ENVST-UA 480
Environmental Justice & Inequality
Spring 2018

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Office location & hours: 285 Mercer St., #907; Tues. 9:30-10:45; Wed. 2:00-3:15.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The poor, indigenous groups, and people of color have historically been exposed to a disproportionate share of environmental hazards. In this course, which is an intermediate Environmental Studies EVS elective [prerequisite: Environment and Society], we will trace the origins of the uneven distribution of environmental problems across communities, examine ways to measure environmental inequality, and analyze how environmental problems—both manmade and natural—reflect and exacerbate social inequality. We will also survey the historical emergence of the environmental justice movement, led largely by impoverished urban nonwhites who felt excluded by mainstream environmentalism, and explore competing political and moral visions for achieving equal protection from environmental hazards for all people. The readings, which include both books and academic journal articles, span the fields of sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history, and politics [note that you are expected to read 80-100 pages per class]. While most of the material centers on the American context, we will also examine the global dimensions of environmental inequality.

Required Text [available at NYU Bookstore, reserve at Bobst, or cheap online]:
Kai Erickson: Everything in its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood
*all other readings are on NYU Classes. Bring assigned readings to class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: “The College is a “community of the mind.” Its students, faculty, and staff all share the goal of pursuing truth through free and open inquiry, and we support one another’s endeavors in this regard. As in any community, membership comes with certain rights and responsibilities. Foremost among these is academic integrity. Cheating on an exam, falsifying data, or having someone else write a paper undermines others who are “doing it on their own”; it makes it difficult or impossible to assess fairly a student’s interest, aptitude, and achievement; and it diminishes the cheat, depriving him or her of an education. Most important, academic dishonesty is a violation of the very principles upon which the academy is founded. Thus, when students enter the College, one of the first things that they are asked to do is to sign a community compact, recognizing these principles of academic integrity. For this reason also, violations of these principles are treated with the utmost seriousness.” For more information on this policy, and sanctions, visit: http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity.

**Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to change any aspect of this syllabus, including readings, assignments, and due dates.
Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Telephone: 212-998-4980
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/csd
Week 1: The Failure of Environmentalism
Dowie: Losing Ground; 1-8, 29-82

Week 2: Origins of Environmental Inequality—Material and Social Aspects
 Diamond: Guns, Germs and Steel; 13-32, 53-66, 85-92

Week 3: Environmental Racism
Bullard: The Quest for Environmental Justice; 32-61
Taylor: Toxic Communities; 47-68
Cole & Foster: From the Ground Up; 54-79
Pellow and Park: The Slums of Aspen; 127-146
Friedman: The Environmental Racism Hoax (5 pages)

Weeks 4 & 5: Urban Environmental Inequality & the Civil Rights Movement
Gottlieb: Forcing the Spring; 83-97
Pellow: Garbage Wars; 1-19, 67-99
Sze: Noxious New York; 27-48

Weeks 6 & 7: Ex-Urban Environmental Inequality & the Anti-Toxics Movement
Gottlieb: Forcing the Spring; 227-251, 275-281, 298-306
Cole & Foster: From the Ground Up; 22-23; 80-102
Erikson: Everything in its Path; 9-48
Watch “Love Canal: Legacy of Doubt”; http://nyti.ms/19PAGy9
Read biography of Lois Gibbs, watch video:
http://www.goldmanprize.org/1990/northamerica

Week 8: Measuring and Explaining Environmental Inequality—Core Debates
Bean, V., and F. Gupta. 1997. “Coming to the Nuisance or Going to the Barrio? A
Longitudinal Analysis of Environmental Justice Claims.” Ecology Law Review 24:
1-56.

Longitudinal Analysis of Environmental Equity in Communities with Hazardous Waste

Hazardous Waste Landfill Siting Patterns in Metropolitan Texas.” Social Science
Quarterly 77: 500-507.

Minority Move-In, and Environmental Justice.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 23(1) 
Pastor Jr., Manuel, Rachel Morello-Frosch and James L. Sadd. 2005. “The Air is Always Cleaner on the Other Side: Race, Space, and Ambient Air Toxics Exposures in California.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 27(2) 

**Week 9: Popular Epidemiology and Contested Illnesses**

*Brown et al.: Contested Illnesses;* 15-32, 108-146  
*Corburn: Street Science: Community Knowledge & Environmental Justice;* 48-77

**Week 10: Site Fights: Explaining Activism & Success, Quiescence & Failure**

Gaventa: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley; 1-32  
McAdam and Boudet: Putting Social Movements in Their Place; 54-91  
Aldrich: Site Fights; 1-25  
Pellow and Brulle: Power, Justice and the Environment; 78-90

**Week 11: There’s No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster**

Dyson: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster; ix-xii, 1-33  
*Watch at library/home: “Trouble the Water”*

**Week 12: The Principles and Policies of Environmental Justice**

Shrader-Frechette: Environmental Justice; 23-48  
Schlosberg: Defining Environmental Justice; 3-44  
Bullard: The Quest for Environmental Justice; 299-302  
Pellow and Brulle: Power, Justice and the Environment; 131-170

**Week 13: Global Environmental Inequality**

Nixon: Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor; 1-30  
Pellow and Brulle: Power, Justice and the Environment; 253-276  
Bullard: The Quest for Environmental Justice; 209-221, 279-298  
Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere: In Search of Shelter: Mapping the Effects of Climate Change on Human Migration and Displacement.

**Week 14: Contemporary Issues: Is Fracking an Environmental Justice Issue?**

Wilber: Under the Surface  
*Watch at library/home: Gasland, FrackNation*
*Special in-class guests TBA
GRADING
There will be no midterm or final exam. Grades are based on performance in four areas:

15% Participation: Class participation includes, of course, what the student does when he/she is in class. Students are expected to have read the material, reviewed notes from the previous class, and be ready and willing to discuss the readings and contribute to class debates. Students are expected to attend to the comments of other students and the instructor. Each week, two students will be in charge of leading class discussion of the readings and should come prepared with critical questions. All other students will post on the NYU Classes “Forums” thread a short [i.e., one line] comment that can either be a question about the reading or something they would like to discuss in class [due 9:00pm the day before class]. Attendance will be a substantial part of your final grade for the course [.5 points will be deducted for each unexcused absence]. Those students who are disruptive will be removed from class (if you are too tired to stay awake in class, don’t come; turn off your cell phones!).

30% Essays: Three two-page (single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, one inch margins) essays will be assigned [10 points each]. These essays must be turned in one week after the date assigned. Papers may be turned in early but will receive one grade deduction for each class period they are late. Each two-page essay will be in response to a question that determines whether the student has critically read the assigned material, and students will also be asked to (briefly) apply concepts from the class to a case study of their choice. Essays longer than two pages, or not in accordance with font and margin guidelines, will not be read by the instructor or graded.

15% Project Proposal. Students must submit a two-page proposal at midterm that delineates the case study, key questions, and rationale for their final paper [see below].

40% Final Paper. Due on the date of our scheduled final Exam. Students must write an 8-10 page paper in which they identify a particular community problem with environmental justice implications, relate it to concepts and case studies covered in class, propose an intervention to address the inequity, and identify strategies for assessing the success of the proposed intervention. While students may use one of the case studies they wrote about for their short essays, they are required to find, read, and cite at least five scholarly research articles not read in class that offer conceptual or empirical support for their analysis. For ease of presentation, cite sources as footnotes rather than in a bibliography. A list of databases for journal articles, organized by topic [e.g., Environmental Science, Sociology, Economics, Anthropology] is available through NYU’s library. Start here: http://arch.library.nyu.edu/
  ● For information on identifying and finding research articles, see: http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/how_do_i/
  ● For information on when and how to cite sources, see: http://library.albany.edu/usered/cite/citing.html