Tufts University Department of Urban & Environmental Policy and Planning

UEP 278: Environmental Justice, Security, and Sustainability
Fall 2014

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Thursdays 1:30-4:00pm @ Jackson Hall, Room 5

Office hours: Wed’s 1:30-3:30 and by appointment.

Description
Environmental justice is a framework for analyzing and addressing the inequalities in environmental conditions (benefits and burdens) among communities of varying race/ethnicity and economic class. At the same time, environmental justice presents a deep challenge to the mainstream environmental and sustainability frameworks. This course will be divided into four sections:

1. Theory and concepts of environmental justice
   We will examine the foundations of the environmental justice concept, the history of the environmental justice movement, and the links between environmental justice and the environmental and sustainability movements.

2. Case studies and local site visits
   We will deepen our understanding of the challenges and responses to environmental injustice through several site visits with local EJ groups and guest presenters who will help frame environmental justice efforts in other parts of the country and the world. Issues that we will address include brownfields, land-use and gentrification, transportation, and others.

3. Strategies for addressing environmental justice
   We will examine the community strategies, governmental and policy responses, and legal approaches to addressing environmental justice.

4. Team projects with EJ partners
   Students will work in teams of 2-4 on projects that will help further the efforts of a local EJ group.

Course Objectives
• To develop theoretical frameworks for understanding how environmental injustice is produced locally, regionally, and globally and how environmental justice is linked to sustainability.

• To ground students in the realities faced by environmental justice communities locally and to connect these to struggles in other parts of the world.

• To explore strategies for addressing environmental justice from the community, government, science, and legal perspectives.

• To inspire and meaningfully engage students in local and regional efforts to promote environmental justice.
Course texts

Required


Optional

A required Reader is also available for purchase. Readings in this syllabus that are not in the required books or Reader will be available via a web link, which you can also find on the course Trunk site. Note, suggested readings in the course syllabus are not in the Reader to save on printing costs. The Course Texts and Reader will also be on reserve at Tisch Library.

Course Requirements and Assessment
All students are expected to attend class regularly and complete assignments on time, including completing the required readings before each class. Your grade will be based on the following:

1. Group Project for Community Group (Due Dec 4) (35%)

Students will work in teams of 2-4 on a group project for a community organization. For those students who already have experience working with community groups, there is the option of doing an individual project of equivalent scale, such as writing a 15-20 page paper (please see me if you wish to pursue this option). The projects will be defined and guided by the community group. A list of the projects will be available once the class begins. The projects will require reporting to the client group and creating a final product (e.g. briefing paper, factsheet, web page, bibliography, powerpoint presentation, etc.). Depending on the nature of the project, groups may also need to conduct secondary research, data analysis and synthesis, or interviews. In addition, each team will submit a post-project reflection on their experience in working on a project with a community partner.

Here are some examples of previous community clients and projects:

• Chelsea Collaborative – assess potential for vacant lots in Chelsea to be converted to parks, urban agriculture, and open space uses.

• Community Labor United and Boston Recycling Coalition – analyze potential impacts of a planned statewide organics waste ban, especially potential to develop good green jobs.

• Welcome Project – explore case studies and develop recommendations for reframing obesity in immigrant communities as food and environmental justice issues.

Students submit preferences by 3rd class (Sep 18), and assignments will be made by 4th class (Sep 25).

Initial project scoping meetings and draft plans submitted by 6th class (Oct 9).

Draft project outputs to partner groups by Wed Nov 26.

Final project presentations on December 4.
2. 5-page Opinion Paper or Book Review (Due Nov 20) (25%)

Choose an issue in environmental justice that you think is contentious but about which you have strong feelings. It could be something like risk assessment, the relationship between environmental justice and sustainability, the role of experts or the debate about gentrification and environmental justice. Using class readings and other resources, write a 5-page opinion paper in support of your position. You should source at least 5 other readings in addition to required class readings. Note, these readings do not have to be peer-reviewed scholarly articles. Magazine articles and “grey” literature pieces (by think tanks, advocacy groups, and others) are acceptable.

Another acceptable option for this assignment is to write a book review on a book that is related to environmental justice. Your book review should also be 5-pages double-spaced. In your review, you should:

- Describe the book’s major themes and arguments
- Critically appraise the book’s methods and conclusions
- Discuss how the book’s themes relate to the themes in the course readings and discussions
- Your recommendations to other EJ students on what they can/should learn from this book

3. Site Visit Journal (Due Oct 23) (20%)

For this requirement, the goal is to deeply analyze the themes and questions raised by our site visits and informed by the class readings. Write a 3-5 paged, double-spaced paper with your reflections based on one or more of our class site visits. You can raise questions and challenges in relation to the class readings, reflect on your own experiences, and/or share your personal reactions and feelings.

4. Weekly Discussion Forum (10%)

For most weeks, there will be short postings on the course Trunk site reflecting on course readings, discussions, and site visits by selected students. Over the semester, each student should expect to do 3-4 postings (2-3 paragraphs). All students are expected to read postings prior to each class.

5. Class participation (10%)

Class participation includes regular and prompt attendance as well as quality (not quantity) of input in class discussions. Remember that class participation is enhanced by being prepared for each class by completing the required readings.

Schedule

Week 1: Sep 4. Overview

Provide overview of course and begin to explore the main themes of the class by reviewing two tales of environmental justice: 1) environmental racism and 2) ecological justice (Just Transition)

Resources


Week 2: Sep 11. Environmental Racism and Injustice: Basic Concepts

In-class role play of an incinerator siting hearing. Explore the frameworks and debates emerging from the early environmental justice movement. What is environmental racism? What evidence is there of disproportionate impact? Is it class or race? Which came first: pollution or poor people of color?

Class project list distributed.

Required Readings (~100)

Cole & Foster. Preface/Introduction (pp 1-18) and Chapter 3 (pp 54-79).


Massachusetts Environmental Justice Map Viewer. Available at: http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/ej.php

Friedman, David, “The Environmental Racism Hoax,” American Enterprise Institute, 2003, available at Trunk Resources


Optional Readings


Week 3: Sep 18. Site Visit: Chinatown/Asian Pacific American Issues

Site visit to Boston Chinatown with Chinese Progressive Association at 28 Ash St. Explore issues of institutional expansion, highways, gentrification and control over land use and the Right to the City framework.

Students submit class project preferences

Required Readings (~81)


**Week 4: Sep 25. EJ Movement History and Evolution Towards Just Sustainability**

Review origins of the EJ movement and its challenge to mainstream environmentalism and sustainability movements. Small group discussion on the evolution of the EJ movement. Is it too broad and unfocused? Is it moving towards a “justainability” paradigm?

*Student teams and projects assigned.*

*Required Readings (~96)*

Cole & Foster. Chapter 1 (pp 19-33).


Agyeman. Introduction (pp. 1-13) and Chapter 3 (pp. 79-106).


*Optional Readings*

Agyeman. Chapter 2 (pp 39-78) and 4 (pp 107-132).


Week 5: Oct 2. Site Visit: Roxbury/EJ in Black Communities

Site visit to Alternatives for Community & Environment in Dudley Square at 2201 Washington Street, Suite 302, Roxbury. Explore issues including asthma and air pollution, transit justice, redevelopment, land and food, and green economy.

Required Readings (~85)
Agyeman. Chapter 5 (pp 133-175).
ACE’s web site at: www.ace-ej.org
ACE Environmental Justice Agenda (PDF available on Trunk)
http://law.lclark.edu/live/files/5644
Optional
Airbeat monitoring system website at: http://www.airbeat.org
Loh, P; Sugerman-Brozan J.; Wiggins, S; Noiles, D; Archibald, C. “From Asthma to AirBeat: Community-Driven Monitoring of Fine Particles and Black Carbon in Roxbury, Massachusetts.” Environmental Health Perspectives (110: supplement 2, April 2002). Available at: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1241176/
Cole & Foster: Chapter 2 (pp 34-53).

Week 6: Oct 9. Site Visit: Chelsea/EJ in Latino Communities

Site visit to Chelsea Green Space and Recreation Committee at Chelsea Collaborative, 318 Broadway, Chelsea. Explore issues of open space, creek cleanup, restoration and access, polluting facilities, and energy efficiency. Additional reading on immigration and population.

Project plans submitted.

Required Readings (~80)
Chelsea Green Space Committee web site at: http://chelseacollab.org/program/greenspace
Bongiovanni, Roseann and Chacker, Stacey. “Chelsea Community Based Comparative Risk Assessment,” presentation at Science to Action: Community-based Participatory Research and Cumulative Risk Analysis as Tools to Advance Environmental Justice in Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities held at Boston University on May 24-26, 2004. Available at Trunk Resources
Chelsea Creek Action Group website at: http://www.chelseacreekaction.org/drupal/drupal-6.19/  
Cole & Foster: Chapter 4 (pp. 80-102).  

**Week 7: Oct 16. Global EJ and Climate Justice Perspectives**

Environmental justice beyond the U.S. and the expanding focus of EJ to climate justice and a just transition.


**Required Readings (~103 pp)**


Video (10 min): Where We Live, about campaign against California’s Proposition 23 in 2010, http://wherewelivefilm.org/

**Optional Readings**


Week 8: Oct 23. Community Strategies

Explore community organizing and movement building strategies used in environmental justice struggles.

Required Readings (~80)

Cole & Foster Chapter 7 (pp 151-166)
Center for Third World Organizing. “Organizing: What It Is and What It Isn’t”
Radical Organizing Conference 2003 booklet. Available at Trunk Resources.

Optional Readings


Explore government responses to EJ and role of risk assessment.

Site visit journals due.

Required Readings (~100)

Optional Readings


Week 10: Nov 6. Case Study: Transportation

Film: Equal or Better: The Story of the Silver Line. Focus on transit racism and disinvestment in Boston area and impact on communities of color.

Required Readings (~90)


* all articles in Global Analysis and Strategies section, except the last one
* in Case Studies and Solutions section, read articles 1-4 and 9-13.


Optional

Movie (DVD), Bus Riders Union (available to borrow).

Week 11: Nov 13. Legal Strategies and EJ in Native American Communities

Explore legal strategies to address environmental justice. Also explore issues in Native American communities.

Required Readings (~105)

Cole & Foster Chapter 5 and 6 (pp 103-150)


**Optional Readings**


**Week 12: Nov 20. Future of Environmental Justice**

How is the EJ movement evolving? Has it run its course? Is there “movement fusion” happening? What are the new directions connecting to or growing out of the EJ movement?

*Final opinion papers/book reviews due.*

**Required Readings (~75)**

Agyeman. Chapters 6 (pp 176-186).


**Optional Readings**


**No class Thur Nov 27 Thanksgiving**

**Week 13: Dec 4. Student Project Presentations**

*Final group project presentations.*