COURSE DESCRIPTION

The concepts of “environmental racism” or “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 innovative fusion of environmental activism and black Civil Rights, the concept of environmental racism has continued to grow and 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 not only pervades 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.

THREE TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN THE COURSE

Environmental Inequalities at the foundation of Modernity
Environmental Inequalities – Research
Environmental Justice in the context of the American environmental movement

REQUIREMENTS

1) Read required readings in a timely manner. All readings are posted on eCommons.
2) Regular attendance at lecture is required. Attendance will be taken. 2 points per session.
3) Midterm exam #1. 25 points.
4) Midterm exam #2. 25 points.
5) Final exam. 30 points.
Please Note: I considered any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating on exams or plagiarizing from the Web in your paper, 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.

Each day of class is divided into three periods or parts:
(a) 9:00 to 10:00
(b) 10:15 to 11:15
(c) 11:30 to 12:30

Important dates:
Midterm #1 – Tuesday, July 3rd
Midterm #2 – Tuesday, July 15th
Final exam – Thursday, July 24th

SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS, READINGS

Session 1, Tuesday, June 24

Topics:

Introduction; the start of the environmental justice movement; early research
Social Inequalities: Class; race/ethnicity; how they interact

Environmental Inequalities at the foundation of Modernity (introduction)

Session 2, Thursday, June 26

Topic: Environmental Inequalities at the foundation of Modernity (cont.)

Readings:


Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, pp. 238-263.
Session 3, Tuesday, July 1

Topic 1: Environmental Inequalities at the foundation of Modernity (cont.)

Readings:


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


Topic 2: Environmental Inequalities – Research (introduction)

(Topics to be covered in this section, July 3 through July 10:
The city as a site of environmental injustice
Explaining outcomes: which came first, the people or the hazards?
The workplace as a site of environmental injustice
The race vs. class debate
New directions in EJ research: “natural” disasters; climate justice
The state of the research; methodological issues)

Session 4, Thursday, July 3

*** Midterm #1 [first hour] ***

Topic: Environmental Inequalities – Research (cont.)

Readings:


Session 5, Tuesday, July 8

Topic: Environmental Inequalities – Research (cont.)

Readings:

Beverly Hendrix Wright, "The Effects of Occupational Injury, Illness, and Disease on the Health Status of Black Americans: A Review"


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


Session 6, Thursday, July 10

Topic: Environmental Inequalities – Research (cont.)

Readings:


*The following are suggested readings – recent literature reviews, summarizing the state of the research in environmental justice:


**Session 7, Tuesday, July 15**

*** Midterm #2 [first hour] ***

**Topic: EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement, Period 1**


**Session 8, Thursday, July 17**

**Topic: EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement, Period 2**

**Readings:**

Andrew Szasz, *EcoPopulism*, chapter 2.


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


Szasz, *EcoPopulism*, chapters 6
Session 9, Tuesday, July 22

Topic: EJ perspective on the history of the American Environmental Movement, Period 3

Readings:

- Szasz, *EcoPopulism*, Chapters 3, 4, 8

Session 10, Thursday, July 24 – Final Exam

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Summer Session Students with Disabilities:

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of the Summer Session. Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu for more information.