ENVIROMENTAL JUSTICE
POSC 212
Winter 2020
Kim Smith
Class meets: 5a in Anderson 329
Office: 106a Goodsell
Office Hours: MWF 9-11 am or by appointment

The environmental justice movement seeks greater participation by marginalized communities in environmental policy, and equity in the distribution of environmental harms and benefits. This course will examine the meaning of “environmental justice,” the history of the movement, the empirical foundation for the movement’s claims, and specific policy questions. Although environmental justice is a transnational movement, our primary focus is the United States.

This course satisfies the Social Inquiry, QRE, and Intercultural Domestic Studies curricular requirements.

Required Texts:

- McGurty, Eileen. *Transforming Environmentalism*
- Other readings posted on moodle

Assessment:

Paper #1: 30%
Paper #2: 30%
Group case study project: 30%
Participation: 10%

COURSE OUTLINE

Class 1: Introduction

Case Studies of Environmental (In)Justice

Class 2: Foundations of Environmental Injustice
Denton & Massey, *American Apartheid* Ch. 4 and pp. 130-142
Cole and Foster, *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of Environmental Justice Movement*. Ch. 2-3

Class 3: History of the Environmental Justice Movement
McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism*, ch. 1-3
Smith, Case Studies: An Introduction

Class 4: McGurty, *Transforming Environmentalism*, ch. 4-end.
Class 5: Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*, Ch 1, 3, 4

Class 6: Lerner, *Diamond*, Ch 1-6

Class 7: Lerner, *Diamond*, Ch. 7-end

Class 8: Freudenberg et al, *Catastrophe in the Making*, Prologue -- ch.5

Class 9: Freudenberg, *Catastrophe*, ch 6-end

***Case study groups will schedule a meeting with reference librarian Sean Leahy during week four. He has appointment slots available Wednesday-Friday. ***

Class 10: Designing Good Case Studies
   Case Studies: An Introduction (again)

***Case selection due in class ***

   **What Is “Justice”?**

Class 11: Justice and collective responsibility
   Smith, Kimberly, “Theories of Justice: An Introduction”

Class 12: Cont.

***First peer evaluations for group project due***

Class 13: Environmental and racial justice
   Bullard, African American Historical and Cultural Perspectives on EJ
   Principles of Environmental Justice
   Schlosberg, “The Justice of Environmental Justice,” in Moral and Political Reasoning in Environmental Practice, ed. Light & de-Shalit

Class 14: Restorative Justice and Collective Responsibility
   Moltchanova, Anna “Gulf Coast Crisis: National Identity and Collective responsibility”

Class 15: Environmentalism and EJ

***Paper #1 due in class***  

***BREAK***

   **Quantitative Approaches to EJ (QRE section)**

Class 16: Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*, ch. 2, 5

Class 17: cont.
   Cutter, Susan, Issues in Environmental Justice; Role of Geographic Scale in Monitoring Environmental Justice; Setting Environmental Justice in Space and Place [All from *Hazards, Vulnerability and Environmental Justice*]
Class 18: UCC study, Toxic Wastes and Race

Class 19: Konisky, ed, Failed Promises: Evaluating the Federal Government’s Response to Environmental Justice (MIT 2015), Ch. 7

Class 20: Social Vulnerability
Cutter, Susan. The Geography of Social Vulnerability: Race, Class and Catastrophe
Cutter et. Al., Social Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards

Applying the EJ framework

Class 21: Fukushima case study: Can the EJ framework apply to Japan?
Curtis, Tohoku Diary (in Natural Disaster and Nuclear Crisis in Japan, ed. Kingston 2012)
Cousins, Temporary Refuge

***Paper #2 due in class***

Class 22: Cont.
Shrader-Frechette, Nuclear Catastrophe, Disaster Related Environmental Injustice, and Fukushima, Japan
Aldrich “Networks of power: institutions and local residents in post-Tohoku Japan” (in Natural Disaster and Nuclear Crisis in Japan, ed. Kingston 2012)

Class 23: Flint Water Crisis

“The science behind the Flint water crisis: corrosion of pipes, erosion of trust,” Conversation blogpost by Terese Olson (Civil engineering, UM-Ann Arbor)
“Flint’s water crisis is a blatant example of environmental injustice,” Conversation blogpost by Robert Bullard (Texas Southern University)
“Flint’s Water Crisis is no accident.” Lederman, from In These Times.

Class 24: EJ and Native Americans: River of Renewal

Class 25: Rights for Nature?

***First Draft of Case Study to be posted on moodle forum. Second peer evals due***

Class 26: Case study workshop

EJ and the Arts

Class 27: The Poetics of Environmental Justice
Patterson, We Know This Place
Mos Def, New World Water
West, Diamonds from Sierra Leone Remix

Class 28: Conclusion: Discussion of case studies

***Final draft of Papers #1 and #2 due in class***
***Case study due Saturday March 14 at noon, with your final peer evaluations***
Paper #1: Political philosophy

Robert Nozick argues that involuntary redistribution of money from wealthy to poor citizens can be justified only to rectify some past injustice. Your paper should (1) concisely explain Nozick’s argument, (2) explore how his theory would apply to the case of Diamond, and (3) offer a critical evaluation of the theory.

I expect this paper to be 5-6 pages (double-space, 1-inch margins)

Due Friday Feb. 7, in class. Final revision is due on Wednesday March 11, in class.

Paper #2: QRE exercise

The purpose of a Quantitative Reasoning exercise is to understand and demonstrate competently how quantitative reasoning is used in the development, evaluation, and presentation of principled argument. This paper asks you to demonstrate that competency. Using the quantitative studies we have examined, please respond to this question:

In her 1999 paper, “Issues in Environmental Justice Research,” Susan Cutter notes that “there is some skepticism as to whether or not injustices do, in fact, exist.” Do we now have stronger evidence of unequal distribution of environmental harms? What sort of additional research is needed to further substantiate EJ claims?

I expect this paper to be 5-6 pages (double-space, 1-inch margins)

Due: Monday Feb. 24 in class. Final revision is due on Wednesday March 11, in class.
**Group Case Study**

Your case study is aimed at testing the “path of least resistance” theory. The goal of this paper is to learn what’s involved in doing a case study, and to see how a case study can be used to test or develop a theory.

The theory we’re testing states that environmental hazards are disproportionately sited in minority and/or poor neighborhoods, because these communities are disempowered. Siting unpopular facilities in these neighborhoods constitutes the “path of least resistance.”

You will test this theory using a case from the University of Michigan Environmental Justice website:

[http://www.umich.edu/~snre492/cases.html](http://www.umich.edu/~snre492/cases.html)

Please choose one of the domestic cases. Your task is to apply the “path of least resistance” theory to this case. The case studies weren’t written with this theory in mind, so you will probably have to do additional research to get all the relevant facts. The process and expectations for the paper are below:

**Process:**

- On Monday Jan. 27, you will submit a brief write-up of the case you’ve chosen, explaining your case selection logic. (Why is this a good case to use?) In class, we’ll develop a research protocol.

- During week 4 (Jan. 27-31), your group will meet with the reference librarian to discuss research strategies.

- On Friday Jan. 31, you’ll turn in your first nonbinding peer evaluations.

- You will post a draft of your write up on the moodle discussion forum on Wednesday March 4, with the second nonbinding peer evaluations. The following Friday we will workshop the case studies.

- You will turn in the final version on Saturday March 14, at noon, with your final binding peer evaluations.

**Instructions for the case study write up:**

**Introduction:** Explain the theory you’re testing and the case selection logic (is this a paradigm, typical, or atypical case?). What do you expect to learn from the case study? Also address data collection (be sure to give credit to the SNRE website and author of the original case study).

**Narrative:** Tell us what happened, focusing on the information that’s relevant to testing the theory.

**Analysis:** Was the theory supported? Did we discover any limitations in the theory? Or did the case study suggest that some other causal process is at play? Even if the “path of least resistance” theory isn’t supported, was there evidence of some other sort of injustice in the case?
PEER EVALUATION PROCESS

Your grade for the group project will be based in part on peer evaluation. I’ll calculate it thus:

\[(\text{Project grade} \times \text{your peer evaluation score})/100\]

For example, if your project grade is 22 (out of 25) and your peer evaluation score is 110, your grade is 24.2.

**Your peer evaluation score:** Everyone in the group will be given 100 points to distribute among the other group members. You may not give everyone the same number of points! You must make some discriminations among them. I’ll add up the number of points you get, and that will be your peer evaluation score.

Your group will decide, at the beginning of the term, what criteria you want to use to evaluate one another. You will also do a non-binding peer evaluation twice during the term, and also give each some (anonymous!) comments on their performance.

**Appeals:** You may appeal your peer evaluation to me. I’ll listen to your complaint and ask each group member to explain their reasoning. I’ll affirm reasonable scores and modify scores that don’t seem to be supported by good reasons.