of your grade is based on class participation you must not only show up for class but also be ready to critically discuss the readings.

### Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide students with an interdisciplinary approach to environmental issues through the environmental justice lens by:

1. Providing a clear understanding of what is environmental justice
2. Understanding the underlying theoretical constructs of environmental justice
3. Develop a critical analysis of how marginalized communities are affected by environmental injustices
4. Present clearly your ideas about environmental justice to an audience

### Course Assignments

**This is a required course for all ENST majors and minors and as such there is a fair amount of writing and critical analysis involved.**

ALL assignments must be completed on or before the due date. **NO LATE assignments will be accepted unless in dire circumstances** in which case it is the student's responsibility to **speak with the instructor prior to the due date (at least one or 2 days ahead)** to work out whether extensions will be given. If concessions are provided it will be at the instructor's discretion so students are advised to **prepare in advance and work on assignments consistently when they are provided.**

#### List of Assignments

##### *Individual Work*

Class Participation

In class

Online Discussions

Take home writing assignments (2)

Mapping Assignment

##### *Group Work*

Academic Poster Proposal

Peer Review of draft posters

Peer evaluations

Final Poster

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Poster Presentation

## **Academic Policies**

**Students with disabilities:** Students who will need special arrangements or consideration due to documented disabilities should speak with me early in the semester. They should also consult with Lynn Waldman, Director of Academic Program Support and Disability Services, 315-228-7375 in the Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research concerning disability concerns and appropriate accommodations.

**Religious Holidays:** This syllabus tries to comply with Colgate Holiday Policy. If there are any conflicts please discuss with me very early in the semester so that alternative arrangements can be made.

**Academic Honor Code:** Colgate has a very strong Academic Honor Code to which all students are subjected and will apply to all assignments both graded and ungraded. **Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated under any circumstances** and will be reported to the fullest extent. If you are unfamiliar with the definition of plagiarism please see **pages 94 to 97** of the Student Handbook.

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center is a great resource and while some students may have acceptable writing skills there is always room for improvement particularly within the academic setting. Please use this resource as often as possible particularly for your take home assignments in order to improve the quality of assignments that are turned in. This will greatly improve your work and help to improve your writing skills.

**Library:** This course has a research component to it to allow students to develop and refine their research skills. Particularly with your poster assignments you will need to perform and report a sophisticated level of findings that goes beyond a simple internet search. Please use the library and its staff to help in this regard. There is a large number of electronic and print media that will help in developing quality research throughout the semester.

## **Course Expectations**

**Attendance policy:** Attendance is important in this class as absences will reduce the number of opportunities for quality contributions to class participation, as such students are advised that missing **3 or more sessions, including excused sessions** will result in a reduction of your class participation grade

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### **Class Participation:**

- a. Your class participation grade will be determined by the extent to which you are present and engaged in the class. Be prepared, on-time and take an active and critical role in the class discussions.
- b. There are several dimensions to the participation grade: presence, preparation and participation

*Presence:* Learning is a cumulative process and as such your presence is key to all the class sessions. It is also strongly recommended that students attend ENST Brown Bag Luncheons as this aids with critical thinking development. As courtesy to all students please:

- Arrive on time
- Turn off cell phones and store them prior to the beginning of class - *please note that during the class session cell phones are to be stored, they are not to be used as a clock source*
- Avoid laptops
- No texting, twittering, facebooking or the like
- No noisy food ☺
- Be prepared to spend entire class period in the classroom

Excused Absences: I will consider these on a case-by-case basis **once an Academic Dean, Coach or appropriate administrative source, provides documentation in a written form.** Student athletes in season must provide a list of scheduled games and absences signed by your coach in the **1<sup>st</sup> week of the semester.** It is the student's responsibility to meet with me to discuss implications of class absences.

*Note: Please note that students who are found to consistently violate these courtesy rules, particularly in the case of cell phone, laptop use and consistent back and forth during class time will be asked to leave the class session.*

*Preparation:* You are expected to read all text prior to each session. This will allow you to be able to contribute to class discussions. When preparing for class, avoid last minute readings. One method that has worked for me in the past has been to read and discuss the material in groups prior to the class session. This has proven to be very helpful. Make notes of key points and concepts while reading. Also make note of questions of things that may not be clear for class discussions. Try to make connections between what you are reading and your class project as well as personal experiences. These are also welcomed during class discussion as it brings theory into practice.

*Participation:* We are all learners and we can learn from each other. To facilitate this, we would respectfully listen to each person's point of view and if the need arises challenge respectfully each other's view. In classes where controversial issues are discussed often there maybe passionate students who will like to contribute. We should all self evaluate and attempt to give everyone a chance to voice their opinions and concerns about the materials that are being discussed. At times, I will use my discretion to call on students to even the participation during class discussions. If a person feels he/she will have difficulty speaking in class for any reason, please see me within the first 2 weeks of classes.

**Out of class activity:** There will be some **mandatory events** outside of class time that students will attend. These include both public lectures and movie screenings that are essential to the materials that are being discussed in class. **For movie screenings – should a student be unable to make the scheduled screening, the movie must be viewed prior to the proceeding class session where it will**

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**be discussed – ALL movies will be on reserve in Case-Geyer.** Most are listed on the syllabus but please bear in mind that there maybe some that are not listed and will be announced on both Moodle and in class. Please bear this in mind. Additionally, **extra credit** is not offered as a formal component in this class, however if a student believes that their progress can be improved through additional critical work, *out of class public lectures* may be used to meet this requirement, provided that it has been discussed and approved by the professor. If extra credit is being submitted, a two page write up of the lecture detailing the environmental justice components will be required. Please see the grading rubric that will be used to assess out of class activities that are submitted for consideration under extra credit. ***Please note that submission of a write up for extra credit does not automatically mean that a student will receive the extra credit as part of their final grade, but rather, this will be used on a discretionary basis.***

**Critical Thinking:** This is the ability to consider multiple perspectives on environmental issues/problems and think about them in ways that make connections to life experiences, theory and larger current events. It is a process of developing questions that challenge our assumptions and beliefs and avoid simplistic answers. These are important to help develop critical thinking.

### **Media Online Discussion Guidelines**

Online discussions are mandatory for all students. This allows students to bring in real world news pieces to the class discussion. Students will have the option of responding to **6 out of the 9** assigned discussion boards for the semester. This form of participation helps to also capture those students who may not always be vocal during class discussions. The media is to be used to get a sense of the thoughts of your peers and to have a conversation about the topic outside of the classroom setting. As such students are encouraged to not only submit their responses but also to read the comments of your peers as these will be incorporated into class discussions.

### **Media piece and Stimulation Questions**

Discussion leader(s) will select a media piece that is no more than one year old that relates to environmental justice issues. This media piece will be sourced through the newspaper archives in the library electronic databases and can consist of either a news

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article or video clip to post to Moodle for class discussion. Leaders will then post 2-3 “stimulation questions” about the media piece for students to respond to. This media piece and stimulation questions must be submitted **by 9:00 PM of the day listed on the syllabus**. The media piece and stimulation questions will be graded on the following rubric:

<b>Grading Criteria</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C</b>
Media piece contains clear environmental justice concerns	X	X	X	X	X	
Questions clear and concise and related to the media piece	X	X	X			
Media piece and questions provokes students to pry into assigned readings	X	X				
Media piece and questions provokes connections to personal experiences and class discussions where relevant	X			X		
Questions are error free	X	X	X	X	X	X

## Responses

Responses are then due within **27 hours i.e. 11.59 pm the next day**. Each student is required to respond to the media piece and question(s) posted in **150 - 200 words**. The response can either be directly to the question or it can be in relation to a comment(s) that were made earlier in the thread. Students should remember that even though this is a discussion there should be an avoidance of making unsubstantiated statements by linking some of the literature where possible to support their opinions. Students should also try to tie in their responses to either personal experiences or class discussions where possible. Additionally try to be creative in your response and avoid repeating what your colleagues have mentioned before. If there is something that one of your peers mentioned that you agree with, state why you agree with the statement. Do not be afraid to show your critique and critical thinking skills in this forum, however as mentioned earlier remember to support your statements rather than just making unsubstantiated claims. Students are asked to put some thought into their responses, as these would also be graded based on the following rubric:

<b>Grading Criteria</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C</b>
Answer question(s) clearly and concisely	X	X	X	X	X	X
Contribute innovative and creative points to the discussion board	X	X				
Make explicit connections to assigned readings	X	X	X	X		
Make explicit connections to personal experiences and class discussions where relevant	X	X	X		X	
Quote selectively and judiciously from readings	X					
Be error free	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Academic Poster:** Students would form pairs (2) and each group would work on a placed-based analysis, using theory and concepts from the course to present an environmental (in) justice facing a vulnerable or at-risk community. Each group would be required to prepare a proposal on the desired topic to be graded and approved by the instructor. Each group is then required to present their research in an academic poster in the last week of classes. These posters will then be displayed the following semester on the walls of the Ho Science Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

There are several layers to this project and students are expected to work on these throughout the semester in order to produce a high quality of work. The following is a break down of the timeline and assignments involved for this project.

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**Important Poster Project Deadlines**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Major Milestone</b>
Sept 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Groups and Poster topic are to be submitted
Sept 23 <sup>rd</sup> - Oct 6 <sup>th</sup>	Meet with Professor Baptiste to discuss topics for approval
Oct 13 <sup>th</sup>	In class library session on doing research for peer reviewed articles and annotated bibliography
Oct 25 <sup>th</sup>	Poster proposal including research question or hypothesis and annotated bibliography with 7 peer reviewed sources
Oct 27 <sup>th</sup>	In class session on poster making
Nov 10 <sup>th</sup>	First draft of poster due via online submission
Nov 21 <sup>st</sup>	Second draft of poster due via online submission
Nov 22 <sup>nd</sup>	In class session of peer reviews of draft projects
Dec 1 <sup>st</sup>	Final poster submitted via online submission
Dec 8 <sup>th</sup>	Afternoon class session of poster presentations

**Written Assignments:** These should be 4 to 5 pages type written, 12 pt, Times or Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins and double-spaced. **American Psychological Association (APA) style** should be used when referencing. All written assignments that are take-home must use proper referencing. Two of the take home assignments are based on readings and will require you to analyze and critique arguments presented by the various authors. You will have one week to complete each assignment. All assignments will be collected at the beginning of class – any assignment that is given after this will be

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considered late. **It is the student's responsibility to give in assignments at the beginning of class.**

**Mapping Assignment:** The third written assignment will allow students to examine the spatial components of environmental justice. Students will choose an environmental issue that they are interested to write about and map. This assignment does not involve GIS or other mapping software (though if you will like to you can), but students are expected to make a detailed map that shows the spatial relationships in the study that they choose. A 4 to 5 page paper accompanies this map. A detailed instruction guideline will be provided for this assignment.

## Grading

Detailed rubrics are used for all assignments that are evaluated in this course. Please see the attached rubric as well as see Moodle for all rubrics that are associated with each assignment. Your grade is a compilation of the following:

Class Participation,	
Attendance, peer reviews, in-class	10%
Writing Assignments 1	10%
Mapping Assignment 2	20%
Writing Assignment 3	25%
Online discussions questions and responses (6 out of 9)	15%
Academic Poster	
Proposal	5%
Final Poster	10%
Poster Presentation	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<b>August 29<sup>th</sup>:</b>	Introduction: Syllabus Review
<b>August 30<sup>th</sup>:</b>	<i>Getting to know each other and Definition of EJ</i> Pellow, D.N. & Brulle, R.J. (2005). <i>Power, Justice and the Environment</i> . Chapter 1. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
<b>Sept 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<i>Theorizing Race</i> NCBI Workshop: Addressing Controversial Issues: Application to Environmental Justice
<b>Sept 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Anderson, K. (2002). The Racialization of Difference: Enlarging the Story Field. <i>Professional Geographer</i> , 54(1), 25-30 Glassman, J. (2010). Critical Geography II: articulating race and radical politics. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 34 (4), 506-512
<b>Sept 7<sup>th</sup></b>	Race the power of an illusion – Afternoon Screening
<b>Sept 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Theorizing Social Justice</i> Smith, J. (1994). Elements of Justice.
<b>Sept 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Social Justice and Environment</i>

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Holifield, R. (2001). Defining Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism. *Urban Geography*, 22 (1), 78 – 90.

**Sept 15<sup>th</sup>**

Newell, P. (2005). Race, Class and the Global Politics of Environmental Inequality. *Global Environmental Politics*, 5, 70 – 94

Taylor, Dorceta E. (1997). Race, Class, and Gender American Environmentalism *USDA Tech Report* (1-36)

**Sept 20<sup>th</sup>**

*History of EJ*

Bullard, R. (2007). Dismantling Toxic Racism. *The Crisis*, July/August, 22-25

Bullard, R.D. (1990). *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*. Chapter 1. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Bullard, R. D., and Wright. B. H. (1989). Toxic waste and the African American community. *The Urban League Review* 13: 67-75.