ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
ESPM 163AC AND SOCIOLOGY 137AC
4 Units – Spring 2018

LECTURES:
Monday & Wednesday 4:00-5:00 pm  LeConte 4
CCN: 33804 and 30305  Discussion Sections: Mandatory

INSTRUCTOR:
Dara O’Rourke - orourke@berkeley.edu
Course Site: https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1467020
Office Hours: Monday 1:00-3:00 pm. 130B Giannini Hall.
Sign up at: https://calendly.com/daraorourke/

GRADUATE STUDENT INSTRUCTORS:
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course engages environmental problems, community responses, and policy debates regarding “environmental justice” (EJ) issues – essentially the race, class, and equity implications of environmental and health issues. The course presents research on distributions of environmental quality and health, enforcement of regulations, access to resources to respond to urban and industrial problems, and the broader political economy of decision-making around environmental and health issues. The course explores and critically analyzes philosophies, frameworks, and strategies underlying environmental justice movements and struggles of African American, Latino/Latina, Asian American, and Native American communities.

The course seeks to prepare students to critically analyze environmental outcomes and processes, providing frameworks for evaluating the equity implications of environmental policies and programs, and distributions of environmental amenities and burdens. Case studies of, and research methods for, identifying environmental, health, and social inequities that underlie environmental justice claims will be incorporated throughout the course. Students will also analyze community and government responses to environmental injustices, and critically assess recent strategies to promote more ecologically sound and socially just development.

The course will include cases of environmental problems in communities that are predominantly African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American. These cases will be analyzed within a broad political economy framework, essentially asking why environmental problems play out differently for different groups, and why some groups are more effective than others in mobilizing to pressure for environmental improvements. We will also explore global “climate justice” issues and movement responses.

GOALS FOR THE COURSE
• Analyze institutional processes impacting race, class, and the environment;
• Analyze structural perspectives on inequality and race in the US;
• Analyze data on the distributions of environmental and health outcomes;
• Perform basic quantitative analysis linking social, economic, and environmental data;
• Analyze government policies related to environmental issues;
• Analyze strategies to prevent or remedy environmental justice problems;
• Strengthen critical thinking, writing, and presentation skills.
ASSIGNMENTS
Students are expected to:

1. Read all of the assigned readings before each lecture for which they are assigned, and actively participate in class discussions in lectures and sections.

2. Complete three short assignments during the semester. These will involve:
   a) Complete a short assignment defining environmental injustice and describing how your own racial, socio-economic, or geographic background influenced your exposure to environmental harm and access to environmental benefits. This assignment will be due on February 7th.
   b) Complete a short essay analyzing federal, state, or local government policies related to an EJ case, analyzing the role of race and/or class in the policy. This assignment will be due on March 7th.
   c) Complete a short assignment on Gathering Evidence and Making Causal Claims related to your term project. This assignment will be due on April 4th.

3. Complete a Term Project by April 25th. In consultation with your section GSI, develop a term paper, wiki page, webpage, or video that involves research and analysis of an environmental justice topic or case. Alternately, students may develop a group service learning project in conjunction with a local non-profit organization, with the prior approval of your GSI.

4. Students will take an in-class final exam. We will be in Final Exam Group 17, May 11th from 8:00-11:00 am.

EVALUATION:
The course grade will be based on the following activities:

- 20% - Class participation in lectures and sections.
- 20% - Assignments
- 5% - Outline and Bibliography for Term Project
- 25% - Term Project
- 30% - Final Examination

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND COURSE JUSTICE
This course is about justice and equity. In that light, and in fairness to students who put in an honest effort, cheaters will be treated very strictly. Any evidence of cheating will result in a score of zero on the assignment. Incidences of cheating and plagiarism will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs, which may administer additional punishment. As a tool to promote academic integrity in this course, work submitted via bCourses may be checked for originality against 2018 and previous year’s work using Turnitin (http://ets.berkeley.edu/academic-integrity).

The use of electronic devices (laptops, tablets, phones, etc.) will not be allowed during lectures due to growing evidence of their deleterious effect on learning and negative impacts on other students.

REQUIRED READINGS
The readings will be available either in the course reader, via bCourses, or on the web. A reader will be on reserve in the CNR Resource Center (260 Mulford Hall). The reader will be available for purchase at Replica Digital Ink, 2138 Oxford St., Berkeley, CA 94704.
SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

January 17 - Introduction to the Course

No readings.

January 22 – Race and Class in America Today


Supplemental Reading:


January 24 – What is Environmental Injustice?


January 29 — Environmental Disparities in the US


January 31 — Health Disparities in the US


Burke, Alison, (2017), “Working class white Americans are now dying in middle age at faster rates than minority groups,” The Brookings Institute, available at: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2017/03/23/working-class-white-americans-are-now-dying-in-middle-age-at-faster-rates-than-minority-groups/

February 5 – Frameworks of Justice

February 7 – Inequality, Stress, and Cumulative Impacts


Morello-Frosch, Rachel, Miriam Zuk, Michael Jerrett, Bhavna Shamasunder, and Amy D. Kyle, “Understanding the Cumulative Impacts of Inequality in Environmental Health: Implications for Policy,” Health Affairs 30, No. 5 (2011): 879-887.

Inequality.org, “Inequality and Health,” available at: https://inequality.org/facts/inequality-and-health/

February 12 – Race in America


Supplemental Reading:


February 14 – Class in America


Supplemental Reading:

Politizane, Wealth Inequality in America, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnjnsM


For more statistics, check out: https://inequality.org/facts/

February 19 – President’s Day – No Class

February 21 - Measuring Environmental Injustices


February 26 - Measuring Cumulative Risks


February 28 - Federal Policies - Guest Speaker – Charles Lee

March 5 – The EPA Today


Supplemental Reading:


March 7 – State and Local Policies


Also, review: http://www.saferstates.com

March 12 – Legal Bases for Environmental Justice Claims


March 14 – The Environmental Justice Movement


EJ on the Berkeley Campus:
https://serc.berkeley.edu/letter-to-the-environmental-community-from-students-of-color/

**March 19 – Campaigning Strategies**


**March 21 – Community-Based Participatory Research**


**March 26-30 - SPRING BREAK**

**April 2 – Community Monitoring**


**April 4 – Climate Change**


**April 9 – “Natural Disasters” and EJ**


**April 11 – Climate Justice Activism**


April 16 – Consumption and EJ


April 18 – Green Jobs and Sustainable Development


April 23 – What Do We Want in Our Backyards?


April 25 – The Future of Environmental Justice


CLASSES END

READING WEEK – April 30th – May 4th

FINAL EXAMINATION – May 11th – 8:00-11:00 a.m.