

Environmental Justice

Political Science 149

University of California, Irvine
Summer I, 2007

Day/Time: TH, 4pm-6:50pm

Location: SSL 122

Course Website – www.asteback.com/EJ

Instructor: P. Brian Fisher

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Office Hours: by app. Social Science Tower, #664

Course Background

This course will explore global environmental issues from a perspective that foregrounds questions of social justice. Environmental justice suggests fair treatment of all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, economic capacity, national origin, and education level with respect to environmental politics. Environmental Justice differs from traditional environmental philosophies in that it seeks to combine a concern for the natural world with a consciousness of ethnic, class, and gender discrimination. From this vantage point, there are marked and increasing disparities between those who have access to clean and safe resources and those who do not. Often poor and minority communities bear a disproportionately large burden of toxic contamination and suffer the health problems that result from it, while the elite and powerful tend to control the valuable resources. Disparities of this nature may be the result of historical circumstances, contemporary economic and trade relations, and inadequate or inappropriate governmental regulation. They may also be the result of deliberate targeting of disenfranchised communities or weak nations to bear the burden of powerful communities and nations unsustainable consumption patterns.

This class critically examines the politics of environmental problems, and focuses on the historic and current roles that economic systems, science, discourse, race, gender, and development play in shaping human interactions with the environment. This class explores how these interactions impact human communities in different ways, as well as what can be done to mitigate differential impacts through movements of environmental justice. In particular, this course takes on and explores in-depth contentious issues such as population growth and resource use, the framing of environmental 'risks' and impacts due to global climate change, consumer-based social movements surrounding alternative trade and development, the implications of food biotechnology, and differential impacts through toxic waste disposal and facility siting. The goals of this class are to challenge your thinking about environmental problems, develop new frameworks for critical analysis, and discuss practical and conceptual alternatives in the form of environmental justice movements. The readings in this class will trace the early historical roots and conceptualizations of 'environmental justice' as a mechanism for change, but also its more current engagements with culture, equity, and power.

Class Format

The class sessions will consist of two main components:

I. A general introduction: situating EJ's roots in context with environmental policy and law, and a review of the historical and current issues within the field of environmental justice.

II. Thematic investigations and EJ case-studies: Focusing on population and environment, food, free and fair trade, toxic waste disposal, labor rights, climate change, and the nature/culture divide with particular attention paid to race, class and gender.

Grading

The following weight will be given to coursework in the determination of final grades:

COURSEWORK	VALUE
Class Analyses	30 %
Final EJ Project	50 %
EJ Presentation	10 %
Participation/Class Prep	10 %
Movie/Book Review	Bonus

Course Materials

The following *required texts* will be available in the UCI Bookstore:

- **NST** = Kai Ericson (1994). *A New Species of Trouble: The Human Experience of Modern Disasters*. New York: WW Norton.
- **QEJ** = Robert Bullard (ed.) (2005). *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- **JS** = Julian Agyeman, Robert Bullard, and Bob Evans (2003). *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Course Website

All students are responsible for visiting the "schedule" section of the course website on a regular basis. The attached reading list provides a general guide to the course readings; however, the actual assignment list and regular updates will be posted on the course website.

Class Announcements

Check your UCI email account on a regular basis for any announcements concerning this class. If you have trouble accessing your UCI email account, an archive of class email announcements can be found on the course website (see top of page 1 for URL address).

Weekly Analysis Assignment

Your assignment should analyze the articles read for class for the previous 1 or 2 classes. This should not be a mere summary of the readings, but an analysis of the major themes and points raised by all the readings taken together. For example, the format could be outlined first with a thesis statement, followed by the key points raised in the articles, the thrust of the major points examined, and the tensions, fault lines or problems resolved or unresolved by the readings. The length should be about one page, single-spaced.

* For each class, I will pose a class question based on the readings that must be addressed in a student group.

Final Project

Each student will complete an environmental justice project based on a field study or data. The paper should be 7-10 pages in length including a bibliography. Your Project topic and thesis paragraph is due **July 10**; the Project Outline is due **July 17**, with the final paper due **July 31**. Each student will also present their findings to the class on the final two classes. These presentations will be about 10-12 minutes total.

Possible Topics include:

- Disasters: Tsunamis, Hurricanes, etc.
- Toxic Waste Sites
- Environmental Human Rights violations
- Climate change impacts
- Dumping on Native American Lands
- Violations/regulations for fishing, hunting
- Homelessness
- Lead in homes, mercury in fish, etc.
- Contaminated playgrounds
- The role of gender/race in EJ
- Indigenous Peoples
- Environmental Justice Movements
- Food/Agriculture and GMOs

CLASS SCHEDULE

Part I: Orientation to Environmental Justice

Class 1 CLASS ORIENTATION

Tuesday, June 26

- Discuss Syllabus
- Discuss Course Outline

Class 2 CONTEXT OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Thursday, June 28

- DUE: READING ANALYSIS #1

Required Readings:

- *JS*, Introduction, pp. 1-13
- *QJ*, Forward, Preface, Introduction, pp. ix-xviii and pp. 1-17
- *NST*, Prologue, pp. 11-23
- *NST*, Chapter 1, "The Ojibwa of Grassy Narrows," pp. 27-57
- Kuehn, Robert "A Taxonomy of Environmental Justice," 30 *ELR* 10681 (2000) (website)

Class 3 HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Tuesday, July 3

- DUE: ECOLOGICAL SOURCES ANALYSIS

Required Readings:

- *QJ*, Chapter 1, pp. 18-42
- *JS*, Chapter 2, pp. 38-61
- *NST*, Chapter 4, "Three Mile Island: A New Species of Trouble," pp. 139-157
- Dorceta Taylor, "The Rise of the Environmental Justice Paradigm," pp. 508-580 (*SKIM*) (website)
- Environmental Justice Roundtable, pp. 15-26 (reserve)

Class 4 WHAT CONSTITUTES ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE?

Thursday, July 5

- DUE: READING ANALYSIS #2

Required Readings:

- Take Ecological Footprint Quiz (website)
- David Schlosberg, "Reconceiving Environmental Justice," pp. 517-537 (website)
- *NST*, Chapter 5, "Being Homeless," pp. 158-181
- *NST*, Chapter 7, "Yucca Mountain: Good Riddance, Bad Rubbish," pp. 203-225

- *JS*, Chapter 12, “Maori Kaupapa and the Inseparability of Social and Environmental Justice,” pp. 252-266
- Comfort, *EJ Reader*, “Struggle in Ogoniland: Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Cultural Politics of EJ,” pp. 229-243 (reserve)

Part II: Race and Gender in Environmental Justice

Class 5 ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Tuesday, July 10

- **DUE: PROJECT TOPIC AND THESIS PARAGRAPH**

Required Readings:

- *NST*, Chapter 2, “The Haitians of Immokalee,” pp. 58-98
- *QEJ*, Chapter 6, “Toxic Racism on a New Jersey Waterfront,” pp. 125-141
- *JS*, Chapter 6, “Race, Politics and Pollution,” pp. 125-144
- Morello-Frosch, et al., “Environmental Justice and Regional Inequality in Southern California,” pp. 149-153 (website)

Class 6 GENDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Thursday, July 12

- **DUE: READING ANALYSIS #3**

Required Readings:

- Stein, *EJ Reader*, “Activism as Affirmation: Gender and EJ”, pp. 194-208 (reserve)
- *JS*, Chapter 11, “Women and Environmental Justice”, pp. 229-249
- *QEJ*, Chapter 3, “Women Warriors of Color on the Front Line,” pp. 62-84

Part III: Sustainability and Climate Change Justice

Class 7 SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
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Tuesday, July 17

- **DUE: PROJECT OUTLINE OF MAIN IDEAS/RESEARCH**

Required Readings:

- *QEJ*, Chapter 13, “Environmental Racism and Neoliberal Disorder in South Africa,” pp. 255-278
- *QEJ*, Chapter 8, “Resource Wars against Native Peoples,” pp. 168-187
- *JS*, Chapter 4, “Social Justice and Environmental Sustainability,” pp. 83-94
- *JS*, Chapter 5, “When Consumption does Violence,” 99-120
- *JS*, Chapter 1, “Environmental Space, Equity, and the Ecological Debt,” pp. 19-35

Class 8 CLIMATE CHANGE JUSTICE & EQUITY

Thursday, July 19

- **DUE: READING ANALYSIS #4**

Required Readings:

- Athanasiou and Baer, *Dead Heat: Global Justice and Global Warming*, excerpts (reserve).
- Paavola, "Justice in Adaptation to Climate Change in Tanzania," pp. 201-221 (reserve)
- Thomas, et al., "Adaptation and Equity in Resource Dependent Societies," pp. 223-237 (reserve)
- Epoch Times, "Inuit Culture, Frozen in Time, Now Melting Away", Aug 18-25, 2005 (website)
- "The Sinking of Tuvalu," Feb. 13, 2005 (website)

Class 9 REPARATIONS AND FUTURE OF EJ

Tuesday, July 24

- **DUE: READING ANALYSIS #5**

Required Readings

- *NST*, EPILOGUE, PP. 226-242
- *JS*, Conclusion, "Towards Just Sustainabilities: Perspectives and Possibilities," pp. 323-332
- *QEJ*, Chapter 10, "Environmental Reparations," pp. 209-221
- *QEJ*, Chapter 14, "Addressing Global Poverty, Pollution, and Human Rights," pp. 279-297

Class 10 PROJECTS

Thursday, July 26

- **PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

Class 11 PROJECTS

Tuesday, July 31

- **FINAL PAPER DUE**
- **PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**