

SOCI 065
Spring 2010
11:00–12:15pm
Hamilton 150

Neal Caren
neal.caren@unc.edu
Hamilton 225
Hours: Wednesday, 10am-12

Environment, Health, and Justice

Why we are here

Many environmental problems in contemporary America, such as hazardous waste facilities where chemicals leak into the ground water, or dirty factories that send toxins into the air, are more likely to be found in and around neighborhoods that are poor, working-class or non-white. Over the last 30 years, communities have organized under a common banner of calling these hazards incidents of “environmental racism.” Using the political tools of the civil rights movement, such as marches, demonstrations, boycotts and lawsuits, local organization have fought for, “environmental justice.” This course uses the environmental justice movement as window to explore the dynamics of social movements, health disparities, and social policy.

In addition to studying the overall history of the environmental justice movement, we will also explore several cases of local organizing in great depth. We will examine how environmental qualities and disparities are measured, and the link between environmental inequalities and health disparities based on race and class. We will also be looking at how the environmental justice movement has gone global and how the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina can be examined from an environmental justice perspective. You will be an active participant in the experience, guiding class discussion, analyzing new data on environmental disparities, and building your own board game.

Stuff you have to do

You are expected to do the assigned reading, to attend class, to participate actively in class discussions, and to complete the required assignments. Class time will usually build on the readings, sometimes review them, but never replace them. Often, there will be in-class group assignments which require the readings to have been completed. You will sometimes be tested on readings at the start of class (as discussed below). You should always bring the assigned reading(s) to class. This way when I ask a question, instead of staring blankly, you can flick through the

pages, looking for an answer. It makes the silence much less uncomfortable for all of us. You should expect to talk at least once during each class.

You will get the most of the course if you keep current with the readings, attend class, participate actively, and pay attention. To succeed in this class, you have to do all that, plus find, evaluate and summarize academic research on environmental justice; and present your finds in a coherent and convincing way. The graded elements of the course include five reading response memos and discussion leadership days; twelve microassignments; a writing assignment, and a short presentation.

You should not use a computer during lecture or discussion. For those of you who normally use computers to take notes or post status updates during class, this may be a hardship. Sorry.

Reading Response Memos and Discussion Leadership

You are required to write five short two-page reading response papers and be available to lead discuss on those days. The memos should be handed in by 9pm the evening before they are due and will be graded. These are to demonstrate that you are reading and thinking about the assigned materials before you come to class. In order to receive full credit for this assignment, you will need to actively participate in class that day by picking one or more interesting points from the reading and leading discussion on it. I will guide you in this process during the beginning of the semester. Due dates are based on your last name, and are listed in the syllabus. You have six opportunities to do this, which means that you can drop or miss one. You can not make these up, and your reading response memos must total at least 10 pages (five memos at two pages each equals at least ten pages).

Microassignments

Twelve small assignments or quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Assignments will either be an in-class exercise, a tiny homework assignment to bring to class the next day, or a quiz on the day's reading. These microassignments are designed to reward those who attend class and stay current with the material. These are often pass/fail assignments, each worth two points towards your final grade. These assignments will not be accepted late, but you can miss two and still get a perfect grade. You can not make these up.

Analyzing Environmental Inequalities

Working with a partner, you will get an opportunity examine the level of environmental inequality in North Carolina. This project requires you to combine census demographic data with geo-coded information on locally undesirable land uses. We will spend a fair amount of time in class learning how to do this sort of analysis, so

don't be scared. You are required to write up a three page report on your findings in the style of research memo, and to briefly present your findings to the class.

WikiEJ Edits

The writing assignment is to help develop a wiki that is focused on environmental justice—wikiej.org. In general, Wikipedia is awesome. Coverage of sociology in general and social movements in specific, however, is less impressive. The mission of our class is to improve this. You will be expected to contribute substantially to Wikipedia by creating and improving articles. The effort you spend on this should be equal to that of an 8–10 page paper. The goal of this assignment is similar to that of a term paper: providing you an opportunity to demonstrate the ability to apply course learning to a new subject, but has the advantage that the final product will not be immediately thrown away by me or you, but rather will live on in a publicly available format as long as it is useful and accurate.

The Wikipedia assignment is broken down into a series of parts to make it easier for you.

1. Review and copy three Wikipedia articles related to environmental justice. Value: 10% of WikiEJ grade.
2. Select two possible articles to create or edit, listing your plan of action for them. Value: 5% of WikiEJ grade.
3. Find five or more resources for use in constructing your articles. Value: 5% of WikiEJ grade.
4. Add 1,200 or more words to WikiEJ. Value: 75% of WikiEJ grade.
5. Edit two WikiEJ articles written by other members of the class. Value: 5% of WikiEJ grade.

Table 1: The final grade is composed of the following elements:

Task	
Discussion Leadership and Response memos	30%
Microassignments and Quizzes	20%
Environmental Inequalities Report	20%
EJWiki Edits	30%
Total	100%

No Deals

The grading system described above will be used for everyone. No exceptions. If you are going to miss class because of an athletic event, you should let me know in advance via email so that you can make up any in-class work.

Academic Integrity

Don't cheat, plagiarize or otherwise engage in academic misconduct. Familiarize yourself with the University policy on Academic Dishonesty. If in doubt, ask me. Transgressions will be reported.

Table 2: Number to Letter Grade Conversion:

Range	Grade	Range	Grade	Range	Grade
60.00–63.32	D-	63.33–66.65	D	66.66–69.99	D+
70.00–73.32	C-	73.33–76.65	C	76.66–79.99	C+
80.00–83.32	B-	83.33–86.65	B	86.66–89.99	B+
90.00–93.32	A-	93.33–100	A		

Stuff I have to do

I'm responsible for giving you the opportunity to learn all you can about environmental justice. I'll try to make coming to class worth your time and money. If you email me, I'll try to respond quickly. If want to chat, stop me after class, come by my office hours, or set up an appointment. I'll do my best to communicate clearly what my expectations are for receiving good grades for each assignment and for the course overall. I'm also responsible for making sure that your grade is fair. I will work to let you know your grades quickly so that you know how your are doing in the course throughout the semester. I will be available to meet with you to discuss why you got a specific grade, or anything else related to the course, or whatever.

Readings

Four books are required. You will be expected to do the readings for each day prior to class. The books are available at the Student Store and other places. They are also on on reserve.

Bullard, Robert D. 2000. *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality, Third Edition*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Cole, Luke W. and Sheila R. Foster. 2001. *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement* New York: NYU Press.

Dyson, Michael Eric. 2006. *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Natural Disaster* Cambridge, MA: Basic Civitas.

Pellow, David Naguib. 2007. *Resisting Global Toxins: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Additional readings will be on the course's Blackboard website.

Course Schedule

This is our current plan. If we get ahead, behind, or change directions, updated schedules will be made available. Guiding questions for each reading are available on Blackboard.

Introduction

Week 1 (1/12 and 1/14)

Tuesday: No readings

Thursday: Rogers Road readings

The birth of the Environmental Justice Movement

Week 2 (1/19 and 1/21)

Tuesday: Cole and Foster, Preface and Introduction; Bullard, Chapter 1 [Group A-C]

Thursday: Bullard, Chapters 2, 3 [Group D-J]

Case studies in Activism, Part I

Week 3 (1/26 and 1/28)

Tuesday: Brown and Mikkelsen's "No Safe Place," online [Group K-M]

In class film: Selection from *A Civil Action*

Thursday: Bullard, Chapters 3, 4. [Group N-Z]

Week 4 (2/2 and 2/4)

Tuesday: Bullard, Chapters 5, 6. [Group A-C]

In class film: Selection from *Erin Brockovich*

Thursday: Roberts and Tooffolon-Weiss's "EPA's Environmental Justice Test Case" [Group D-J]

Environmental Disparities in North Carolina

Week 5 (2/9 and 2/11)

Tuesday: Swine CAFO, online [Group K-M]

Thursday: Tillery, online [Group N-Z]

Measuring Disparities and Democratizing Science

Week 6 (2/16 and 2/18)

Tuesday: UCC report and followup, online. [Group A-C]

Thursday: Coburn's "Street Science: Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice," online. [Group D-J]

Environmental Justice as a Social Movement

Week 7 (2/23 and 2/25)

Tuesday: Snow and Soule's "A Primer on Social Movements," Part I online. [Group K-M]

Thursday: Allen et al.'s "Becoming an Environmental Justice Activist," [Group N-Z]

Week 8 (3/2 and 3/4)

Tuesday: Snow and Soule's "A Primer on Social Movements," Part II online. [Group A-C]

Thursday: Taylor's "The Rise of the Environmental Justice Paradigm: Injustice Framing and the Social Construction of Environmental Discourses," online. [Group D-J]

Case studies in Activism, Part II

Week 9 3/16 and 3/18)

Tuesday: Cole and Foster, Chapters 3, 4. [Group K-M]

Thursday: Cole and Foster, Chapters 5, 6. [Group N-Z]

Environmental Inequality Reports

Week 10 3/23 and 3/25)

Due: Environmental Inequality oral and written reports

Environment and Health Disparities

Week 11 (3/30 and 4/2)

Tuesday: Gee and Payne-Sturges's "Environmental Health Disparities: A Framework Integrating Psychosocial and Environmental Concepts," online [Group A-C]

Thursday: Moses's "Farmerworks and Pesticides," online. [Group D-J]

Hurricane Katrina

Week 12 (4/6 and 4/8)

Tuesday: Dyson, Chapters 1, 2 [Group K-M]

In class film: Spike Lee's *When the Levees Broke*

Thursday: Dyson, Chapters 3, 4 [Group N-Z]
In class film: Spike Lee's *When the Levees Broke*

Week 13 (4/13)
Tuesday: Dyson, Chapters 5–10 [Group A-C]

Globalizing Environmental Justice

Week 13 (4/15)
Thursday: Pellow, Chapters 1-3 [Group D-J]

Week 14 (4/20 and 4/22)
Tuesday: Pellow, Chapters 4-5 [Group K-M]
Due: WikiEJ major edits
Thursday: Pellow, Chapters 6 and 7 [Group N-Z]

Going Forward

Week 15 (4/27)
Tuesday: Bullard, online