

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
POSC 212  
Winter 2013  
Kim Smith  
Willis 203  
MWF 5a

Office: 106a Goodsell  
Office Hours: MW 9-11, Fri 1-2

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 focus is the United States.

**Required Texts:**

- McGurty, Eileen. *Transforming Environmentalism*
- Bullard, Robert. *Dumping in Dixie*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000.
- Foreman, Christopher. *The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice*. Brookings, 2000
- Lerner, Steve. *Diamond*. MIT Press, 2005
- Freudenburg, Gramling, Laska & Erikson, *Catastrophe in the Making*. Island Press, 2009.
- Other readings on reserve [R]

**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:** 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  
Case Studies: An Introduction [R]

**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

**\*\*\*Chesley Lecture, Jan 16, 7:30: Stephen Pacala, "Global Warming and the Fate of the Land Carbon Sink"\*\*\***

**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

**Class 10:** Foreman, *Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice* Ch. 1-3

**Class 11:** Foreman, *Promise and Peril*, Ch. 4-6

**Class 12:** Designing Good Case Studies  
Case Studies: An Introduction (again) [R]

### **What Is "Justice"?**

**Class 13:** Justice and collective responsibility  
Smith, Kimberly, "Theories of Justice: An Introduction" [R]

**\*\*\*Case selection due in class\*\*\***

**\*\*\*BREAK\*\*\***

**Class 14:** Cont.

**Class 15: Research session**

**Class 16:** Environmental and racial justice

Bullard, African American Historical and Cultural Perspectives on EJ [R]

Principles of Environmental Justice [R]

Schlosberg, "The Justice of Environmental Justice," in *Moral and Political Reasoning in Environmental Practice*, ed. Light & de-Shalit [R]

**Class 17:** Restorative Justice and Collective Responsibility

Walker, "Restorative Justice and Reparations," *J. Soc Phil* Fall 2006, pp. 382-389 [excerpt] [R]

Kukathas, "Who? Whom? Reparations and the Problem of Agency," *J. Soc. Phil*, pp. 331-340 [excerpt] [R]

Moltchanova, Anna "Gulf Coast Crisis: National Identity and Collective responsibility" [R]

**Class 18:** Environmentalism and EJ

DeLuca, Kevin. *A Wilderness Environmentalism Manifesto*. From *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: the Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement*. MIT Press. [R]

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

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

**EJ and Economic Development (ORE section)**

**Class 19:** Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*, ch. 2, 5

**Class 20:** cont.

Cutter, Susan, *Hazards, Vulnerability and Environmental Justice: 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*] [R]

**Class 21:** UCC study, Toxic Wastes and Race

Bullard et al, *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2000*, ch. 3 and 4 [online]

**Class 22:** Social Vulnerability

Cutter, Susan. *The Geography of Social Vulnerability: Race, Class and Catastrophe* [R]

Cutter et. Al., *Social Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards*, [R]

**EJ: Emerging Issues**

**Class 23:** Food access and labor issues (with guest speaker Reginaldo Haslett-Marroquin)

Orrin Williams, *Food and Justice* (in Pellow & Brulle, *Power, Justice and the Environment*)

Gottlieb, *Where we Live, Work, Play... and Eat*, *Environmental Justice* 2(1): 7-8 (2009)

Peña, *Tierra y Vida* (in *The Quest for Environmental Justice*)

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

**Class 24:** Cont.

**Class 25:** Water as a commodity

Devon Pena, Water and Environmental Justice,

<http://ejfood.blogspot.com/2010/03/water-and-environmental-justice.html>

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

**Class 26:** EJ and Nuclear Power

### **EJ and Meaning**

**Class 27:** The Poetics of Environmental Justice

Patterson, We Know This Place [R]

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBY0i5DMItA>

Mos Def, New World Water

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxvQKZPb6Wo>

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 Thursday, Mar 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—for example, using tax money to help rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina—can be justified only to rectify some past injustice. Explain Nozick’s argument and critique it: Consider what you’ve learned from the readings, class discussion and your own experience, and offer what you consider to be the *strongest* argument against Nozick’s position.

(Note: you may actually agree with Nozick, but for the purposes of this paper I’d like you to explore *both* his position and the strongest counterargument).

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

Due: Friday, Feb. 15, in class. Final revision is due on Monday, March 11, in class.

### Paper #2: QRE exercise

Christopher Foreman maintains in his 1998 book that the evidentiary basis for EJ claims is weak. Drawing on the class readings and discussion, evaluate that claim. 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: Wednesday, Feb. 27, in class. Final revision is due on Monday, 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 environmentally 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>

Please choose one of the domestic cases (so that our analysis isn’t confounded by dramatic political and cultural differences). 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:

- During Class 12, we’ll develop a research protocol.
- On Friday, Feb 1, 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?).
- During the next week, figure out what additional information about your case you’ll need to do your analysis. On Friday, Feb 8, you will meet with the reference librarian to discuss research strategies.
- On Friday, Feb. 15, you’ll turn in your first nonbinding peer evaluations.
- You will turn in a draft of your write up on Monday, March 4, with the second nonbinding peer evaluations.
- You will turn in the final version on Thursday, March 14, with your final binding peer evaluations.

### Instructions for the 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:

$$(\text{Project grade} * \text{your peer evaluation score})/100$$

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.

What the numbers mean:

If you have 5 people in your group, so you're distributing 100 points to 4 people:

*If everyone gave student X 27 points, her score would be 107: Above and beyond*

*If everyone gave student X 25 points, her score would be 100: Did everything we expected*

*If everyone gave student X 22 points, her score would be 88: good effort most of the time*

*If everyone gave student X 19 points, her score would be 76: slacker territory*

Etc.