COURSE DESCRIPTION

The concepts of “environmental racism” and “environmental justice” arose from a specific struggle by a community of African-Americans resisting the siting of a hazardous waste landfill in their community. From its beginnings as an original fusion of environmental and black Civil Rights rhetorics, the concept of environmental racism has continued to grow, expand. It soon embraced the experience of other racial and ethnic minorities in the United States, Native Americans, latinos and others. Expanding the concept further, the “environmental inequalities” perspective came to encompass gender and class dimensions, as well. The concept can be expanded fruitfully in both space and time: Environmental inequalities exist not only in the United States; all over the world, social and environmental inequalities are inseparable facets of a single process. Environmental inequality pervades not only contemporary society; at its very origins, modern society was made possible by acts of combined social and environmental injustices. In this course, we study “environmental inequalities” in this deep, structural sense.

REQUIREMENTS

1) Read required readings in a timely manner. Most of the other readings are posted on ERses (I will announce the password in class). A few readings can be download directly from the internet.

2) Regular attendance at lecture is expected.

There will be 5 quizzes, given at random times, during lecture. The quizzes will test your knowledge of key issues raised in readings. Each quiz is worth 5 points.

3) Midterm exam. 35 points.

4) Either (a) take the final exam, or (b) write a research paper. 40 points; your choice. The research paper can be either an individual project or a small group project. Students who choose to write a research paper can choose either to study an environmental justice issue in their community/city of origin, or do research on environmental inequalities in another nation.
Please Note: I considered any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating on exams or plagiarizing from the Web in your papers, a serious violation of the University’s norms of conduct. Students who plagiarize or cheat on exams receive an F in the course and will be reported to their College Provost for further sanctions.

Important dates:
Midterm – April 26th
Final exam option – Monday, June 7th, 7:30-10:30 pm
Research paper option
Proposal (½ page) and list of (co-)authors is due May 10th.
Paper is due: June 7th, 7:30 pm.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS, READINGS

Week 1
March 29 -- Introduction; discovery of the environmental justice perspective


March 31 -- Environmental justice – early studies; expanding the issue


Marian Moses, "Farmworkers and Pesticides," Chapter 10 (pp. 161-178) in Robert D. Bullard, Confronting Environmental Racism.


Week 2

April 5 and 7 -- Environmental Inequalities in the transition to modernity

Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation: the Political and Economic Origins of Our Time, Chapters 3-6, pp. 33-76. *suggested*

Karl Marx, Capital, Volume 1, pp. 238-263.


Week 3

April 12 -- Environmental inequalities in early American history

Native Americans
William Cronon, Changes in the Land, pp. 54-107

Cotton and slavery
Carolyn Merchant, Major Problems in American Environmental History, 206-211, 224-236

Mining in California

April 14 – Workplace hazards as an environmental justice issue


Week 4

April 19 – the workplace, cont.; Urban dynamics and residential proximity


April 21 -- Urban dynamics (cont.)


Week 5

April 26 *** MIDTERM EXAM ***

April 28 – EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement

Period 1


Week 6

May 3 -- EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement

Period 1 (cont.)


May 5 -- EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement
Period 2

Rachel Carson, selection from Silent Spring, in Merchant, 437-440.

Robert Alford, "Paradigms of Relations between State and Society" *suggested*

Joseph Page and Mary-Wyn O'Brien, Bitter Wages, pp. 191-221.

Andrew Szasz, EcoPopulism, chapter 2.


Week 7

May 10 -- EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement
Period 2 (cont)

Marver Bernstein, selection from The Life Cycle of Regulatory Commissions, *suggested*

Anthony Downs, "Up and Down With Ecology -- the 'Issue-Attention Cycle,'" The Public Interest, 28(Summer):38-50.


Szasz, EcoPopulism, chapters 6

*** For students doing the RESEARCH PAPER: PROPOSAL IS DUE ***

May 12-- EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement
Period 3

Szasz, EcoPopulism, Chapters 3, 4, 8

"Together We Can Do It," Southern Exposure, 9(3):42-47.
Ginny Thomas and Bill Brooks, "Buddy, We're Home: Halting the Heard County Landfill," *Southern Exposure*, 9(3):38-41. [in Course Reader]


Celene Krauss, "Women and Toxic Waste Protests: Race, Class and Gender as Resources of Resistance," *Qualitative Sociology* 16(3):247-262. *suggested*

**Week 8**

**May 17-- EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement**

Period 3 (cont)


**May 19 -- EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement**

Period 3 (cont)


Barbara Epstein, "Grassroots Environmentalism: the Politics of Race and Gender," manuscript.


Week 9

May 24 – Extending EJ: “Natural” Disasters; “Technological” Disasters


May 26 – Extending EJ: Climate Change; other generational inequalities

The Copenhagen Diagnosis – download text and figures at:
http://www.ccrc.unsw.edu.au/Copenhagen/Copenhagen_Diagnosis_LOW.pdf
and
http://www.ccrc.unsw.edu.au/Copenhagen/Copenhagen_Diagnosis FIGURES.pdf

Week 10

May 31 *** Holiday *** No Class ***

June 2 -- Current state of EJ research; course summary


June 7, Monday *** RESEARCH PAPER DUE 7:30 pm ***

*** FINAL EXAM  7:30-10:30 pm ***