

# Environmental Justice

## AMS 101G

Professor J. Sze

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:40-3 p.m.

Class Location: Olson 251

Office Hours: Thursday, 10-11 and by appt.

Office Location: 2221 Hart Hall (Across from the Women and Gender Studies Office)

[jsze@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jsze@ucdavis.edu) or (530) 754-5479

### **Course Description:**

This course examines the concept of environmental justice through interdisciplinary lenses. We begin by examining different attempts to define “environmental justice” (and focus on environmental justice in the United States for reasons of time and scope, although environmental justice issues are also important at the global level). Various frameworks analyze environmental issues through the lens of social justice and human inequality, specifically categories of race, class and gender.

We begin by looking at historical approaches to environmental justice. Then, we analyze environmental racism and the environmental justice movement (EJM) through social scientific approaches, including empirical documentation of the problem, examination of the roots and consequences of environmental racism, and the social movements that have arisen in the last two decades to combat it. In addition to environmental racism, we will examine how gender impacts the production and experience of environmental injustices. Lastly, we utilize humanities approaches to representations of environmental injustice, including literary, philosophical and cultural frameworks.

Through selected case studies, we examine a number of topics and questions. Some of these include: the advantages and drawbacks of current systems of production and consumption, the question of who bears the burdens and who enjoys the benefits of our current environmental and social system and what kinds of alternatives are available. Why do some have access to a clean and safe environment, and not others? Who decides and why?

### **Course Objectives:**

- Introduce basic concepts and themes fundamental to understanding the topic of environmental justice;
- Introduce students to different methodological frameworks and approaches in environmental justice studies;
- Promote critical thinking and your understanding of environmental, social and political history and contemporary conflict, and expand your view of race, gender, class by examining environmental topics.
- Develop writing and other important skills, such as discussion facilitation and public presentation.

**Grading and Assignments:**

Reading Responses (3 Total)	15%
Group Discussion Leading	15%
Extended Response Paper (3 Pages)	15%
Final Presentation (group)	10%
Final Paper (individual 7-8 pages)	25%
Participation, In-class writing assignments & Quizzes	20%

You will receive separate guidelines for each of these assignments. You will receive a separate set of guidelines of how to write reading responses.

You will also choose which one day for which you will write the Extended Response Paper by week two. It cannot due on a day when the response papers are mandated for everyone, nor can it be for a day where you are in charge of discussion. Select from the remaining available days. If you choose to write an Extended Response Paper for a literary work, the guidelines and criteria for writing are slightly different, but we will discuss the differences as the end of the quarter nears.

For your Final Paper and Group Presentation, see separate guidelines.

I will also reserve the right to give reading quizzes if I feel that the class is not doing the reading. These are very basic, designed solely to see if you have done the reading. If you have done so, you'll do fine. Every reading in this class has been carefully chosen: they are interesting and have something to tell us about environmental justice. So maximize what you get out of this class by doing the reading.

\*\*\*\*\*In general, it's in your best interest to learn how to read effectively. That means being able to digest a large amount of information efficiently. Your best bet with the amount of reading in this class is to figure out what the main themes and questions are, not to get bogged down on the details. But the worst thing you can do for yourself and in this class is to skip the reading altogether. \*\*\*\*\*

Effort alone will not ensure a good grade on the assignment (or in the class in general), although if you do not make an effort, it may be hard to achieve a good grade. Similarly, participation is not simply a question of quantity, but also of quality and thoughtfulness. If you choose to use the class time to do something else should you decide not to attend, that is your decision. You are responsible, however, for understanding the class material discussed in your absence and I will grade your work with the assumption that you have mastered all course material (Any videos we watch in the class, unless otherwise indicated, are available at the media lab). However, if you miss class because of illness or family emergency, I will help you make up the work.

**A Note on Grading:**

From this syllabus, you know everything you need to do in order to do well in this class. Your grade may play a significant role in your future. As your teacher, my role is as messenger: when you do your work carefully and well, I will give you an "A" on that assignment. If you sustain that exceptional work, you will get at "A" in the course. Your grade is not an entitlement, it is

earned. When you choose to do less than stellar, mediocre, or no work, I deliver the appropriate grade. It is entirely possible for every student who delivers exceptional work to earn an "A" (with acknowledgements for this philosophy from Murray Sperber as described in the Chronicle of Higher Education).

Letter grades correspond to the following:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	
A	93-96	B	83-86	
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	and so on.....

This class involves a fair amount of discussion and group work. Group work is graded collectively. Individual work is graded individually.

In general, I do not believe that grade anxiety is useful. Rather, full engagement with the material and the process of learning is a better and healthier, and ultimately more constructive way for you to approach the class.

#### **Policy on Late Papers and Make-up Assignments:**

Papers will be collected at the BEGINNING of class the day that they are due, and will be returned the following week (papers that come in during or at the end of class will be considered late). Late papers are immediately deducted (a half grade or 2 points in the case of the reading responses, and a full grade on the extended reading response), and will drop by a grade each subsequent class session that they are late. Again, the logic of this policy is to get you to do the assignment and to do so in a timely manner so that I can grade all similar assignment together. But, I do believe it is always better to do the reading and the assignment than not to do it at all. I do not like entering a zero on assignments, and will always accept an assignment and will cap out the late points deducted.

All assignments will be returned 1 week after they have been turned in.

#### **Statement on Academic Honesty**

Your writing is like your signature. To turn in someone else's writing is foolish. Plagiarism is also insulting to yourself, easily recognized, and an insult to your instructor and fellow students. Lastly, it is also a surefire way to get into trouble. Academic Senate policy requires that all cases of plagiarism be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Please review "Avoiding Plagiarism: Mastering the Art of Scholarship" retrievable at: <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/avoid.htm>

#### **Readings for the class:**

Reader from Navin's across the street from Café Roma.

There will be one copy of the reader available in the AMS office for 2 hour checkout.

Please bring your reader to class, as we may refer to it in class.

## Schedule

**Week 1: Environmental Justice: Defining the term, Class Overview. Thursday, 1/5**

### Unit 1: Historical Approaches

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 2 Tues. 1/10	<b>Defining Nature and Wilderness:</b>  <b>Nature as Contested Terrain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapters from Roderick Nash's <i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i>.</li> <li>Introduction from Uncommon Ground and "The Trouble with Wilderness" (both by Cronon)</li> </ul>	Reading Response #1 Due	
Thursday, 1/12	<b>Wilderness and Conservation Politics:</b> <b>Urban and Class Contexts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Karl Jacoby, "Class and Environmental History: Lessons from the War in the Adirondacks"</li> <li>Forcing the Spring (Chapter 2)</li> <li>Dorceta Taylor Article page 1-20 from internet at <a href="http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/pubs/viewpub.jsp?indx=3259">http://www.srs.fs.fed.us/pubs/viewpub.jsp?indx=3259</a></li> </ul>	Group Leading #1	

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 3 Tues. 1/17	<b>Gender and Nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carolyn Merchant "Reinventing Eden: Western Culture as a Recovery Narrative,"</li> <li>Merchant: Preface and Intro from Death of Nature</li> <li>Nash, 9 (Wilderness Cult)</li> <li>(recommended but not required) Merchant, "Ecofeminism"</li> </ul>	Group Leading #2	
Thursday, 1/19	<b>Imperialism, Conquest and American Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slotkin "Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West' and the Mythologization of the American Empire"</li> <li>Spence, Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 7</li> <li>(recommended but not required) Donna Haraway, Teddy Bear Patriarchy</li> </ul>	Group Leading #3	

## Unit 2: Social Movements and Sociological Approaches

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 4 Tues. 1/24	<b>Mainstream environmentalism:</b>  <b>Case Study: Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gottlieb, p. 81-114 (on the 60's)</li> <li>• Selections from <i>The Population Bomb</i></li> <li>• Silliman: Dangerous Intersections: Feminist Perspectives on Population,</li> <li>• ADD SELECTION FROM CARSON</li> <li>• Amartya Sen: "population. delusion and reality"</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hartman on population and national security</li> </ul>	Group Leading #4	
Thursday, 1/26	<b>History and principles of the Environmental Justice Movement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taylor Article page 20-41 (ONLINE)</li> <li>• Executive Order 12898, 1994</li> <li>• "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environmental and Social Justice" Giovanna Di Chiro from Cronon,</li> <li>• Cole and Foster, Preface, Ch. 1</li> </ul>		

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 5 Tues. 1/31	<b>Space, place, race and pollution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pulido: Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California"</li> <li>• Gladwell review of Heat Wave <a href="http://www.gladwell.com/2002/2002_08_12_a_heat.htm">http://www.gladwell.com/2002/2002_08_12_a_heat.htm</a></li> <li>• Cole and Foster: Chapter three beyond the distributive paradigm</li> </ul>	Reading Response #2 Due	
Thursday, 2/2	<b>Case Studies from CA</b>  <b>Subaltern Environmentalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Healthy Communities from the Ground Up: Environmental Justice in CA Report available Online at <a href="http://www.calendow.org/reference/publications/pdf/disparities/TCE0915-2003_Building_Heath.pdf">http://www.calendow.org/reference/publications/pdf/disparities/TCE0915-2003_Building_Heath.pdf</a></li> <li>• Pulido Chapter 1 and 3 (on reserve at Shields)</li> </ul> (recommended but not required: Cole		

		and Foster, Ch 4 on Buttonwillow)		
--	--	-----------------------------------	--	--

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 6 Tues. 2/7	<b>Un (Natural Disasters)</b>  Case Studies: The Gulf Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allen: Uneasy Alchemy, Chapter 2</li> <li>Lerner, Diamond, Chapter 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>	Watch Fenceline  Reading Response #3 Due	1 paragraph topic due
Thursday, 2/9	<b>EJ and Energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sze, Toxic Soup Redux: Why Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Matter after Katrina <a href="http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Sze/">http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Sze/</a></li> <li>Sze, "Race and Power"</li> </ul>		

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 7 Tues. 2/14	<b>Native EJ movement: politics and culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kuletz. <i>The Tainted Desert</i>, Introduction and Ch 2</li> <li>Selections on POPs contamination</li> <li>Cole and Foster, Chapter 6 (IEN)</li> </ul>	View To Protect Mother Earth: Broken Treaty II	Final groups assigned
Thursday, 2/16	<b>cont'd</b>	Linda Hogan, Solar Storms		

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACTIVIST PANEL on 2/15 from 4-6 p.m.

I **highly recommend** that you attend this event, although I am not requiring that you do so.

There will be representatives and activists from the leading environmental justice organizations in California speaking about their work: from Silicon Valley Toxics Coalitions, Communities for a Better Environment, and the Asian Pacific Environmental Network.

If you do attend, you can write a reading response for the event that will replace your lowest grade for that assignment.

Location University Club Lounge

### Unit 3: Philosophical, Cultural and Literary Approaches

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 8 Tues. 2/21	<b>New Approaches in EJ studies</b>	Intro from Power, Justice and the Environment	Watch portions of Borderline Cases	Outline and list of sources
Thursday,	<b>Border Justice</b>	Tijuana Straits a Novel		

2/23		Pellow		
------	--	--------	--	--

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 9 Tues. 2/28	<b>Gender Epistemology: knowledge and action</b>	Sandra Steingraber: Living Downstream Prologue, Chapters 1 & 2 (on reserve at Shields)  Allen, Chapter 5		3 page draft due
Thursday, 3/2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>class canceled, but you must either attend a showing and discussion of Blue Vinyl (one hour version) on 3/1 (and turn in a 1 page summary of the event) or watch the film in the media lab and turn in a summary</li> </ul>		

Blue Vinyl will be shown on campus on 3/1 (from 4-6) and I will be facilitating a discussion.  
Location University Club Lounge

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Week 10 Tues. 3/7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-Class meeting to discuss comment and prepare for presentations</li> </ul>		Comments due on drafts
Thursday, 3/9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group Presentations</li> </ul>		

Date	Theme	Reading	Assignment	Misc
Last Week 3/14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group Presentations</li> </ul>		

Final papers due 3/16.