



Study abroad.

SYLLABUS

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Instructor: Professor Frank von Hippel

Contact Hrs: 52

Language of Instruction: English

ROSARIO, ARGENTINA

Course Description

An exploration of international case studies of environmental injustice, where marginalized populations suffer disproportionately from exposure to dangerous pollutants or other forms of environmental degradation. Students study the historical, political and legal context of each case study, as well as the scientific evidence for the environmental problem. Students will also gain an understanding of the mechanisms by which pollutants damage human and environmental health. The course includes field trips in Rosario, as well as exercises integrated into other program excursions in Argentina.

Course Objectives

- To teach students the historical, political and legal contexts underlying cases of environmental injustice.
- To teach students scientific principles necessary for a thorough understanding of environmental problems and health effects associated with pollution.
- To teach students to analyze patterns of environmental degradation relative to human populations and assess whether these patterns reveal cases of environmental injustice. Exercises will focus on local scale problems (Rosario), as well as national (Argentina) and international cases of environmental injustice.
- To teach students about the scientific method and have students repeatedly apply that method in the study of environmental justice.
- To teach students to critically evaluate potential cases of environmental injustice.
- To improve the student's ability to write well and concisely.

Instructional methodology

This course will include a combination of lectures, discussions and excursions. Lectures will be illustrated with photographs, short video clips, and modeling and mapping exercises. Questions and discussions will be encouraged. Students will be trained to think deeply about topics, and as part of this training students will engage in formal classroom debates. Students will have the opportunity to discuss controversial topics with local environmental experts, as well as see examples of concepts covered in class during field trips.

Method of Evaluation (Grading)

The course will have two essays, each worth 15% of the grade, as well as a final exam worth 20%. The exam will cover material from lectures and reading. Evidence of preparation for the classroom debate, delivery of the debate and debate outline will also be worth %15 of the grade. Each student will also lead a classroom exercise at a local school, and this exercise will be worth 15% of the grade. Exercises from excursions will comprise 10% of the grade, and participation will comprise the remaining 10% of the grade.

Course Readings

- Agyeman, J., Bullard, R.D. & Evans, B. (Eds.). (2003). Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World. MIT Press, 367 pp.
- Cole, L. & Foster, S. (2000). From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement. NYU Press, 244 pp.
- Rechtschaffen, C. & Gauna, E.P. (2002). Environmental Justice: Law, Policy, and Regulation. Carolina Academic Press, 467 pp.
- Individual articles will also be provided for particular case studies of importance to the course.
- For students with sufficient Spanish ability, supplemental readings in Spanish will be available.

Course Schedule

- Week 1: A history of the environmental justice movement
- Week 2: Grassroots resistance and the structure of environmental decision making
- Week 3: Environmental space, equity and ecological debt
- Week 4: Globalization, sustainability and environmental justice
- Week 5: Inequality and modernization
- Week 6: Social justice and environmental sustainability
- Week 7: Sustainability, environmental justice and resource limitation
- Week 8: Race, politics and pollution
- Week 9: Indigenous peoples and environmental injustice
- Week 10: Environmental justice: law
- Week 11: Environmental justice: policy
- Week 12: Environmental justice: regulation
- Week 13: Tools: citizen suite enforcement, Civil Rights Act, land use and planning tools, disclosure laws, collaborative projects