

Master of Science in Sustainability Management
SUMA PS5888: Geographies of Environmental Justice & Sustainability
Tuesdays: 6:10PM – 8:00PM EST Location: 332 Uris Hall
3 Credits
[Area 1, Area 4, or Elective]

Instructor:	John E. Williams, Ph.D. JEW2159@columbia.edu
Office Hours:	2929 Broadway - 5 th Floor (<i>Above Starbucks across from Hogan Hall</i>) Tuesday & Thursday 4-5:00PM EST & By Appointment
Response Policy:	Preferred means of communication is via email and students can expect responses typically within 24 hours during the work week. Weekend communication will be limited with delayed response.
Co-Instructor:	Rashawn Merchant RKM2151@columbia.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday: 4:30PM-6:00PM (2929 Broadway – 5 th Floor)
Response Policy:	(Same as Instructor)

Course Overview

The origin of the American Environmental Justice Movement can be traced back to the emergence of the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and more specifically to the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964. These historical moments set the stage for a movement that continues to grow with present challenges and widening of economic, health and environmental disparities between racial groups and socioeconomic groups. The environmental justice movement builds upon the philosophy and work of environmentalism, which focuses on humanity's adverse impact upon the environment, entailing both human and non-human existence. However, environmental justice stresses the manner in which adversely impacting the environment in turn adversely impacts the population of that environment. At the heart of the environmental justice movement are the issues of racism and socioeconomic injustice.

This course will examine the intersections of race, equity, and the environment – focusing on history and the growing role and impact of the environmental justice movement in shaping new sustainability discourses, ethics, policies, and plans for the twenty-first century. Environmental Justice embeds various disciplines into its analytical framework ranging from human geography and history to urban studies, economics, sociology, environmental science, public policy, community organizing, and more. Drawing from these disciplines, as well as from recent policies, advocacy, and regulations, students will develop a deeper understanding of equity, sustainability, social impact, and environmental justice in places and spaces across the nation.

Building on the broadness of environmental justice and sustainability, this course will use the geography lens and frameworks, building on the concept that geography brings together the physical and human dimensions of the world in the study of people, places, and environments. Geography will set the stage for us to explore a variety of environmental justice topics and issues in different regions across the nation, from the Black Belt South to the Rust Belt to Cancer Alley, New Orleans, and Atlanta; then back to New York City and the metropolitan area, introducing students to initiatives, policies, stakeholders, research, community groups, and advocacy involved in the development and implementation of environmental laws, policies, practices, equity-based solutions, and sustainable infrastructure. Throughout the course, we will review the impact and implications of particular policies, as well as assess case studies of particular communities. The course will also invite guest scholars currently working in the field to share their views and expertise.

Learning Objectives

L-1: Examine the history of the American Environmental Justice Movement, connecting it to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and the ongoing struggles for racial justice, social justice, and equity in the Twenty-First Century

L-2: Inspire and intentionally engage students in efforts to promote environmental justice and sustainability, focusing on initiatives in Black and Brown communities, and in places and spaces of marginalized and historically-excluded populations

L-3: Examine the widening economic, health, and environmental disparities and develop common strategies that are supportive of building sustainable African American and other Black & Brown communities

L-4: Develop theoretical frameworks for understanding how environmental justice is produced in the local, regional, and national context, and how environmental justice and equity are linked with sustainability

L-5: Explore and analyze current strategies and initiatives addressing environmental justice and sustainability challenges from the community, government, science, and legal perspectives. Additionally, introduce and ground students in the realities faced in the ongoing work of social and environmental justice, connecting these to struggles in New York City and throughout the nation

Readings

Required

Bullard, Robert, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*. Westview Press, 2000. pp. 1-160

Bullard, Robert. Ed. *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 2005. pp. 1-84; 87-107; 168-187

Hobson, Maurice., *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*. UNC Press, 2017, pp. 1-93

Rothstein, Richard and Adam, Grupper, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. [United States]: Recorded Books, Inc, 2017., pp. 1-76

Recommended

Bibliography

Bullard, Robert. Ed. *Growing Smarter: Achieving Livable Communities, Environmental Justice, and Regional Equity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.

Bullard, Robert D., and Glenn Johnson. "Environmental Justice: Grassroots Activism and Its Impact on Public Policy Decision Making." *Journal of Social Issues* 56.3(2000): 555-578.

Clarke, Chris. "Defending mother earth: Native American perspectives on environmental justice" In *Ecotheology* 7(July 1999): 118-120.

Environmental Justice & Environmental Racism. (n.d.). Green Action. Retrieved November 16, 2020, from <http://greenaction.org/what-is-environmental-justice/>

Environmental Justice and the Gullah Geechee: The National Environmental Policy Act's Potential in Protecting the Sea Islands, S.C. *Law Review* August 8, 2021 Issue 4, Volume 72

Finney, C (2014) *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the relationship of African Americans to the great outdoors*. UNC Press Books

Gandy, Matthew. "Between Borinquen and the Barrio: Environmental Justice and New York City's Puerto Rican Community." In *Antipode* 34.4(2002): 730-762.

Gedicks, Al. 2005. "Resource Wars against Native Peoples," in Bullard, Robert (ed) *The Quest for Environmental Justice*. San Francisco. Sierra Club Books. pp 168-187.

Kronk Warner, Elizabeth Ann. 2017. *Environmental Justice: A Necessary Lens to Effectively View Environmental Threats to Indigenous Survival*. *Transnational Law & Contemporary Problems* 26: 343-369.

Perrett, Roy W. "Indigenous Rights and Environmental Justice." In *Environmental Ethics* 20(Winter 1998): 377-391.

Southwest Georgia Project: <https://www.mrbf.org/people/southwest-georgia-project>

Southwest Georgia Project: <https://www.swgaproject.com/about-us.html>

Southwest Georgia Project: New Communities, Inc. <https://snccdigital.org/events/new-communities-formed-in-southwest-georgia/>

Thomas, Deborah and Susan Cutter. "Dumping in Dixie Revisited: The Evolution of Environmental Injustices in South Carolina." *Social Science Quarterly* 80.2(1999): 229-244.

United States Commission on Civil Rights. *Not in My Backyard: Executive Order 12, 898 and Title VI as Tools for Achieving Environmental Justice*. Washington, DC: US Commission on Civil Rights, 2003. (PDF Available: <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/envjust/ej0104.pdf>)

Zimring, Carl (2015) *Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States*. New York: NYU Press

Atlanta

Historically redlined neighborhoods in Atlanta still have more polluted air: <https://www.wabe.org/historically-redlined-neighborhoods-in-atlanta-still-have-more-polluted-air/>

Even many decades later, redlined areas see higher levels of air pollution: <https://www.wabe.org/even-many-decades-later-redlined-areas-see-higher-levels-of-air-pollution/>

Kruse, K.M. (2019, August 14). What does a traffic jam in Atlanta have to do with segregation? Quite a lot. The New York Times Magazine. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/traffic-atlanta-segregation.html>

West Atlanta Watershed Alliance: <https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/urban-waters-and-proctor-creek-watershedatlanta-georgia>

EPA. 2020. Proctor Creek Watershed Story Map: The Intersection of Green Infrastructure and Health. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Washington, D.C. <https://epa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a9360889f36743269d8b0db3fd96ec6b>

New Orleans

Environmental Justice in New Orleans: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/58f80aa50b4b49ff90881e7f1bf8ae14>

Barbara L. Allen, Environmental Justice, local knowledge, and after-disaster planning in New Orleans, *Technology in Society*, Volume 29, Issue 2, 2007, Pages 153-159, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2007.01.003>

Reyna, L. (2020). Environmental Racism Is Killing Black Communities in Louisiana. *Talk Poverty*. Retrieved November 16, 2020, from <https://talkpoverty.org/2020/01/09/environmental-racism-black-communities-louisiana/>

Flint, MI

Butler, Lindsey J., Madeleine K. Scammell, and Eugene B. Benson. 2016. The Flint Michigan, Water Crisis: A Case Study in Regulatory Failure and Environmental Injustice. *Environmental Justice* 9(4): 93-97.

Pulido, Laura. 2016. Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism. *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 27(): 1-16.

Future of Environmental Justice

Movement Generation. 2015. Redefining Resilience: Principles, Practices, and Pathways. In *Pathways to Resilience*. (pp 20-33) Available at: <http://pathways-2-resilience.org/ebook/part-ii-redefining-resilience/>

Pellow, David Naguib. 2018. What Is Critical Environmental Justice. *Polity*. Chapter 2: Black Lives Matter As An Environmental Justice Challenge, pp 34-66.

Pena, Devon. 2005. "Autonomy, Equity, and Environmental Justice," in Pellow, David Naguib and Robert Brulle (eds) *Power, Justice, and the Environment*. Cambridge, MA. MIT Press. Pp 131-151.

Assignments and Assessments

Discussion Posts – 30% (Individual Grade – L1, L2, L3, L4, L5)

This will include posting 250 to 300 word Canvas discussion posts in direct response to detailed questions and response and engagement with at least two other student responses. Posts will be evaluated based on critical thinking and analysis, application and synthesis of lecture/discussion and reading topics, as well as thoughtful consideration and responsiveness to posts by other students. Each post counts for 5% of the grade. Additional assignment details can be found on the assignment submission page in Canvas.

Essays – 30% (Individual Grade – L1, L2, L3, L4, L5)

Students will be asked to assess issues of citizenship and justice, sustainability impacts, and power relationships between primary actors. Minimum of 1,000 words, double spaced. Essays will be evaluated based on writing mechanics, organization of information, evidence of case analysis, synthesis of lecture/discussion and reading content, and personal reflections demonstrating awareness and sensitivity. Additional assignment details can be found on the assignment submission page in Canvas.

Final Project – 30% (Group/Team Grade – L1, L2, L3, L4, L5)

Researching and supporting an Environmental Justice or Sustainability initiative across the Nation.

Students (in groups) will research and select an initiative of their choice from vast array of initiative around the U.S. As we will introduce many initiatives over the course of the class, the goal of this project is to find others beyond the discussion to connect with. Working in small groups/teams, student will submit a summary of the group proposal in a written document, of between 4,500 to 5,000 words. Students will also prepare a Final Presentation that will provide an overview and details of specific initiative in which they studied.

Final projects will be evaluated for the group based on quality of group presentation which will comprise $\frac{1}{3}$ of the final grade. Written responses will be evaluated based on responsiveness to outlined elements, writing mechanics, organization of information, as well as presentation of information using graphs, charts, and other tools, as appropriate. Projects should reflect analysis of policy and practices and correlation between these policies and practices to current sustainability issues. Projects will be assessed based on clarity of goals and objectives.

More Details will be available in Canvas, as the Final Project continues in development: TBA

Grading

The final grade will be calculated as described below:

FINAL GRADING SCALE

Grade	Percentage
A+	98–100 %
A	93–97.9 %
A-	90–92.9 %
B+	87–89.9 %
B	83–86.9 %
B-	80–82.9 %
C+	77–79.9 %
C	73–76.9 %
C-	70–72.9 %
D	60–69.9 %
F	59.9% and below

Assignment/Assessment	% Weight	Individual or Group/Team Grade
Discussions (6)	30%	Individual
Essays (2)	30%	Individual
Final Project	30%	Group/Team
Attendance & Participation	10%	Individual

Course Schedule/Course Calendar

Date	Topics and Activities	Readings (due on this day)	Assignments (due on this date)
Week 1	Course Introductions Foundations of Environment Justice History, Geography, Race, Equity, Sustainability	Bullard, Robert. Dumping In Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 1-36 United States Commission on Civil Rights. Not in My Backyard: Executive Order 12, 898 and Title VI as Tools for Achieving Environmental Justice.	

		http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/envjust/ej0104.pdf)	
Week 2	History of Environment Justice Civil Rights Movement & Civil Rights Act of 1964	Bullard, Robert. Ed. The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution, Part One, pp. 1-84 Environmental Justice & Environmental Racism. (n.d.). Green Action. Retrieved November 16, 2020, from http://greenaction.org/what-is-environmental-justice/	Discussion 1
Week 3	Indigenous/Native People Gullah-Geechee Communities	Gedicks, Al. 2005. "Resource Wars against Native Peoples," in Bullard, Robert (ed) The Quest for Environmental Justice. pp. 168-187 Perrett, Roy W. "Indigenous Rights and Environmental Justice." Environmental Justice and the Gullah Geechee: The National Environmental Policy Act's Potential in Protecting the Sea Islands	
Week 4	Rural America Southwest Georgia Project/New Communities, Inc. Land Trusts	Southwest Georgia Project: https://www.mrbf.org/people/southwest-georgia-project Southwest Georgia Project: https://www.swgaproject.com/about-us.html Southwest Georgia Project: New Communities, Inc. https://snccdigital.org/events/new-communities-formed-in-southwest-georgia/	Discussion 2
Week 5	Black Belt South Cancer Alley (Health & Environment)	Living and Dying in Louisiana's "Cancer Alley" in Bullard, Robert. Ed. The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the	Discussion 3

		Politics of Pollution, Chapter Four, pp. 87-107	
Week 6	Rust Belt Flint, MI (Health & Environment)	Butler, Lindsey J., Madeleine K. Scammell, and Eugene B. Benson. 2016. The Flint Michigan, Water Crisis: A Case Study in Regulatory Failure and Environmental Injustice. <i>Environmental Justice</i> 9(4): 93-97. Pulido, Laura. 2016. Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism. <i>Capitalism Nature Socialism</i> 27(): 1-16.	Essay 1
Week 7	New Orleans Natural Disaster (Transportation)	Environmental Justice in New Orleans: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/58f80aa50b4b49ff90881e7f1bf8ae14 Reyna, L. (2020). Environmental Racism Is Killing Black Communities In Louisiana. <i>Talk Poverty</i> . Barbara L. Allen, Environmental justice, local knowledge, and after-disaster planning in New Orleans	Discussion 4
Week 8	Atlanta Historic Preservation Redlining (Transportation)	Hobson, Maurice., <i>The Legend of the Black Mecca</i> , Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 12-93 Rothstein, <i>The Color of Law</i> , Chapters 1-4, pp. 3-76 Historically redlined neighborhoods in Atlanta still have more polluted air. Kruse, K.M. (2019, August 14). What does a traffic jam in Atlanta have to do with segregation? Quite a lot. <i>The New York Times Magazine</i> .	

Week 9	Atlanta West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA)	West Atlanta Watershed Alliance: https://www.epa.gov/urbanwaterspartners/urban-waters-and-proctor-creek-watershedatlanta-georgia EPA. 2020. Proctor Creek Watershed Story Map: The Intersection of Green Infrastructure and Health. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, Washington, D.C.: https://epa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a9360889f36743269d8b0db3fd96ec6b	Discussion 5
Week 10	New York City Green Jobs Initiative Civilian Climate Corps Environmental Wellness	https://www1.nyc.gov/site/sustainability/our-programs/environmental-justice.page https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/09/climate/climate-corps-congress.html https://livingnewdeal.org/forging-an-environmentally-just-civilian-climate-corps/	Discussion 6
Week 11	New York City Exploring Harlem	WE ACT For Environmental Justice: https://www.weact.org/we-act-in-new-york-city/	
Week 12	New York City Future of Environmental Justice	Movement Generation. 2015. Redefining Resilience: Principles, Practices, and Pathways. In Pathways to Resilience. (pp 20-33) Pellow, David Naguib. 2018. What Is Critical Environmental Justice. Polity. Chapter 2: Black Lives Matter As An Environmental Justice Challenge, pp 34-66.	Essay 2
Week 13	Final Project		Final Project Presentations
Week 14	Final Project		Final Project Presentations

Course Policies

Participation and Attendance

It is expected that you will come to class on time and thoroughly prepared. I will keep track of attendance and look forward to an interesting, lively and confidential discussion. If you miss an experience in class, you miss an important learning moment and the class misses your contribution. More than one absence will affect your grade. If you need to miss a class for any reason, please discuss the absence with me in advance.

Late work

Work that is not submitted on the due date noted in the course syllabus without advance notice and permission from the instructor will be graded down 1/3 of a grade for every day it is late (e.g., from a B+ to a B).

Citation & Submission

All written assignments must use APA citation format, cite sources, and be submitted to the course website (not via email).

School and University Policies and Resources

Copyright Policy

Please note—Due to copyright restrictions, online access to this material is limited to instructors and students currently registered for this course. Please be advised that by clicking the link to the electronic materials in this course, you have read and accept the following:

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

Academic Integrity

Columbia University expects its students to act with honesty and propriety at all times and to respect the rights of others. It is fundamental University policy that academic dishonesty in any guise or personal conduct of any sort that disrupts the life of the University or denigrates or endangers members of the University community is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. It is essential to the academic integrity and vitality of this community that individuals do their own work and properly acknowledge the circumstances, ideas, sources, and assistance upon which that work is based. Academic honesty in class assignments and exams is expected of all students at all times.

SPS holds each member of its community responsible for understanding and abiding by the SPS Academic Integrity and Community Standards posted at <https://sps.columbia.edu/students/student-support/academic-integrity-community-standards>. You are required to read these standards within the first few days of class. Ignorance of the School's policy concerning academic dishonesty shall not be a defense in any disciplinary proceedings.

Diversity Statement

Adapted from: **The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach, 2nd Edition**, Judith Grunert O'Brien, Barbara J. Millis, Margaret W. Cohen. ISBN: 978-0-470-60549-3. Available as an E-Book from Wiley at: <https://www.wiley.com/en-us/The+Course+Syllabus%3A+A+Learning+Centered+Approach%2C+2nd+Edition-p-9780470605493>

It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture.

Accessibility

Columbia is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with documented disabilities. A student's disability status and reasonable accommodations are individually determined based upon disability documentation and related information gathered through the intake process. For more information regarding this service, please visit the University's Health Services website: <https://health.columbia.edu/services/ods/support>.

School Policies and Expectations:

Accessibility Statement – I want you to succeed in this course. Contact disability@columbia.edu for learning accommodations.

Names/Pronouns

You deserve to be addressed in a manner that reflects your identity. You are welcome to tell me your pronoun(s) and/or name (if different from University records) at any time, either in person or via email.

Discrimination

We embrace the diversity of gender, gender identity & expression, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, disability status, family status, socioeconomic background, and other visible and non-visible identities. Columbia University does not tolerate unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation and all such conduct is forbidden by Columbia University Policy.

Duty to Report

You deserve a University community free from discrimination, harassment, and gender-based misconduct including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. It is therefore University policy to require Columbia faculty and staff to report to EOAA any instance or allegation of prohibited conduct involving any undergraduate or any graduate student that is disclosed to, observed by, or otherwise known to that employee. This requirement to report is in place to help ensure that students are provided appropriate resources and to allow the University to mitigate harm to our community.

Confidential Resources

There are confidential resources on campus who do not have a Duty to Report, including:

- * Sexual Violence Response & Rape Crisis/Anti-Violence Support Center (SVR)
- * Ombuds Office
- * Medical Services
- * University Counseling and Psychological Services
- * University Pastoral Counseling
- * Columbia Office of Disability Services

University employees working in a confidential capacity will not report information shared with them.

Inclusion

In the M.S. in Sustainability Management program, faculty and staff are committed to the creation and maintenance of “inclusive learning” spaces – classrooms and other places of learning where you will be treated with respect and dignity, and where all individuals are provided equitable opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed.

All students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class.

Class Recordings

All or portions of the class may be recorded at the discretion of the Instructor to support your learning. At any point, the Instructor has the right to discontinue the recording if it is deemed obstructive to the learning process.

If the recording is posted, it is confidential and it is prohibited to share the recording outside of the class.

SPS Academic Resources

The Office of Student Affairs provides students with academic counseling and support services such as online tutoring and career coaching: <https://sps.columbia.edu/students/student-support/student-support-resources>.

Columbia University Information Technology

[Columbia University Information Technology](#) (CUIT) provides Columbia University students, faculty and staff with central computing and communications services. Students, faculty and staff may access [University-provided and discounted software downloads](#).

Columbia University Library

[Columbia's extensive library system](#) ranks in the top five academic libraries in the nation, with many of its services and resources available online.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center provides writing support to undergraduate and graduate students through one-on-one consultations and workshops. They provide support at every stage of your writing, from brainstorming to final drafts. If you would like writing support, please visit the following site to learn about services offered and steps for scheduling an appointment. This resource is open to Columbia graduate students at no additional charge. Visit <http://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center>.

Career Design Lab

The Career Design Lab supports current students and alumni with individualized career coaching including career assessment, resume & cover letter writing, agile internship job search strategy, personal branding, interview skills, career transitions, salary negotiations, and much more. Wherever you are in your career journey, the Career Design Lab team is here to support you. Link to <https://careerdesignlab.sps.columbia.edu/>

Netiquette

[Only applies to courses using online platforms]

Online sessions in this course will be offered through Zoom, accessible through Canvas. A reliable Internet connection and functioning webcam and microphone are required. It is your responsibility to resolve any known technical issues prior to class. Your webcam should remain turned on for the duration of each class, and you should expect to be present the entire time. Avoid distractions and maintain professional etiquette.

Please note: Instructors may use Canvas or Zoom analytics in evaluating your online participation.

More guidance can be found at https://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/mintu-wimsatt_0310.htm

Netiquette is a way of defining professionalism for collaborations and communication that take place in online environments. Here are some Student Guidelines for this class:

- Avoid using offensive language or language that is not appropriate for a professional setting.
- Do not criticize or mock someone's abilities or skills.
- Communicate in a way that is clear, accurate and easy for others to understand.
- Balance collegiality with academic honesty.
- Keep an open-mind and be willing to express your opinion.
- Reflect on your statements and how they might impact others.
- Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
- When in doubt, always check with your instructor for clarification.