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ENVS 435/535 Environmental Justice

Class Meets T, Th 2-3:50 in 30 Pacific

Welcome to ENVS 435/535 *Environmental Justice*! How and why are environmental problems experienced differently according to race, gender and class? How do different communities experience and respond to environmental problems? Why does it matter that there is unequal exposure to environmental risks and benefits? What do we learn about the meaning of gender, race and class by studying the patterns of exposure and creative resistance of different communities to environmental hazards? In other words, what does the study of environmental risks tell us about racism, classism, sexism in our nation and world today? What is environmental privilege and why does it matter? These are some of the questions we will take up in the next ten weeks together. This course will be highly reading and discussion intensive. Environmental justice is one of the most important and active sites of environmental scholarship and activism in our country today. We will read classics and new material and work both inside and outside the classroom. In particular, we are very fortunate that the largest public interest environmental law conference in the country is held annually here in Eugene Oregon. Attendance is mandatory as we will integrate ideas, issues and information from the conference into our class.

Goals and Objectives

It is our goal that this course will simultaneously be a rigorous academic experience and one of personal empowerment. You will be exposed to key texts and arguments regarding environmental justice. You will also be exposed to some of the movements' key environmental activists and strategists right here in Oregon and beyond. After completing this course you should be able to give thoughtful responses to each of the questions above. After completing this course you should also have a vivid sense that we are each potential agents of change. Society is not static, and especially when we work together, we can effect significant social change. After completing this course you should be able to:

- Explain theoretical perspectives on the causes and consequences of unequal exposure to environmental problems.
- Understand multiple ways that race, class, and gender affect one's experience of and responses to ecological problems from toxic exposure to species decline.

- Think critically about your own life, how you impact and are affected by dynamics of social inequality and ecological problems.
- Know more about regional environmental justice issues and movements.

Operating Assumptions

- People's experiences of and knowledge about the world (including environmental issues) differs by race, class, gender, sexual orientation and nationality (and more).
- Although we recognize that different members of society have different perspectives on environmental problems, ecological damage such as species decline, climate change, toxic contamination, air and water pollution are real, and the rate of damage is increasing.

Class Format

Environmental problems are not "out there" in the world, they are created and experienced by each of us. We each contribute to ecological problems as we go about our daily lives, eating, using electricity, buying clothing and computers and so forth. And each of us is affected by ecological problems as we consume unhealthy food, breath polluted air, watch our communities change, or feel a sense of hopelessness as the problems multiply. Most importantly, each of us has the potential to be agents of change as we come together to strategize, unite, resist and work to make our communities and world a better place. Therefore, this class will be very interactive with lots of room for thoughtful input from each of you.

Classroom Conduct

Being there

While we understand that it can be difficult to get to class on time for all of us, please make an effort to be to class on time. If you are more than 5 minutes late we'll see you next time. If you know in advance that you need to arrive late or leave early just let us know beforehand.

In Class

We expect to be transformed from the process of teaching and interacting with all of you. And in turn, we expect you to be transformed by the interactions you have in this class, with us as instructors, with other students, with videos, assignments and readings. In this sense we expect our classroom to be the site of fairly intense energy. We will be fully present, and expect each of you to be the same. Please come to class prepared to listen and learn. Unfortunately, due to their impact on the class atmosphere and the widespread problem of internet and facebook addiction, computers are not allowed in the classroom. Please feel free to contact Prof. Norgaard in person during office hours should you wish to request an exception.

Discussions

Discussions can be times of rich learning, but they can also be scary for many of us.

In order to create as much safety as possible, you need to agree to the following ground rules:

- * Come to class as intellectually and psychologically prepared as you can.
- * Raise your hand and wait until called before speaking.
- * Listen to and be respectful of your classmates.
- * Be open to new possibilities

Required Texts - - Available at Black Sun Books (24th and Hillyard)

Toxic Communities Environmental Racism by Dorceta Taylor

Cultivating Food Justice Race, Class and Sustainability ed Alison Alkon and Julian Agyeman (CFJ in syllabus)

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate by Naomi Klein

Native American Environmentalism: Land Spirit and the idea of Wilderness

A few additional readings will be posted online

Readings are listed in syllabus for the day that they will be discussed.

Assignments

Leading Class Discussion (20%)

This is your class, and to make it work, everyone needs to be involved. Because this is a seminar style course many classes will consist of discussions led by all of you! Each student in the class will be responsible for team leading one discussion, which will be worth a significant portion of your final grade. Discussion leaders will meet in advance and work together to provide a summary of the main ideas of the text, list and define key terms, present explanation of scientific information listed and most importantly, come with a plan to facilitate the class including a series of “discuss-able” questions. You are also encouraged to bring in background materials on the topic we will discuss that day such as music, photos, artwork, youtube videos, etc. Presenting teams are required to meet with Prof Norgaard or the Course GTF Wenhui Qiu prior to class to discuss the material and consider possible formats for its presentation. Please arrange these meetings as far in advance as possible, and come to them on time and having prepared with questions and ideas for discussion. While not a direct part of your evaluation, these discussions can have a major impact on the quality of team presentations, which are a portion of your final grade. Your team will earn an "A" if it meets all the criteria below:

- 1) Briefly but thoroughly summarizes the **key concepts** and arguments of the assigned readings for the day
- 2) Draws **connections** between the current readings, course themes as noted on page 1 of the syllabus and other readings/aspects of the movement.
- 3) Effectively **facilitates the participation** of everyone in class

- 4) Incorporates the **questions** from class members
- 5) Equally **divides the labor** between presenters
- 6) Shows **preparation and creativity** in its presentation

Your team will earn a "B" if your presentation could be improved in one or two areas listed above, a "C" if improvement is needed in about half of the areas, and a "D" or "F" if many or most of the criteria are not met.

Participation in Class Discussion (20%)

On the days when you are not presenting, all students in the class are expected to read carefully the assigned readings for each class period. You should have a copy of each reading and bring it with you to class on the day that we discuss it. During student led discussions you will be specifically evaluated on your discussion participation on each of the days you do not act as a presenter. These discussion grades will add up to 20% of your final grade.

- 1) You will earn an "A" if you contribute substantially in a quantitative sense and move the discussion forward by making insightful and relevant remarks, referring to specific passages or arguments in the text.
- 2) A "B," if you contribute only once or twice but still manage to move the conversation forward with insightful and relevant remarks.
- 3) A "C," if you contribute minimally in a quantitative sense, and your remarks were off topic or failed to engage the discussion.
- 4) A "D," if you were a physically present but otherwise inert mass during discussion.
- 5) A zero, if you miss a discussion without a good reason.

Discussion Questions (5%)

In addition to attending class and participating in regular class discussions you will submit one question on the reading by email to Wenhui Qiu and the discussion leaders 24 hours in advance of our class on each day that there will be a student led discussion (i.e. if there are two student led discussions, you will submit two questions that week). Note that discussion leaders need not submit questions for the day they are leading.

Memos 10%

Each Thursday of our term you will turn in a memo with your own personal reactions to the course material. The purpose of the memo is to integrate course material with your own life, and for you to give us feedback on how the course is going for you. The content of the memos should focus on both the course material and your experiences, but are otherwise open to you. For example, you might describe your reaction to a class discussion, film or lecture, report an event in your life or a conversation with a friend or family member about course material, whatever is happening in your mind that week. **These are not reading or lecture summaries.** Your memo can be anywhere from a paragraph to a page. You will receive credit for work done but memos will not be graded. Memos (without names)

may be read in class to stimulate discussion or illustrate a diversity of perspectives. If you prefer not to have your memo read aloud just indicate so at the top.

Community Engagement Project OR Topic Essay (20%)

This year our class has the opportunity to learn about environmental justice in rural Oregon hands on by teaming up with Beyond Toxics on a project on herbicide drift. If you choose this option you will work a team of 3 or 4 to conduct firsthand research and/or participate in community outreach activities related to pesticide drift exposure in Oregon. You will complete a paper (6-10 pp) describing what you did, the results of the project and indicating how the project ties into readings and concepts from the class. Due date for papers is March 5th or Thursday of week 9. Your final presentation will be an oral report back to the class during week 9.

OR

The topic essay option (6-10pp) is designed to show your ability to synthesize broad questions from the readings and course material. Think of it as a cross between a research paper and a take home exam. A specific prompt will be provided at least ten days in advance of the due date. If you choose this option the essay will be due on March 5th which is Thursday of Week 9.

PIELC Conference Participation and Report (10%)

These gatherings will allow us the unique opportunities to witness first hand the efforts to bring about environmental change from leading groups and individuals across the country and around the world. Attendance of at least one conference is mandatory and both are recommended. This year's PIELC conference is scheduled to take place from **March 5-8th**. The Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC) is an amazing event and you will be busy! We will participate in a way that balances key speakers and each of your own interests. The follow are required:

1. Attend and take notes during all keynote addresses.
2. Attend other panels of your choosing. Keep a list and take notes.
3. Locate & interview 2-4 members of the environmental movement.
4. Meet with the class at designated times during the event for synthesis.

On the Tuesday following the conference (March 10th) you will turn in a summary of your activities in the conference including interviews and a 2-4 page reaction to the conference. What were the take home messages for you? What themes did you notice from our course? What speakers or issues were most powerful and why? What questions should our class have on the table as we move through the rest of the term?

Final Project Team Presentation 15%

Students who work on the pesticide drift community engagement project will present their project to the class. Students who do topic papers will work in teams of 3 or 4 to present an in depth analysis of an environmental justice issue not

already discussed in class. Each team will have roughly 20 min to present.

Grading Summary:

Community Engagement Project or Topic Paper	20%
Leading class discussion	20%
Discussion Participation	20%
Discussion Questions	5%
Conference Report	10%
Final Project Team Presentation	15%
Memos	10%

Course Schedule:

Week One	January 6 Course opening Intro to EJ	January 8 Lisa Arkin guest speaker <u>Reading:</u> Recent news stories posted on bb site, Toxic Communities Introduction and Chapter 1
Week Two	January 13 African Am EJ <u>Reading:</u> CFJ Ch 3, 8. Toxic Communities Ch 2, 4, 5	January 15 Native Environmental Justice Guest Speaker Ron Reed Karuk Tribe Cultural Biologist <u>Reading:</u> CFJ Ch Toxic Communities Ch 3
Week Three	January 20 Class Workshop: Rehearsals for Life <u>Reading:</u> Tatum “Talking About Race, Learning About Racism”	January 22 STUDENT LED DISCUSSION <u>Reading:</u> Toxic Communities Ch 6- conclusion

Week Four	<p>January 27</p> <p>Colonialism and Resistance</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Native American Environmentalism pp. xi-55</p>	<p>January 29</p> <p>Gender and Native EJ</p> <p>STUDENT LED DISCUSSION</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Native American Environmentalism pp. 55-91</p>
Week Five	<p>February 3</p> <p>Spirituality and Native EJ</p> <p>Guest: Annelia Norris, Yurok Tribal activist</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Native American Environmentalism pp. 91-147</p>	<p>February 5</p> <p>Guest Carol Van Straum</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> A Bitter Fog, excerpt available online</p>
Week Six	<p>February 10</p> <p>Latina/o and Asian American Environmental Justice</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> CFJ Ch 6, "The Environmental Health of Latino Children" Ch. 4 CFJ Asian Immigrants and CA farming; "Asian American Activism for Environmental Justice"</p> <p>STUDENT LED DISCUSSION</p>	<p>February 12</p> <p>Whiteness, Food and Privilege</p> <p>STUDENT LED DISCUSSION</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> CFJ Ch. 9, 10,12</p>
Week Seven	<p>February 17</p> <p>Class, Labor and EJ</p> <p>STUDENT LED DISCUSSION</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Interview with Judi Bari, and other TBA</p>	<p>February 19</p> <p>Capitalism and Climate Change</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> This Changes Everything Part One (pp 1-190)</p>
Week Eight	<p>February 24</p> <p>STUDENT LED DISCUSSION</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> This Changes Everything p 191-293</p>	<p>February 26</p> <p>STUDENT LED DISCUSSION</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> This Changes Everything pp 293-387</p>

<p>Week Nine</p>	<p>March 3</p> <p>STUDENT LED DISCUSSION</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> This Changes Everything pp 388-467</p>	<p>March 5</p> <p>FINAL PRESENTATIONS, PAPERS DUE</p>
<p>Week Ten</p>	<p>March 10</p> <p>State of the Environmental Movement today Debrief PIELC</p> <p>PIELC REPORT BACK DUE</p>	<p>March 12</p> <p>FINAL PRESENTATIONS and COURSE CLOSING</p>