

Environmental Justice
 Environmental and Sustainability Studies 3365-090
 3 credits * Spring Semester 2018

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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 a 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 requires community-engaged fieldwork.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Examine local and regional examples of environmental injustice.
- Assess political and economic structures of U.S. society that maintain environmental and social 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.

WEEK	TOPIC
1 – Intro Jan 8 -12	Welcome: Introduction to EJ
2 – Intro Jan 15 - 19	Environmental movement histories
3 – Intro Jan 22 - 26	Privilege
4 –Theory Jan 29 – Feb 2	Inequality Formation
5 –Theory Feb 5 - 9	Beyond Distributive Justice
6 –Theory Feb 12 – Feb 16	Economics of Injustice
7 –Theory Feb 19 – Feb 23	Political Economy
8 - Case Studies & Approaches Feb 26 – March 2	Food Justice
9 – Case Studies & Approaches March 5 – March 9	Air Quality
10 – Case Studies & Approaches March 12 – March 16 March 18-25	Indigenous lands and sovereignty SPRING BREAK
11 – Case Studies & Approaches March 26-10	Climate Justice
12 – Case Studies & Approaches April 2 – April 6	Social movements and grassroots action
13 – Sustainability & transformation April 9 – April 13	Social movements and grassroots action
14 – Sustainability & transformation	Transformative possibilities

April 16 – April 20	
15 – Sustainability & transformation	Transformative possibilities
April 17 – April 23	

READINGS

There is one text you are required to get for this course. You will also be directed to required articles, text excerpts, online books, web links, etc., each week as needed in Canvas.

1. Do It Anyway (2010) by Courtney Martin
2. Hope in the Dark – 3rd Edition (2016) by Rebecca Solnit

TEACHING METHODS

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

CONSULTATION

If you need help, by all means ask for it, Ian, Emily, or I will be happy to assist you. Email is the best way to reach us to set up an appointment.

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, any discussions submitted after the initial date will not be accepted, late community fieldwork assignments will not be accepted for credit, and late *CAFs will be accepted at 50% of their original point value until 2 weeks from their original due date*, and late community fieldwork assignments will not be accepted.

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. These forms will help you read critically and articulate your questions, reactions, and potential or actual roles in these issues.
3. Throughout the semester you will participate in at least 2 *citizenship activities* to be approved in advance. At least 1 of these must be some sort of political meeting e.g., community council, legislative sessions, etc. Citizenship activities will be posted on Canvas, or you may find your own opportunities and submit them to Emily *in advance* for approval. You'll need to upload a reflection *on each* activity. In your reflection, in no more than one page you will:
 - describe what you did;
 - reflect on the value of the activity in terms of citizenship and environmental justice; and
 - consider whether or not you feel this is an effective way to participate in your community and be heard.
4. During the semester, you will complete an environmental justice-related project by working with your peers for a local organization involved in EJ issues. At the end of the semester, you will complete a paper that integrates your class experience with your community-engaged learning experience.

The project requires **8 hours of direct service** (fieldwork), and **12 hours of indirect service** (research). The project culminates in a finished product of some kind for the partner; a research paper, presentation, educational module, etc.

There are five components to this assignment. Some of them are team elements and some are individual submissions. No late assignments will be accepted.

1. Project sign-up (individual). DUE Week 3.
2. Contract (individual). DUE Week 5.
3. Annotated bibliography (team). DUE Week 7.
4. Final product for community partner (team). DUE Week 13..
5. Reflection and evaluation (individual). DUE Weeks 13 & 15.
 - a. Five-page reflection paper DUE week 13 for peer review, DUE week 15 as final product.
 - b. Peer feedback on group's performance DUE week 15.
 - c. Time log DUE week 15.
 - d. Partner feedback survey DUE week 15.

ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTS:

- Discussions: 30% of the final grade
- Critical analysis forms 37% of the final grade
- Citizenship 8% of the final grade
- Community Fieldwork Project: 25% 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 COURSE GUIDELINES

Electronic or equipment failure:

It is your responsibility to maintain your computer and related equipment in order to participate in the online portion of the course.

Equipment failures will not be an acceptable excuse for late or absent assignments.

Failure to obtain course materials in a timely fashion will not be an acceptable excuse for late or absent assignments.

You are responsible for making sure your assignments, including attachments, are received before the deadline.

WELLNESS STATEMENT

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. There are excellent resources, often free and confidential, on campus. For more information, contact the Center for Student Wellness - www.wellness.utah.edu; 801-581-7776.

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.