

# ENVS 435: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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Instructor: Julie

Office Hours: 2-2:30 M, T, W

Office Location: Columbia Hall 240

## ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

This course examines how systems of power and difference that are embedded in social and political life, influence the distribution of environmental risks and benefits.

The course draws heavily from theories that have developed to explore social systems of structural violence. In particular, feminist theory, queer theory and critical race theory are core components of the work we will do in this course.

For many people, this will be their first encounter with these theories. These encounters can be mind-blowing, uncomfortable, exciting or scary. Sometimes you may feel resistance to a particular concept or idea. That's absolutely ok! No one is obligated to unthinkingly believe anything they learn. This goes not only for our class but for everything in life. Ultimately, only you can decide what makes sense to you. But in this class you will be required to think through and engage with not only the ideas and concepts you readily accept, but also those you find difficult.

Our aim will be to support and encourage each other to challenge ourselves and to further our thinking about environmentalism, systems of social power, and our places within both.

## COURSE MATERIALS

**The Militarization of Indian Country** –Winona LaDuke

**The Slums of Aspen**- Park and Pellow

**Blackboard access and competency** – It is critical that you know how to use blackboard proficiently. If you have concerns or questions, come to my office hours or make an appointment to meet with me immediately. I will post many of the assigned readings and videos there.

## MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

**Memos -60%**

These memos are informal responses to the materials you have read or viewed for class that day. Memos must address the readings but can be personal and self-reflective in nature. 1 page each.

**Team Class Facilitation - 10%**

As part of a small group, each student will facilitate one discussion of a particular reading or video. This includes preparing a brief synopsis of major points and a short list of discussion questions.

**Research Report -10%**

Student's may choose to complete this requirement as an annotated bibliography or presentation. In week 1 students must select a particular topic for further research with instructor approval.

**Final – 20%**

You will have the option of taking a final exam or submitting a final paper (8-10 pages in length).

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

You are required to attend lecture. We meet only 18 times, so every class and a half =1 week. Missing more than 2 lectures will result in a loss of 10% of your final grade for each absence over 2.

## **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/>

Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence <http://cmae.uoregon.edu/>

Teaching and Learning Center <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/>

Women's Center <http://pages.uoregon.edu/women/>

Men's Center <http://pages.uoregon.edu/uomc/>

UO OUT <http://lgbt.uoregon.edu/Home.aspx>

Multicultural Center <http://pages.uoregon.edu/mcc/>

## **COURSE UNITS**

### **CLASSES 1-5**

explores basic theories and history relevant to Environmental Justice

### **CLASSES 6-9**

environmental privilege and the role it plays in shaping environmental policy and activism (some topics include food movements, gentrification, wilderness preservation)

### **CLASSES 10-13**

explores the environmental justice implications of militarism (including but not limited to a consideration of nuclear testing, waste storage, and mining; the “national security” rhetoric vs. the EJ implications of tar sands and fracking; chemical weapon incineration facility citing).

### **CLASSES 14-16**

contemporary EJ activism

### **CLASSES 17-18**

students present their research and share ideas