ENST 489S.01: Environmental Justice Issues and Solutions: Service Learning

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Course Description

This course meets UM’s General Education Social Sciences requirement. The course co-convenes with a graduate course with the same title and nearly identical syllabus (ENST 595). 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 by examining various case examples.

In the latter part of the course, we will use our understanding of the causes to consider environmental justice solutions. This year 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, 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.
• complete two take-home midterm exams.
• 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 term papers/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 only if meeting during office hours is not possible). I pride myself on be readily available for extra help.
Field Trip

There will be an optional overnight field trip to the Roy Boy Reservation of the Chippewa Cree Tribe, about a five hour drive from Missoula. The trip is tentatively planned to leave Sunday, September 29, and return Monday night, September 30. Accommodations will be modest, i.e., likely consist of camping or staying on the floor of a gymnasium or the like. My contact with the Tribe would like a group of students to assist the tribe in developing a climate adaptation plan. Thus, the purpose of the visit is to tour the reservation, meet with tribal leaders, natural resource staff and other tribal members, develop other useful contacts and gather needed information. Students attending the field trip are not required to participate in the climate adaptation plan project, providing we have a critical mass of students going who are committed to the project.

Description of Main 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 Students for Economic and Social Justice (SESJ), Women’s Voices for the Earth (WVE), Students for Peace and Justice, 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 and minority populations, such as the Missoula Food Bank, Forward Montana, Poverello Center, or Valor House are generally acceptable. A list of service learning options for this semester will be handed out in class. In addition, opportunities will be provided in class to meet leaders and staff of these groups, who can plug you into program and project activities. 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 Thursday, Oct. 10, and all 15 hours by Tuesday, Nov. 19. Final reports must include an essay that relates the service learning experience to the course content and themes.

Midterm Exams: There will be two midterm exams that are designed to help students solidify their understanding of the course materials by asking you to integrate reading and lecture materials and apply environmental justice principles and concepts to analyze various cases presented in the class. The format will consistent of several essay questions. The first exam, due Tuesday, September 24, will cover the history, successes, and challenges of the environmental justice movement, concepts and theoretical explanations of environmental injustice, and the evidence of environmental injustice. The second exam will cover climate justice, food justice, transportation justice and issues relating to Native Americans and environmental justice. The second exam, due Tuesday, October 22, will also ask you to develop a social and environmental history of your life and offer personal reflections.

Term Paper/SL Project: Students will also develop a term paper or service learning (SL) project. This assignment should have both research and analysis components. 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, good neighborhood agreements, clean production/green chemistry, co-management, traditional ecological knowledge, tribal intellectual property rights, community-based research, citizen science, the precautionary principle, disparate impact assessments, community mapping, corporate responsibility, 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 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 of the project. Working on a climate action
plan for the Chippewa Cree Tribe will be one such opportunity. Students who want to do a service learning project should work closely with their project sponsor 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 projects will be developed in three phases in consultation with the instructor and outside organizations for service learning projects. “Deliverables” for each phase (for term papers and group projects) are described below.

PHASE 1 Term Paper/Project Proposal: A 3-4 page proposal with at least ten references should describe the topic, issue, or case to be researched, provide important background or context, describe the purposes or objectives of the research, 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. Phase 1 also involves making a short informal presentation of your proposal in class on October 29.

PHASE 2 Environmental Justice 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 conduct submit their own analysis, though sharing of information and resources is encouraged.

PHASE 3 Final Term Paper/Project Report: Include revisions to your Phase 2 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 approximately 15 pages, not including references and appendices. 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.

Schedule of Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class Reading Commentaries (graduate students)</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam 1</td>
<td>Tues. 9/24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Learning Progress Reports</td>
<td>Thurs. 10/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam 2</td>
<td>Tues. 10/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Paper/Project Proposals (Phase 1)</td>
<td>Tues. 10/29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Environmental Justice Analysis (Phase 2)  Tues. 11/12
Service Learning Final Reports  Tues. 11/19
Term Paper/Project Reports (Phase 3)  Wed. 12/11, 5 pm

Requirements Grading and Evaluation

It is expected that all assignments will be turned in on time. 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 your class participation (see Attendance Policy), two synthesis papers, service learning assignment, and the term paper/project. A total of 1000 points are possible for each of the following components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment/Grade Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam 1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam 2</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning Assignment</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper/project proposal (Phase 1)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental justice analysis (Phase 2)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper or term project report (Phase 3)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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. Turn it in late instead if necessary.

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 of the readings will be on Electronic Reserve (E-RES) through the Mansfield Library website (see: http://eres.lib.umt.edu/eres/default.aspx). The course password is “justice.” 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. These readings will be on E-RES too and labeled as such should you be interested in more in-depth investigation.

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 posted in E-RES. An electronic copy of the full report can be downloaded from: 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>INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUES. 8/27 – COURSE INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THURS. 8/29 – INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUES. 9/3 – ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**THURS. 9/5 – ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT (cont.)**


**GRAD**


**TUES. 9/10 – SPOTLIGHT ON EJ CASES**

All Read:


Last Names A-D Read:


Last Names E-L Read:


Last Names M-P Read:


Last Names Q-Z Read:


**THURS. 9/12 – EJ EXPLANATIONS**


TUES. 9/17 – ASSESSING DISPARATE IMPACTS AND THE EVIDENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE


ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES

THURS. 9/19 – EJ AND NATIVE AMERICANS

Rosier, Paul C. 2008. “‘We, the Indian People, Must Set an Example for the Rest of the Nation’: Environmental Justice from a Native American Perspective.” Environmental Justice 1(3): 127-129.


Sheets, Cassie. 2013. “Protecting the Sweet Grass Hills and Blackfeet Culture from Mining Threats: Considering Future Policy Options.” (July) Sociology Department, University of Montana, Missoula.


TUES. 9/24 – SERVICE LEARNING PLANNING DAY

Midterm #1 Due

THURS. 9/26 – CLIMATE JUSTICE


**TUES. 10/1 – EJ WHERE WE WORK**


**GRAD**


**THURS. 10/3 – FOOD JUSTICE**


**GRAD**


**TUES. 10/8 – TRANSPORTATION JUSTICE**


Pastor Manuel., Rachel Morello-Frosch, James L. Sadd. 2005. The Air is Always Cleaner on the Other Side: Race, Space, and Ambient Air Toxics Exposures in California. Journal of Urban Affairs 27(2): 127-148

THURS. 10/10 – SERVICE LEARNING PROGRESS REPORTS

Service Learning Progress Reports Due

TUES. 10/15 – RACE AND CLASS IN AMERICA


THURS. 10/17 – MIDTERM EXAM 2 TRAINING/STUDY SESSION

Class meets in computer classroom – SS 262

TUES. 10/22 – FILM DAY

Midterm #2 Due

EJ SOLUTIONS

THURS. 10/24 – INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY SOLUTIONS – FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES


TUES. 10/29 – TERM PAPER/PROJECT PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

Term Paper / Project Proposals Due (Phase 1)
**Thurs. 10/31 – EJ Screening Tools**


**Tues. 11/5 – Incorporating EJ into Environmental Assessments/Reviews**


**Thurs. 11/7 – State Government Responses, Part 1**


**Tues. 11/12 – State Government Responses, Part 2**

Environmental Justice Analysis Due (Phase 2)


**Thurs. 11/14 – Incorporating EJ into Local Land Use Planning Processes and Siting Decisions**


**Tues. 11/19 – Toxics Reform, Clean Production and Green Chemistry**

Service Learning Final Reports Due


**THURS. 11/21 – HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Readings TBA

**TUES. 11/26 – COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH, CITIZEN SCIENCE, COLLABORATION AND COALITION-BUILDING**


**SRV/LRN GROUP PROJECT AND GRADUATE STUDENT TERM PAPER PRESENTATIONS & COURSE WRAP-UP**

**THURS. 11/28 – THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS)**

**TUES. 12/3 – PRESENTATIONS**

**THURS. 12/5 – PRESENTATIONS**

**MON. 12/9 – PRESENTATIONS AND COURSE WRAP-UP (CLASS MEETS 3:20 – 5:20 PM)**