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ENST 589.01: Environmental Justice Issues & Solutions

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ENST 589 – Environmental Justice Issues and Solutions – Spring 2022

Tu/Th 2:00-3:20 PM

JRH 205

Instructor

Robin Saha

Zoom Office Hours: [Tues. 11:00 am – 12:30 pm](#), [Wed. 2:00 – 3:30 pm](#), and by appt.¹

Email: robin.saha@umontana.edu

Phone/Voicemail: 406-243-6285

Teaching Assistant

Lucy Portman

Office: Jeannette Rankin Hall, M4

[Zoom Office Hours](#): Mon. 11 am – 12:30 pm, Tues. 3:30 – 4:30 pm, Thurs. 11 am – 12 pm, and by appt.

Email: lucia.portman@umontana.edu

Course Description

This graduate class and is co-convened with ENST 489S, a course with the same name that is open to undergraduates. This is a project-based class in which students work in small teams on current environmental justice issues involving a local Superfund site, fossil gas development, and threats to areas culturally-significant to American Indian tribes in Montana. Projects will be conducted in coordination with organizations and individuals already engaged in those issues.

Before commencing on projects, the class will consider *how* and *why* environmental risks, such as exposure to toxic chemicals – and benefits, such as access to sacred sites, natural resources, environmental amenities (e.g., clean water, open space and parks), and environmental protection (e.g., monitoring & enforcement, disaster preparedness and response) – are inequitably distributed among various segments of society.

To provide foundational understandings for projects, we will also look at causal explanations, i.e., the historical, sociocultural, political, and economic processes by which environmental inequities by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status are believed to have arisen and continue to persist. We do so largely by examining examples and manifestations of environmental injustice, including those facing Indigenous peoples. We will focus on governmental and industry responses to environmental justice issues. We will look at ways that disproportionately affected communities and their allies empower themselves and work toward a more just, fair and sustainable society. We also will critique efforts of environmental justice organizations, government, industry, and traditional environmental organizations.

¹ You can email Robin or Lucy ahead of time to set up a Zoom meeting with me during our office hours. You can also “drop by” during our listed hours and wait in the Zoom waiting room until we are able to let you in. Just click on one of the Zoom Office Hour links above. If those times don’t work, contact us to set up an appointment at another time.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course seeks to develop students' capacity to understand myriad causes of environmental inequality and apply those understandings to carrying out a project and in doing learn about solutions to environmental inequality and related challenges. By the end of the course students will:

- understanding of the history and development of the environmental justice movement;
- be able to identify examples of environmental injustice in various contexts;
- understand and apply various environmental justice concepts in analyzing EJ cases;
- understand a range of explanations for environmental inequality;
- understand structural disadvantage, institutional and systemic discrimination, and be able to recognize and describe social, economic and environmental manifestations thereof;
- understand the unique aspects of environmental justices that relate to Native Americans;
- understand and appreciate the role of grassroots environmental justice groups in societal responses to environmental injustice;
- be able to assess the effectiveness of existing approaches for addressing environmental injustice;
- have enhanced teamwork and project management and assessment skills;
- be able to propose appropriate solutions that individuals, communities, government, industry, and the environmental community can use to address environmental justice problems; and
- have given thoughtful consideration to one's roles and responsibilities in fostering positive social and environmental change.

Class Structure (subject to change due to developments with the COVID-19 pandemic)

Although it is possible that we may need to switch to an online format for some time, this class will be taught in person until further notice. The class is highly interactive and will include a combination of lectures, videos, guest speakers, group project work, student presentations, and other activities.

Field Trip

The class will take a day-long field trip to the Flathead Indian Reservation, home of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (date to be announced).

COVID-19 Precautions (may be updated)

UM recommends that students get the COVID-19 vaccine. Please direct questions or concerns about vaccines to Curry Health Center. Mask use is required within the classroom. If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330. If you are required to isolate or quarantine, you will receive support in the class to ensure continued academic progress. For example, I can record lectures for you, and Lucy or I update and assist you by videoconferencing with you individually. However, quarantining students should not expect the class to be changed to a hybrid structure and may be assigned short "make-up" assignments to serve the place of classroom activities. If you need a COVID-related accommodation in order to safely attend

class, please contact the [Office of Disability Equity \(ODE\)](#) (formerly Disability Services for Students) for assistance.

Other Expectations

- Regular attendance, unless you have a legitimate medical reason or receive a disability accommodation.
- Participation in the class field trip.
- Active participation during class and preparation for project work in class.
- Cooperative and productive team project work and availability to meet with your group outside of class with peers and instructor as needed.
- Leadership, initiative taking and follow-through.
- A willingness to put yourself in unfamiliar or challenging situations – to step outside your comfort zone – to learn new skills and strengthen your existing ones.
- Flexibility and resilience to adapt to changing circumstances, new information and obstacles encountered.
- Openness to feedback and a willingness to work cooperatively with the instructor and TA.
- Willing to revise and resubmit parts of assignments in a timely manner to help ensure project success.
- Professional conduct, including respectful interactions with fellow students, the instructor, TA, and individuals from partner and collaborating organizations.
- Willingness to provide honest and candid self-evaluation of your participation in the team project and constructive feedback of your team members, and to team members as appropriate.

If you have concerns about any of these expectations, please discuss them with me as soon as possible.

On-line Contingency Guidelines

If the class shifts to an online format, i.e., meeting by Zoom, students are expected to follow basic Zoom etiquette, including:

- Zooming into class from a location that has a good internet connection
- Keeping your video on as much as possible and having adequate lighting
- Minimizing background noise (e.g., wind) and muting your mic as appropriate
- Using headphones or a mic as needed to hear and be heard as needed

For technical support, please visit [UM's Student IT webpage](#) or make an appointment with them. You can also self-refer to the [UM Solutions Center](#). If you still cannot fulfill the above guidelines, please discuss your situation with the instructor. I will help you get assistance or figure out an appropriate accommodation.

Email Communication

In accordance with privacy laws the University requires me to communicate with students about academic matters through students' University email (UMConnect) account. It is often necessary to communicate with the class. Thus, please regularly check your UM email account for this class.

Description of Assignments

All assignments should be typed, double-spaced and use 11- or 12-point font and one-inch or one-and-a-quarter inch page margins. Unless otherwise instructed, all assignments should be submitted through the [Moodle](#) course webpage (use your UM NetID Login at <http://umonline.umd.edu/>).

Reading Commentaries. You are asked to submit a total of four reading commentaries for the assigned readings for four days of your choice during the first three weeks of class. Reactions papers should be three-four double-spaced pages, use at least 1-inch margins, and be submitted before class on Moodle or in hard-copy form in class the same day the readings are assigned. Please do not email reaction papers to me. Reaction papers should comment on all of the readings assigned for a specific day. In your reaction papers, please address the following: (1) how the readings further your understanding of the different types and manifestations of environmental injustice; (2) how the readings inform you about why environmental injustices occur, i.e., causal explanations; (3) how the readings further your understanding of approaches to addressing environmental justice problems, that is, EJ solutions, and related challenges; and (4) questions, other comments or critiques about the readings. You need not include a reference list but include in-text citations (author, year, and page numbers) for quotes and references to specific information from the readings

Group Project Assignments. The major work in this class consists of planning, carrying out, and evaluating a project on a current environmental justice issue. Specific project assignments include: (1) *Project Goals and Objectives*; (2) *Project Proposals and Team Norms*; (3) *Project Presentations*; (4) *Project Reports & Portfolios*; (5) *Peer Evaluations*; and (6) *Self-Reflection Essays*. Assignments #1, #5, and #6 are individual assignments; the others are group assignments. In addition, teams will periodically give progress reports in class. Specific guidelines for assignments will be distributed in class and posted on Moodle.

All materials to be publicly distributed or used publicly, such as fliers, regardless of the media (print, radio, video, website materials, social media etc.), must be cleared by your full project team and the instructor before their release or use.

Assignments and Grading

It is expected that all assignments will be turned in on time and before the beginning of class. Stiff reductions will be made for assignments turned in late unless you pre-arrange getting an extension before the due date. Course grades will be based on a total of 1000 possible points allocated as indicated below.

Assignment	Points	Due Dates
Class Participation	150	N/A
Reaction Papers	50	Weeks 1-3
Project Goals and Objectives	50	Fri. 2/18
Project Proposal and Team Norms	100	Tues. 3/1

Assignment	Points	Due Dates
Project Presentation	100	As arranged
Project Report / Portfolio	400	Friday, May 13
Peer Evaluations (individual)	50	Friday, May 13
Self-Reflection Essay (individual)	100	Friday, May 13

This course uses traditional grades, which are assigned based on cumulative points earned, as follows:

925-1000: A	875-899: B+	800-824: B-	725-774: C	675-699: D+	600-624: D-
900-924: A-	825-874: B	775-799: C+	700-724: C-	625-674: D	<600: F

Participation grades will be determined by students' attendance record and/or the consistency and quality of students' contribution to in-class discussions, meetings outside of class, and contributions to group work.

Attendance Policy

Unexcused Absences. Attendance is required. Students who have three, four, or five or more unexcused absences will receive a class participation grade of 50%, 25%, and 0%, respectively.

Excused Absences. A limited number of excused absences may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. Students requesting an excused absence should notify the instructor in advance of a class that they will miss and have an acceptable reason such as illness, injury, or death in the family. To receive an excused absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event, you must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and why your participation is important. Students with excused absences also may be asked to turn in a "make-up" assignment.

Lateness to Class. Repeated lateness (and leaving class early) is disruptive to the learning and is factored into the class participation grade.

Missed Class. Students who miss class are responsible for finding out from a fellow classmate, the TA, or the instructor about information covered in class, including announcements, instructions about assignments, changes in the course schedule, etc.

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.

Drop Deadlines and Procedures

You may drop the course on CyberBear and receive a refund until Feb. 7 at 5:00 pm. From Feb. 7 at 5:01 pm to Mar. 29 at 5:00 pm, dropping requires the instructor's and your advisor's approval using the Course Add/Change/Drop link in CyberBear. If you drop the course after that, you will not receive a refund, will need to pay a \$10 fee, and will get a "W" on your transcript. From Mar. 29 at 5:01 pm to

May 6 at 5:00 pm, you must petition to drop and get your instructor's, advisor's, and Dean's approval, and a "WP" or "WF" will appear on your transcript. You cannot drop the class during final's week. Click here for more info: [Spring 2022 Registration Deadlines](#).

Campus Resources

Mansfield Library Research Resources. Students are encouraged to use the library's [Environmental Studies Research Guide](#) , [Environmental and Natural Resource Databases](#), and [Citation Guide](#).

Disability Services. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE). If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability, please contact the ODE at: (406) 243-2243, ode@umontana.edu, or visit www.umt.edu/disability for more information. Retroactive accommodation requests will not be honored, so please, do not delay. I will work with you and the ODE to implement an effective accommodation, and you are welcome to contact me privately if you wish.

Curry Health Center Counseling. This service addresses the personal, behavioral, and mental health needs of UM students. Individual appointments are \$25 and your initial consultation is free if you have paid the semester's health fee. To access this service, visit the website at <http://www.umt.edu/curry-health-center/> or call 406-243-2122.

UM Writing and Public Speaking Center. Located in Lommasson 271. Visit their website for helpful handouts on writing effective thesis statements or introductions, and to schedule one-on-one appointments with writing tutors throughout the semester: www.umt.edu/writingcenter. For using the Center, it's best to plan well ahead of assignment due dates.

The UM Food Pantry. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in school, is urged to notify a trusted staff or faculty member if comfortable doing so. The [UM Food Pantry](#) in the UC is available to any student facing food insecurity.

Information Technology Support. If you are experiencing technical difficulties navigating UM's information technology service and platforms you can contact the [UM's Student IT webpage](#), visit www.umt.edu/it/support or call the UM IT Help Desk at 406-243-4357. You can also self-refer to the [UM Solutions Center](#).

Readings and Project Resources

Class reading will be posted on the ENST 489 Moodle course webpage. See: <https://moodle.umt.edu/>. Each project will also have a section of Moodle with readings and resources specific to that group.

Reading Schedule

Readings are assigned for the first three weeks of class as listed below. Additional readings will be assigned as needed. These are announced in class and on Moodle and sometime via email. Students are expected to check Moodle and their UM email regularly.

Dates	Topics	Readings
Thurs., Jan. 20	Intro to Environmental Justice	Bullard, R (2005). Environmental Justice in the Twenty-First Century. Mohai, P (2018). Environmental Justice and the Flint Water Crisis. [Read p. 1-2, 18-35]
Tues., Jan. 25	Climate Justice	O'Rourke, D & Connolly, S (2003). Just Oil? The Distribution of Environmental and Social Impacts of Oil Production and Consumption. CSPO Equity Review (2021) A Fair Shares Phase Out: A Civil Society Equity Review on an Equitable Global Phase Out of Fossil Fuels. [Read p. 5-25] Permian Climate Bomb [review Chapters 1-6 including short videos at www.permianclimatebomb.org]
Thurs., Jan. 27	Environmental Justice and Indigenous Americans	Hooks, G & Smith, C (2004). The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans. Mills, M & Nie, M (2021). Bridges to a New Era: A Report on the Past, Present, and Potential Future of Tribal Co-Management on Federal Public Lands.
Tues., Feb. 1	Project Topic	See Moodle
Thurs., Feb. 3	Project Topic	See Moodle

First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit

17 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.
10. Environmental justice considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
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.