

CRN: 46409

ENVS 435: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
INSTRUCTOR: J. BACON
julieb@uoregon.edu
240 Columbia Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This interdisciplinary student-centered course will challenge conventional concepts of "environment" and "environmentalism" in order to explore questions such as:

- How do communities experience different kinds of environmental harms?
- What role do systems of social and political inequality play in this distribution?
- How have communities attempted to confront and eradicate these harms?
- What roles can the university and university students play in changing or maintaining unequal distributions of environmental harms?

We will utilize: Lecture, films, creative, academic and popular literature on environmental justice, class exercises to develop self-reflection and a creative personal knowledge mapping project design to chart the ways knowledge has been gained and incorporated into student's thinking.

GOALS & INTENTIONS:

It is my hope that this course will fundamentally shift student's relationship to knowledge and knowledge production. Too often, students are encouraged to think of themselves as "customers" paying for a product (a degree, or some credits). This approach to knowledge undermines the value of our relationships to each other and to the material we address in class.

This course will ask students to think about knowledge and learning not as something separate from themselves, not as a commodity, but as a process in which they are a part of. The material we will discuss and think about must not be held as some abstract concept or "thing" but as a real and immediate set of events that we are all implicated in. We must stop believing the myth of a "real world" out there, away from the university, and consider how our actions here and now are part of the politics, ideologies, and events that shape human and non-human experience.

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- describe and analyze environmental problems through the lens of environmental justice
- critically discuss and evaluate various perspectives on environmental justice

MAJOR COURSE TOPICS:

- Garbage, Toxins, and The Dawn of Environmental Justice

- Race, Class, Gender and the Accumulation of Environmental Privilege
- The Right to Eat, The Struggle for Food Justice
- When the Water Rises, Who Floods? Disaster and Climate Justice.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS:

- Park and Pellow *The Slums of Aspen* All additional readings supplied through Blackboard.
- Knowledge of and access to Blackboard

This course draws on works from Sociology, Psychology, Law, Political Science, Public Policy, Public Health, History, Geography, Ethnic Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Fine Arts, and Media Studies.

ACCOMODATION

If you have any particular circumstances that require accommodation in order to make this class accessible please let me know ASAP.

SOME IMPORTANT RESOURCES AT UO

Accessible Education Center <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>
 Multicultural Center <http://pages.uoregon.edu/mcc/>
 Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence
<http://cmae.uoregon.edu/>
 Women's Center <http://pages.uoregon.edu/women/>
 Men's Center <http://pages.uoregon.edu/uomc/>
 Sexual Violence Prevention and Education <http://asap.uoregon.edu/>
 UO OUT <http://lgbt.uoregon.edu/Home.aspx>
 Teaching and Learning Center <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/>

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are required to attend class. Since this is a condensed summer course the attendance policy is quite strict. Missing more than one class will result in a 5% deduction from the final grade. Missing more than two classes 10% and so on...

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Knowledge Map - 25% Final Exam (oral or written) - 15%
 Discussion Leadership - 10% Research Labs - 20%
 Participation/Homework - 18% Quizzes - 12% total (4 quizzes)

Discussion Leadership

Each student will be responsible for co-facilitating (with me) one days' discussion. Students must submit a page of main points/interesting concepts from the day's assigned homework and three questions for discussion by 8pm the day before leading discussion.

Research Labs

These in-class activities will introduce students to some of the basics of qualitative research. Most consist of short interviewing, coding, and writing exercises.

Quizzes

Weekly quizzes will test student knowledge of important terms and concepts. Mainly multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blanks. These are not designed to be tricky, but are just to ensure that we are all up to speed with the meanings of terms/concepts central to EJ.

Final Exam

The final exam is a chance to formally express what you have learned in the course. Students will have a take-home written final where you respond to a prompt in 4-7pages using only course materials as sources I also intend to offer the option of a one-on-one oral final in which we would meet and have a 30-45minute discussion about course concepts and readings. Students would be expected to speak at length and in some detail about course material and respond to a series of questions.

Knowledge Map

The knowledge map is a creative course-long project during which students keep track of new concepts and ideas which fundamentally inform how they think about environmental justice. Labs and homework assignments will guide students through the data collection process.