ENST 489S.01: Environmental Justice Issues and Solutions (SERV)

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Course Description

This co-convened undergraduate (489S) and graduate (595) course meets UM’s Social Sciences General Education requirement for undergraduates. Together we explore how and why environmental risks, such as exposure to toxic chemicals - and benefits, such as access to natural resources, environmental amenities, and environmental protection - are inequitably distributed among various segments of society. The premise of this course that socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable societies at the local, national, and global levels cannot be achieved unless the underlying causes of environmental and social inequity are understood and addressed.

Thus, in the first part of the course we look at the historical, sociocultural, political, and economic processes by which environmental inequities by race, socioeconomic status, and gender are believed to have arisen and continue to persist. We do so largely by examining various case examples and different manifestations of environmental injustice.

In the latter part of the course, we will use our understanding of the causes to consider environmental justice solutions. We will focus on governmental responses to environmental justice issues. We also will look at strategies and tools that environmental justice groups are using to empower themselves and work toward a more just and sustainable society. We will critique efforts of environmental justice organizations, government, industry, and traditional environmental organizations. Over the course of the term, students will research and analyze an environmental justice issue, topic, or case, or conduct a service learning project in collaboration with a grassroots community organization.

This course has a Service Learning designation, which means all students will have an opportunity (i.e., are required) to volunteer for an environmental justice group. The service learning experience and a related service learning project option help integrate and deepen understanding and appreciation of course content.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course seeks to develop students’ understanding of myriad causes of environmental inequality and apply those understandings to critique existing solutions to environmental inequality and propose new solutions.

By the end of the course students will:

- be able to identify examples of environmental injustice in various contexts.
- understand and apply various environmental justice concepts;
• understand key analytic issues regarding evidence of environmental injustice;
• understand the range of explanations for environmental inequality;
• understand the unique aspects of environmental justices that relate to Native Americans;
• have a better understanding of their own social background and environmental influences;
• understand and appreciate the role that grassroots environmental justice groups in societal response to environmental injustice, including the role of local EJ groups;
• be able to assess the effectiveness of existing approaches for addressing environmental injustice;
• be able to propose appropriate solutions that individuals, communities, government, industry, or the environmental community can use to address environmental justice problems; and
• conduct environmental justice analyses and demonstrate an in-depth understanding of a particular environmental justice case, topic, or issue.

Requirements

In addition to regular attendance and completing all assignments and attending the all-day field trip on Oct. 9, all students are required to:

• conduct 15 hours of service learning volunteering for a campus or community environmental justice organization (students participating in service learning projects are exempted).
• be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, i.e., share thoughts, critiques, reactions, and questions about the readings.
• in consultation with the instructor, develop a term paper throughout the term that involves research and analysis of a relevant environmental justice topic, issue or case. Alternately, students may conduct a group service learning project in conjunction with a community organization.

Class

The class format will be a mix of lecture, discussion, short films, guest speakers, small group activities and student presentations. There also will be a training held in a computer classroom on obtaining and using demographic data and information on pollution sources and toxic chemicals. Some class time will be provided to work on term papers/projects, and the last few classes will be devoted to final presentations of graduate student term papers and group service learning projects (see below).

A Note on Email Communication: In accordance with privacy laws the University requires me to communicate with students about academic matters through students’ University email (UMConnect) account. Although efforts will be made to limit emails, occasionally it is necessary to communicate with the class. Thus, please regularly check your UM email account for this class.

A Note about Obtaining Assistance: If you or your team needs assistance outside of class, please come see me during office hours (or by appointment if meeting during office hours is not possible). I pride myself on be readily available for extra help.
Field Trip

There will be a full-day field trip on Thursday, October 9 to the Flathead Indian Reservation, which is home to the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes. The field trip will feature a visit to the National Bison Range. Further details will be provided in class. All students are expected to attend the field trip and should make necessary arrangements with their other instructors, employers, families, etc.

Description of Assignments

Service Learning Volunteering: All students are required to volunteer a minimum of 15 hours for a campus or community environmental justice organization such as Women’s Voices for the Earth (WVE), Students for Peace and Justice, Community Action for Justice in the Americans, Asia and Africa, or the Jeannette Rankin Peace Center of Missoula. Sometimes groups that do not have an explicit EJ or social justice emphasis have appropriate opportunities such as the ASUM Sustainability Coordinator, Garden City Harvest, 1000 Gardens, Sierra Club, and others. In addition, volunteering for organizations that serve low-income, minority populations or disadvantaged groups, such as the Missoula Food Bank, The Tom Roy Youth Guidance Home, Watson Children’s Center, Forward Montana, Poverello Center, or Valor House are generally acceptable. Occasionally, government agencies and small businesses (such as those that do energy conservation retrofits for low-income housing) have appropriate service learning opportunities. Opportunities will be provided in class to meet leaders and staff entities who can plug you into program and project activities. All volunteer hours should be logged along with a description of services provided. In addition, a note from the sponsoring organization documenting your contributions should be obtained. Six hours should be completed by Tuesday, Oct. 7, and all 15 hours by Tuesday, Nov. 18. Following the guidelines handed out in class, final service learning reports should include an essay that relates the service learning experience to the course content and themes. Students doing approved service learning projects do not need to submit a separate service learning report in addition to their project report but will do a reflection essay on their experience.

Reaction Papers: You are required to turn in short reaction papers to the readings as per the Schedule of Assignments below. Undergraduates and graduate students are expected to do a total of six and ten reaction paper, respectively, spread out through the semester. Reaction papers should be no more than two double-spaced pages for undergraduates and three pages for graduate students, should use 11 or 12 point font and no less than one-inch margins, and should be submitted in hard copy form in class the same day the readings are assigned. Reaction papers should respond to all readings assigned for a specific day. In your reaction papers, you are asked to: (1) identify what you found to be the most important or interesting points of each assigned reading, and explain why; and (2) offer your critique and/or comments on each reading. In doing so, you could identify the strengths and weaknesses of each reading, compare and contrast them to each other, explain how you see them relating to the topic for the day, previous topics and key themes and learning outcomes of the course. In addition, you are encouraged to offer thoughtful and thought-provoking questions that the readings raise for you and that you can also bring up in class to help stimulate class discussion. Your reaction papers will be evaluated with a $+,-,0$ based on the depth of understanding, originality, thoughtfulness and analytic insight they convey, for example, the degree to which you identify themes and concepts in the reading, compare and contrast them, question underlying assumptions, and provide justification for your arguments. Although unsubstantiated opinions are discouraged, raising questions or expressing doubts is appropriate. In referring to specific points in a specific reading, please refer to page numbers and consider using direct quotes.

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1 Undergraduates may do up to 10 and graduates up to 12, respectively, throughout the semester, but only the best 8 and 10, respectively, will be counted toward your grade in the class.
**Social History Reflection Essay:** For this assignment, you will be asked to use definitions of social class and concepts of race and ethnicity presented in the class, as well as Census and environmental data on the neighborhood or community you grew up in, to develop a social and environmental history of your life. In doing so, you will be asked to offer personal reflections about how your background and experience of the place where you grew up shaped your outlook on life, your awareness of and interactions with diverse others, and your experiences of and attitudes toward the environment. Essays should be about 6-7 pages for undergraduates and 8-10 pages for graduate students. **Essays are due Tuesday, October 21.**

**Term Paper/SL Project:** Students will also develop an individual term paper or group service learning (SL) project. Thus, there are two approaches you can take: (1) a traditional term paper for which you research, analyze, or critique a current environmental justice case, issue, topic, or an approach to addressing EJ problems (such as: grassroots community organizing; EJ policies; good neighborhood agreements; clean production/green chemistry; co-management; traditional ecological knowledge; tribal intellectual property rights; community-based research; citizen science; the precautionary principle; corporate responsibility; toxics reform; environmental human rights; EJ networks; sustainable economic development; etc.); or (2) a service learning project in which you work in a group to assist an EJ organization, community or population of concern on a current campaign of theirs. **Service learning projects fulfill the course service learning requirement.** The instructor will provide ideas for service projects and guidance during the development and execution of the project. Students who want to do a group service learning project should work closely with a project sponsor in an outside organization or government office to develop a project proposal, discuss their ideas with the instructor, submit a written proposal and obtain approval from the instructor. It is expected that some service learning volunteering will lead to development of full blown service learning projects. In fact, that is encouraged.

Term papers and SL projects should have both research and analysis components. Both will be developed in consultation with the instructor and require three separate assignments: (1) A Proposal; (2) An EJ Analysis; and (3) A Final Paper or Report. Students doing service learning group projects and graduate students are also required to give a class term paper/project presentation at the end of the semester. These separate assignments are described below though specific guidelines will also be handed out.

**Term Paper/Group Project Proposal:** A 3-4 page proposal with at least 10 and 15 references for undergrads and grad students, respectively, should describe the topic, issue, or case to be researched, provide important background or context, describe the purposes or objectives of the research or project, explain the relevance to the course goals, provide an outline of subtopics to be discussed, and describe your interest in the topic. Also, please explain how you intend to accomplish your objectives, for example, what sources of information you will use. For service projects, identify your collaborating partner(s), such as the individual, group or non-profit organization you are working with, describe the end-product or activities envisioned, provide some justification or a statement of need, explain how you plan to develop the project, i.e., identify key milestones and provide a timeline for achieving them. Also list the names, organizational affiliations, and titles of your collaborating partners. Students will make short informal presentations of your proposal in class on Tuesday, October 28.

**Term Paper/Project EJ Analysis:** An environmental justice analysis of the issue or topic you will be addressing in your term paper or project. Success requires conducting background research and using environmental justice concepts, frameworks, and theoretical explanations taught in the class. A variety of sources should be utilized and referenced. **For group service learning project, each person should submit their own analysis,** though sharing of information and resources is encouraged.

**Final Term Paper/Project Report:** Include revisions to your EJ analysis and incorporate feedback from the instructor. Terms papers should suggest policy, organizing, or other solutions to the issue or
problem, and include a feasibility analysis. Term papers should be at least 12 pages, not including references and appendices, for undergraduates, and about 20-25 pages for graduate students. As applicable, service learning project reports should include a description of the project, support materials, documentation of activities performed, the actual product developed, an explanation of the outcomes of your efforts, and a letter from your project sponsor. Service learning project reports should be 10-50 pages, depending on the nature of the product developed and outcomes achieved.

**Term Paper/Project Presentation:** Required for graduate students and students doing SL project only. A schedule and guidelines will be handed out in class.

**Project Reflection Essay:** Required for students doing SL projects only

**Class Facilitation (GRADUATE STUDENT ONLY):** For this assignment, you are asked to facilitate class in the latter part of the semester. Class facilitation should be about 45 minutes to one hour and include the following two components:

1. **Present on the Assigned and Outside Readings.** Briefly summarize the main points of the readings, provide analysis and critique that can prepare the class for discussion or the activity, introduce and discuss additional sources on the topic. Although a variety of approaches are possible, you might identify the strengths and weakness of the readings, for example, what main arguments or claims you found useful, effective, or ineffective and why, and offer additional sources to bolster your argument or enhance understanding of the topic. Reading commentaries should also attempt to link the readings for the day to each other by identifying common themes and otherwise comparing and contrasting them. Your presentation should explain how and why you think the readings and additional sources you identify improve our understanding of a particular environmental justice topic.

2. **Lead Discussion or an Activity.** Engage with the class in some way on the topic. Consider preparing handouts or involving the class in an activity, posing questions and leading a discussion or small group activity, a role play perhaps. Please ask the instructor if you would like assistance in planning an activity or if you would like additional resources to help you prepare.

To plan for this assignment, please submit your top three choices of topics by Thursday, September 11. Choose from among the topics listed in the syllabus on or after Thursday, October 23, or propose a topic not already listed that is also not what you expect will be the topic of your term paper. I will make my best effort to give you your top choice. I can provide additional reference materials on the topic if requested (and may do so on my own), and can work individually with you as you prepare for this assignment. No less than two weeks your assigned day to facilitate class, please submit a class facilitation plan that identifies and describes the outside sources you will use to supplement the assigned readings and that describes the planned activity.

**Note on the Graduate Students Increment:** Graduate students are required write longer reaction papers and more of them, give a term paper or project presentation, and facilitate class discussion and lead a class activity once during the term. Graduate students working on group service learning projects will be expected to function in a leadership capacity. Resulting work is expected to demonstrate relatively more thorough research and in-depth analysis and insight. In addition, the quality of research, writing and documentation for term papers will be held to a higher standard.
**Schedule of Assignments**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class in hard copy form unless announced otherwise in class or indicated in assignment guidelines handout out in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Facilitation (graduate students)</td>
<td>As arranged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Papers (cumulative totals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 for undergraduates and 3 for graduates by:</td>
<td>Tues. 9/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 for undergraduates and 6 for graduates by:</td>
<td>Thurs. 10/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 for undergraduates and 10 for graduates by:</td>
<td>Tues. 11/25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Learning Progress Reports</td>
<td>Tues. 10/7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social History Reflection Essay</td>
<td>Tues. 10/21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper/Project Proposals</td>
<td>Tues. 10/28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper/Project EJ Analysis</td>
<td>Thurs. 11/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Learning Final Reports</td>
<td>Tues. 11/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper/Project Presentations(^2)</td>
<td>As arranged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper/Project Written Reports</td>
<td>Wed. 12/10, 5 pm</td>
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**Grading and Evaluation**

It is expected that all assignments will be turned in on time. The instructor reserves the right to not accept late assignments. If accepted, deductions will be made for all assignments turned in late unless you make pre-arrangements before the due date.

Course grades will be based on a total of 1000 possible points allocated as follows for undergraduates and graduate students, and for students doing (individual) term papers and (group) service learning projects.

**TERM PAPERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
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<th>Graduate Students</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Class Facilitation</td>
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<td>Service Learning Assignment</td>
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<td>Social History Reflection Essay</td>
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<td>Term Paper Proposal</td>
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<td>Service Learning Assignment</td>
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<td>Term Paper EJ Analysis</td>
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<td>Term Paper Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper Written Report</td>
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<td>Term Paper EJ Analysis</td>
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<td>Term Paper Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper Written Report</td>
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<td>Term Paper Written Report</td>
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**SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS**

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<thead>
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<th>Undergraduates</th>
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<td>Reaction Papers</td>
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\(^2\) For (for grad students and students doing SL projects only.)
Undergraduates

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<tr>
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<td>Service Learning Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL Project Proposal</td>
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<td>SL Project EJ Analysis</td>
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<td>SL Project Presentation</td>
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<td>SL Project Written Report</td>
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<td>SL Project Reflection Essay</td>
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Graduate Students

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<tr>
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<td>Social History Reflection Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL Project Reflection Essay</td>
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Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is a requirement and a significant part of your participation grade. Attendance will be taken each day in class; and it is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet. Students who have five or more unexcused absences throughout the term may receive up to a full letter grade reduction in their course grade. Excused absences will be given on a case-by-case basis. Students wishing to have an excused absence generally must notify the instructor in advance of a class that they will miss or provide an acceptable reason such as illness or death in the family and may be required to provide verification. Repeated lateness to class and/or early departure from class is disruptive to the learning environment and may also result in a grade reduction.

Please come to class on time! Also, do not miss class to work on an assignment.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity. All work and ideas submitted are expected to be your own or must be fully and accurately attributed to verifiable sources. The Academic Policies and Procedures in the University Catalog states: “Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion.” If you have any doubts about plagiarism and citing of others’ work or ideas, especially web sources, please consult the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and wish to discuss reasonable accommodations for this course, contact me privately to discuss the specific modifications you wish to request. Please be advised I may request that you provide a letter from Disability Services for Students verifying your right to reasonable modifications. If you have not yet contacted Disability Services, located in Lommasson Center 154, please do so in order to verify your disability and to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at http://life.umt.edu/dss.

Readings

Although there are no required texts for the course, we will be reading various articles, book chapters, reports and such. All readings will be available for downloading and printing through the ENST 489 Moodle course webpage. See: https://moodle.umt.edu/. Please note that printouts of some case study materials (readings) should be brought to class as indicated in the Class Schedule. Reading assignments are listed in the course schedule below.

Note that graduate students are assigned extra readings some days as indicated in left margin by the following notation: GRAD.
Also note that we will read several chapters of an update of the landmark environmental justice report *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*. The report was sponsored by the United Church of Christ (UCC) and co-authored by environmental justice scholars. It is titled *Toxic Waste and Race at Twenty: Grassroots Struggles to Dismantle Environmental Racism*. Individual chapters of the report will be Moodle.

An electronic copy of the full report can be downloaded from: [http://www.ejrc.cau.edu/TWARTFinal.htm](http://www.ejrc.cau.edu/TWARTFinal.htm).

Some adjustments to the course schedule may be needed to suit the needs of the class. These are announced in class. Students who are late, miss class, or leave early are responsible for finding out about any changes from other students or me.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUES. 8/26</strong> — COURSE INTRODUCTION</td>
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TUES. 9/9 – SPOTLIGHT ON EJ CASES

All Read:


Please bring a copy of your assigned case to class

Last Names A-C Read:


Last Names D-M Read:


Last Names N-R Read:


Last Names S-Z Read:


THURS. 9/11 – EJ CASES (CONT.)

Please bring a copy of your assigned case from 9/9 to class

TUES. 9/16 – EXPLANATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE


**Thurs. 9/18 – Assessing Disparate Impacts and the Evidence of Environmental Injustice**


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**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES**

**Tues. 9/23 – Service Learning Day**

**Thurs. 9/25 – Food Justice**


**EN**


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**Tues. 9/30 – Climate (In)Justice**


**GRAD**

**THURS. 10/2 — EJ AND NATIVE AMERICANS**

**Service Learning Progress Reports Due**


**GRAD**


**TUES. 10/7 — TRIBAL CO-MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY – THE NATION BISON RANGE**


**THURS. 10/9 — FIELD TRIP TO THE FLATHEAD INDIAN RESERVATION**


**GRAD**


**TUES. 10/14 — RACE AND CLASS IN AMERICA**


EVST 489 & 595 Environmental Justice Issues and Solutions / Fall 2014 / Page 11


**THURS. 10/16—TRAINING/STUDY SESSION**

Class meets in computer classroom – SS 262

**TUES. 10/21—FILM DAY**

Social History Reflection Essays Due

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**EJ SOLUTIONS**

**THURS. 10/23 – INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY SOLUTIONS – FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES**


**TUES. 10/28 – TERM PAPER/PROJECT PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS**

Term Paper / Project Proposals Due

**THURS. 10/30 – INCORPORATING EJ INTO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS/REVIEWS**


**TUES. 11/4 – ELECTION DAY – NO CLASS**

**THURS. 11/6 – INCORPORATING EJ INTO LOCAL LAND USE PLANNING PROCESSES AND SITING DECISIONS**


**Tues. 11/11 – Veteran’s Day – No Class**

**Thurs. 11/13 – Topic To Be Announced**

Term Paper/Project EJ Analyses Due

**Tues. 11/18 – Toxics Substances Policy Reform, Clean Production and Green Chemistry**

**Service Learning Final Reports Due**


**Thurs. 11/20 – Community-Based Participatory Research and Citizen Science**


**Tues. 11/25 – Collaboration and Coalition-Building**


**SRV/LRN Group Project and Graduate Student Term Paper Presentations & Course Wrap-Up**

**Thurs. 11/27 – Thanksgiving Break (No Class)**

**Tues. 12/2 – Presentations**

**Thurs. 12/4 – Presentations**

**Wed. 12/10 – Presentations and Course Wrap-Up (Class Meets 3:20 – 5:20 PM)**
First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit
Principles of Environmental Justice
(1991)

We, the People of Color, are gathered together at this First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction of our lands and communities, do hereby reestablish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; we respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice.

1. Environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.

2. Environmental justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.

3. Environmental justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.

4. Environmental justice calls for universal protection from extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water and food.

5. Environmental justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination to all peoples.

6. Environmental justice demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive substances, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.

7. Environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.

8. Environmental justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment, without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.

9. Environmental justice protects the rights of victims of environmental justice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.


11. Environmental justice recognizes the special legal relationship of Native Americans to the US government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming their sovereignty and self-determination.

12. Environmental justice affirms the need for an urban and rural ecology to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources.

13. Environmental justice calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.

14. Environmental justice opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.

15. Environmental justice opposes military occupations, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures.

16. Environmental justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experiences and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.

17. Environmental justice requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth’s resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to insure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.