Tufts University

Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning

Environmental Justice UEP 278
Fall 2008

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Fridays 9.00-11.30 am at Tisch Library Room 314
Office hours: Friday after class and by appointment.

Description

Environmental justice is a framework for analyzing and addressing the inequalities in environmental conditions (benefits and burdens) among communities of varying race/ethnicity and economic class. At the same time, environmental justice presents a deep challenge to the mainstream environmental and sustainability frameworks.

This course will be divided into four sections:

1. Theory and concepts of environmental justice
   We will examine the foundations of the environmental justice concept, the history of the environmental justice movement, and the links between environmental justice and the environmental and sustainability movements.

2. Case studies and local site visits
   We will deepen our understanding of the challenges and responses to environmental injustice through several site visits with local EJ groups and guest presenters who will help frame environmental justice efforts in other parts of the country and the world. Issues that we will address include brownfields, land-use and gentrification, transportation, and others.

3. Strategies for addressing environmental justice
   We will examine the community strategies, governmental and policy responses, and legal approaches to addressing environmental justice.

4. Service learning projects
   Students will work in teams of 2-4 on projects that will help further the efforts of a local EJ group.

Course Objectives

- To develop theoretical frameworks for understanding how environmental injustice is produced locally, regionally, and globally and how environmental justice is linked to sustainability.
- To ground students in the realities faced by environmental justice communities locally and to connect these to struggles in other parts of the world.
- To explore strategies for addressing environmental justice from the community, government, science, and legal perspectives.
- To inspire and meaningfully engage students in local and regional efforts to promote environmental justice.

Course texts


A required Reader is also available for purchase. Where a reading on this syllabus is not in your Reader, it will be internet based as directed by a url in the syllabus. Note, suggested readings in the course syllabus are not in the Reader to save on printing costs.

Course Requirements and Assessment

All students are expected to attend class regularly and complete assignments on time, including completing the required readings before each class. Your grade will be based on the following:

1. Group Project for Community Group (35%)

Students will work in teams of 2-4 on a group project for a community organization. For those students who already have experience working with community groups, there is the option of doing an individual project of equivalent scale, such as writing a 15-20 page paper (please see me if you wish to pursue this option). The projects will be defined and guided by the community group. A list of the projects will be available once the class begins. The projects will require reporting to the client group and creating a final product (e.g. briefing paper, factsheet, web page, bibliography, powerpoint presentation, etc.). Depending on the nature of the project, groups may also need to conduct secondary research, data analysis and synthesis, or interviews.

Potential community clients and project issues:

- T Riders Union – analyze and document disparities in transit service between low income communities of color and more wealthy communities.
- ACE – document the impact of the Massachusetts Environmental Justice Policy on projects that require state environmental review since the inception of the policy in 2002.
- Boston Green Justice Coalition – research and analysis to support the development of community-driven energy efficiency initiatives that can also generate green jobs and ownership opportunities.
- On the Move – develop and test survey tool for community groups to get input towards developing a long-range transportation justice plan for the Boston region.
- ACE – research and analysis to help develop ACE’s organizing initiatives for the Dudley Square area of Roxbury, with a focus on future development plans and gentrification impacts.

Students will submit preferences for projects by 3rd class (Sep 19) and assignments will be made by 4th class (Sep 26).

Initial project scoping meetings and draft plans submitted by 6th class (Oct 10).

Draft project outputs to client groups by Nov 21.

Final project presentations on December 5.

2. 5-page Paper (25%)

Choose an issue in environmental justice that you think is contentious but about which you have strong feelings. It could be something like risk assessment, the relationship between environmental justice and sustainability, the role of experts or the debate about gentrification and environmental justice. Using class readings and other resources, write a 5-page critique in support of your position. You should source at least 5 other readings in addition to required class readings. Note, these readings do not have to be peer-reviewed scholarly articles. Magazine articles or “grey” literature pieces are acceptable. The paper is due on December 5th.

3. Site Visit Journal or Op-Ed or Lead Class Discussion (20%)

For this requirement, the goal is to deeply analyze the themes and questions raised by either a site visit or the readings in relationship to the overall questions addressed by this class.

There are 3 options:

a. Site visit journal [due Oct 31]
   3-5 paged, double-spaced paper with your reflections based on one of our class site visits. You can
raise questions and challenges in relation to the class readings, reflect on your own experiences, and/or share your personal reactions and feelings.

b. Op-Ed [due Oct 31]
  500-700 word Op-ed on a subject related to the class and that could be submitted to the Boston Globe.

c. Lead class discussion
  For some of the classes (weeks 7, 8, 10, 11), there will be an opportunity to lead or co-lead a 30-45 minute discussion section. In addition to leading the discussion, the leader(s) will prepare a reading briefing paper (3-5 paged double spaced) summarizing the main themes in the class readings for the discussion and questions and challenges raised by those readings. The reading briefing document must be available to the rest of the class, on our Blackboard site http://blackboard.tufts.edu no later than 5.00pm on Wednesday before the class.

4. Class participation (20%)

Class participation includes regular and prompt attendance as well as quality (not quantity) of input in class discussions. Remember that class participation is enhanced by being prepared for each class by completing the required readings.

Schedule

Week 1: Sep 5. Overview

- Course overview and approach
- EJ case study snapshots
- ACE Video: Not In My Backyard
- Role of students and university in supporting community groups

Required Readings


Optional Readings


Week 2: Sep 12. EJ Theory and Concepts 1

- What is environmental justice?
- Evidence of disproportionate impact
- Causes of environmental injustice
- ROLE PLAY: Siting Hearing
- Class project list distributed.

Required Readings (~100)


Faber, Daniel and Krieg, Eric, "Unequal Exposure to Ecological Hazards 2005: Environmental Injustices. in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Executive Summary." Philanthropy and Environmental Justice Research Project of
Northeastern University. October 2005. Available at: 

Massachusetts Environmental Justice Populations. Available at: 
http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/ei/ei.pdf

Friedman, David, "The Environmental Racism Hoax," American Enterprise Institute, 2003, available at: 
http://www.taeMag.com/issues/articleid.17115/article_detail.asp


Optional Readings


http://www.nap.edu/books/0309064074/html/11.html


Week 3: Sep 19. EJ Theory and Concepts 2

- EJ movement history
- EJ challenge to mainstream environmentalism and sustainability movements
- Small group discussion
  - Students submit class project preferences

Required Readings (~109)


Principles of Environmental Justice, Adopted at the People of Color Conference on Environmental Justice, Washington, D.C. 1991. Available at: 
http://www.ejrc.cau.edu/princej.html

Foreman, Christopher. 1997. Environmentalism or Ideology? Inner City Activists Talk Pollution, Push Social Agenda. Available at: 
http://www.brookings.edu/articles/1997/0901metropolitanpolicy_foreman.aspx

Foreman, Christopher. 2002. Remarks on Environmental Justice to United States Commission on Civil Rights. Available at: 


Agyeman. Introduction (pp. 1-13) and Chapter 3 (pp. 79-106).


Optional Readings


**Week 4: Sep 26. Site Visit: Chelsea/EJ in Latino Communities**

- Site Visit to Chelsea Green Space and Recreation Committee at 300 Broadway, Chelsea
- Issues for site visit:
  - Polluting facilities: salt mountain, Boston Hides and Fur, proposed power plant
  - Chelsea Creek redevelopment and restoration
- Additional readings on EJ in Latino communities and immigration/population
- Student teams and projects assigned.

*Required Readings (~75)*

Chelsea Green Space Committee web site at: [http://www.chelseagreenspace.org/](http://www.chelseagreenspace.org/)


Chelsea Creek restoration collaborative website at: [http://www.noahcdc.org/cbe/ccrp.html](http://www.noahcdc.org/cbe/ccrp.html)

Cole & Foster: Chapter 4 (pp. 80-102).


*Optional Readings*


**Week 5: Oct 3. Site Visit: Roxbury/EJ in Black Communities**

- Site visit to Alternatives for Community & Environment in Dudley Square at 2181 Washington Street, Suite 301, Roxbury. [Session led by ACE Program Director Khalida Smalls]
- Issues for site visit:
  - Asthma and air quality
  - Polluting facilities
  - Youth and Violence

*Required Readings (~115)*

Agyeman. Chapters 5 (pp 133-175).

ACE’s web site at: [www.ace-ej.org](http://www.ace-ej.org)


Cole & Foster: Chapters 2 and 3 (pp 34-79).


Optional Readings

ACE’s web page on the BU bioterror lab at: http://www.ace-sj.org/BioclubWeb/biolab.html

Airbeat monitoring system website at: http://www.airbeat.org

Loh, P; Sugerman-Brozan J.; Wiggins, S; Noiles, D; Archibald, C. “From Asthma to AirBeat: Community-Driven Monitoring of Fine Particles and Black Carbon in Roxbury, Massachusetts.” Environmental Health Perspectives (110: supplement 2, April 2002). Available at: http://www.ehponline.org/members/2002/suppl-2/297-301/loh/EHP110s2p297PDF.PDF


Sherman, Scott, “Environmental Justice Case Study: West County Toxics Coalition and the Chevron Refinery Richmond, California,” available at: http://www.umich.edu/~snre492/sherman.html


West Harlem Environmental Action GIS maps at: http://www.weact.org/gis/index.html

Week 6: Oct 10. Site Visit: Chinatown/Asian Pacific American Issues

- Site visit to: Boston Chinatown: Jeremy Liu, Asian Community Development Corporation at 38 Oak Street, Boston Chinatown. [to be confirmed]
- Gentrification and control over land use. Right to the City framework.
- Project plans submitted.

Required Readings (~100)


**Optional Readings**


**Week 7: Oct 17. Case Study: Transportation**

- Transportation and EJ
  - Guest speaker Bob Terrell (Washington Street Corridor Coalition)
- Student-led discussion of readings.

**Required Readings (~100)**


**Optional Readings**


Movie (DVD), *Bus Riders Union* (available to loan from ACE).

**Week 8: Oct 24. Legal Strategies and EJ in Native American Communities**

- Legal Strategies
  - Guest speaker: Gene Benson, ACE Staff Attorney
- Native American EJ issues
- Student-led discussion of readings.

**Required Readings (~150)**

Cole & Foster Chapter 5 and 6 (pp. 103-150)


Optional Readings


Week 9: Oct 31. Community Strategies

- Community organizing – building power from the bottom up
  Guest speaker: Khalida Smalls (ACE Program Director)
- Building the EJ movement
- Site visit journals or Op-eds due.

Required Readings (~100)

Cole & Foster Chapter 7 (pp. 151-166)


Center for Third World Organizing. "Organizing: What It Is and What It Isn’t"


Radical Organizing Conference 2003 booklet. Available at class site: http://blackboard.tufts.edu

Optional Readings


Week 10: Nov 7. Government Strategies and Risk Assessment

- Government responses to EJ
- EJ and Risk Assessment
- Student-led discussion of readings.

Required Readings (~90)


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Urban Habitat Program. Webpage: Race, Class and the EPA's Environmental Justice Strategic Plan. Read page plus pdf links to EPA memo and EPA comment letter. Available at: http://urbanhabitat.org/epa


Optional Readings


**Week 11: Nov 14. Case Studies: South Africa and Climate Justice**

- EJ in South Africa  
  Guest speaker: Heeten Kalan or Sunita Dubey (GroundWork USA)

- Climate justice

- Student-led discussion of readings.

**Required Readings (~110)**


**Optional Readings**


Week 12: Nov 21. Future of Environmental Justice

- Guest: Professor Julian Agyeman
- Sustainability and EJ movements. What is to come? Where to from here?
- Draft project outputs should be submitted to client groups.

Required Readings (~100)

Agyeman. Chapters 6 (pp 176-186).


Optional Readings


Death of Environmentalism Responses from Grist:
http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2005/01/13/doe-intro/ and
http://www.grist.org/comments/dispatches/2005/02/22/elp/

November 28. HOLIDAY

Week 13: Dec 5. Student project presentations

- Final group project presentations.
- Critical Comment papers due.