ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

POSC 212

Winter 2011

Kim Smith

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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. Our focus is the United States, but students will have the opportunity to research environmental justice in other countries.

**Required Texts:**

McGurty, Eileen. *Transforming Environmentalism*

Foreman, Christopher. *The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice*. Brookings, 2000

Cole, Luke and Sheila Foster.  *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of Environmental Justice Movement*. NYU Press, 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: 25%

Paper #2: 25%

Group Research Proposal project: 35%

Participation: 15%

COURSE OUTLINE

**Class 1:** Introduction

**Class 2**: History of the Environmental Justice Movement

McGurty, Transforming Environmentalism, ch. 1-3

**Class 3:** McGurty, Transforming Environmentalism, ch. 4-end.

**\*\*\*Meet in groups\*\*\***

**Class 4**: Cole and Foster, *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of Environmental Justice Movement*. Preface – Ch. 3

**Class 5:**  Cole and Foster, Ch. 4-7

**Class 6**: Foreman, *Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice* Ch. 1-3

**Class 7:** Foreman, Ch. 4-6

**Class 8:** Workshop on Developing a Research Question

**\*\* Statement of Research Question due Tuesday, Jan 25, at noon (and peer evaluation)\*\*\***

**What Is “Justice”?**

**Class 9:** Justice and collective responsibility

Smith, Kimberly, “Theories of Justice: An Introduction” [R]

**Class 10:** Environmental and racial justice

Bullard, African American Historial 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 11:** Cont.

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 12**: 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]

Wenz, Does Environmentalism Promote Injustice for the Poor? [R]

**EJ and Agriculture**

**Class 13:** Landloss

Daniel, “African American Farmers and Civil Rights,” *Journal of Southern History* 73:3-26 (Feb 2007) [R]

“American Indian Farmers would get funds in class-action settlement,” InForum article [R]

**\*\*\*Paper #1 due in class: What is environmental justice?**

**Class 14:** Food access and labor issues

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)

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

**Class 15:** Lerner, Diamond

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

**Class 16**: cont.

**Class 17:** Workshop: Literature Reviews

**\*\*\*Revised Statement of Research Question and Literature Review due Thurs Feb 17, at noon (with peer evaluation)\*\*\***

**Class 18:** Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*, Ch. 2,5 [R]

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

**Class 19:** 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]* [R]

**Class 20:** Bullard et al, Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2000, ch. 3 and 4 [online]

**\*\*\*ATTEND SHAH CONVOCATION, Friday Feb. 18. On the discussion forum, comment on her most interesting or provocative point.\*\*\***

**Class 21:** No Class; work on group research project

**Class 22:** Social Vulnerability

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

Cutter et. al., “Social Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards,” in *Hazards, Vulnerability and Environmental Justice* [R]

**EJ and Water: The Flooding of New Orleans**

**Class 23:** Freudenberg et al, Catastrophe in the Making, Prologue -- ch.4

**\*\*\*Paper #2 due in class: QRE exercise(s)**

**Class 24**: Catastrophe, ch 5-7

**\*\*\*This week: Groups should meet with Kim to discuss your sources and methods\*\*\***

**Class 25**: Catastrophe, ch. 8-end

**Class 26**: Water as a commodity

Devon Pena, Water and Environmental Justice, http://ejfood.blogspot.com/2010/03/water-and-environmental-justice.html

**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

**\*\*\*Final draft of Paper #2 due in class**

**Final draft of research proposal (with final peer evaluation) due Saturday, March 12, at noon**

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—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 we’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: Monday, January 31, 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: Friday, Feb. 25, in class

Group research proposal project

Your group will develop a 15-page research proposal. (You won’t actually have to carry out the research project). The aim of this assignment is to teach you how to put together a good research project.

The topic should be connected somehow to New Orleans. There are many possible issues to explore: the problems of fenceline communities, the distribution of environmental hazards, issues related to offshore oil-drilling, food access, land-loss, etc.

You will need to come up with a well-defined research question, review the relevant scholarly literature, and explain what data you will gather and what methodology you will use. So you research proposal should have the following structure:

Title

1. Research Question (1-2 pp)
2. Literature Review (8-10 pp)
3. Method and Sources (2-3 pp)

Process:

* You will turn in the research question on Tuesday, Jan. 25, along with peer evaluations
* You will turn in a revised research question and literature review on Thurs, Feb. 17, along with peer evaluations
* Your group will meet with Kim during the week of Feb 28-Mar 4 to discuss methods and sources
* Your Proposal is due Sat, Mar 12, at noon, with your final peer evaluations.

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

(Project grade \* 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 everyone gave student X* **27** points, her score would be **107**

*If everyone gave student X* **26** points, her score would be **104** Above and beyond

*If everyone gave student X* **25** points, her score would be **100**

*If everyone gave student X* **24** points, her score would be **96** Did everything we

*If everyone gave student X* **23** points, her score would be **92** expected

*If everyone gave student X* **22** points, her score would be **88**

*If everyone gave student X* **21** points, her score would be **84** good effort most of the

*If everyone gave student X* **20** points, her score would be **80** time

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

*If everyone gave student X* **18** points, her score would be **72** slacker territory

*If everyone gave student X* **17** points, her score would be **68**

*If everyone gave student X* **16** points, her score would be **64**  checked out of

*If everyone gave student X* **15** points, her score would be **60** project

SAMPLE PEER EVALUATION FORM  
  
CRITERIA:  
  
Amount of work contributed to project  
Respect for others’ ideas  
Flexibility when disagreements occur

Responded promptly to e-mails

Etc.

Comments:  
  
What is this group member doing well?

What could  this group member improve on?

Points allocated: