

enst2000a

# Environmental Justice

winter 2021

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## Course Description:

The term environmental justice grew out of efforts in communities disproportionately impacted by environmental harms such as toxic waste sites and other polluters as they worked with allies in churches, universities, labour, businesses and government to fight against the environmental injustice and environmental racism they experienced.

Environmental justice is now also an umbrella term that brings together a set of ideas (theories) around a good way to live in, with and as a part of the environment. The focus of environmental justice includes understanding exposure to toxins, but also advocating for access to environmental goods, examinations of how the disparities happen in the first place, and ideas for how to reduce environmental burdens all together.

In this course we will explore how we measure the distribution of environmental harms and benefits, how we understand the environment and our place in it, and processes for making environmental change.

Environmental justice has also always been rooted in praxis so an additional goals will be to think together about the relationships between theory and actions in our environmental relationships.

## Learning Outcomes:

1. Explore different perspectives around environmental justice specifically, and environmental theory more generally;
2. Explore and practice various methods of communicating about, and taking action around environmental justice;
3. Practice skills in the description, collection, application, analysis, evaluation and creation of environmental data, information, and stories;
4. Reflect on your own theories and principles around a good way to live in, with and as a part of the environment.

## Learning in a pandemic:

Also remember that this is not a normal term!

We're online, which comes with its own challenges; and we're online because we're in the middle of a global pandemic and dealing with the health, economic, political and social fallout of that.

So even more than ever we have to find ways to be kind to ourselves, and each other as we also work to continue learning together.

## **Active learning, care and accessibility:**

To accomplish the learning outcomes students are expected to be active learners, this includes asking questions when something is unclear, when you need support, or when you would like to hear more about a topic; a willingness to share your own interpretations of and reactions to ideas presented; and a willingness to listen with openness and care to different perspectives and ways of understanding and interpreting ideas. It also means approaching your work with honesty and integrity; taking advantage of student success resources around writing, research and citation, and again asking when you are unsure!

Additionally active learning means taking care of yourself and your health, because school is really important, but taking care of ourselves, especially now, is more important! Health and Counseling Services [[carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health)] provide a variety of services, and you should consult with them if you find yourself in need of specific physical or mental health support, and for preventative care and health promotion. Awards and Financial Aid provides support for unexpected expenses or economic hardship [[carleton.ca/awards/other-assistance-2/](http://carleton.ca/awards/other-assistance-2/)].

Your stories including medical diagnosis, financial and family circumstances are your own to share or not. But letting the teaching team know, in general terms, about circumstances that might impact your learning as soon as possible means that we can work with you around accommodations, adjustments, and alternatives, to help you meet the learning requirements of the course.

The teaching team also believes the course will be made stronger through the participation of students with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, identities, skills and experiences. As such, we're working to make this course as accessible as possible for all students so please do not hesitate to approach us, if you require particular accommodations or supports including, or in addition to/distinct from, those listed at the end of the syllabus.

## **Texts:**

Course texts will all be posted though cuLearn. There is no textbook for the course.

The texts for this course come from a variety of fields (and in a variety of media) including environmental studies and geography as well as ecology, environmental design, science and technology studies, critical race studies, Indigenous studies, public health, environmental management, journalism, art and design.

Read to understand the point of view of the piece. After reading ask yourself what was the story, thesis, or argument? Ask yourself what is the main idea you will take away from reading the piece?

Also be a critical reader. After you read try to identify the tools that were used to tell the story, prove the thesis or make the argument. Think about the style of writing, the graphics, the information or data presented, the methods used to acquire the knowledge or data.

Think about your own questions after the reading? Are there terms you still find confusing, details that are unclear, or ideas and topics that you want to know more about?

## **Course Calendar:**

This term we will take full advantage of being online to create opportunities for choice and flexibility in your learning, as well as opportunities for collaboration among peers and in support of ongoing community-based initiatives.

In addition to the general outline here, the detailed structure of the course will be shared on the course site.

**Unit 1:** Introductions (released approximately January 8)

**Unit 2:** Environmental Justice Definitions and Distribution (released approximately January 15)

**Unit 3:** Environmental Relationships (released approximately February 12)

**Unit 4:** Procedural Justice (released approximately March 19)

## Evaluation and Course Activities:

### Readings and Reflections (67 points)

Each unit will include a group of multi-media texts including popular and academic writing, video and audio.

Points will be given for completing the short reflections associated with each text. Rolling deadlines.

### Collaborative Discussions (16 points)

Each week we will work collaboratively using discussion boards and chats to complete discussion tasks including, for example, building collective understandings, evaluating cases, annotating texts, collecting new data or information and presenting alternatives. There will be some opportunity for choice around discussion tasks.

Points will be assigned based on the quality of participation. Criteria for participation will be outlined on the course site. Points will only be assigned for participation during the 24 hour period between Mondays 9:35a (eastern) - Tuesdays 9:25a (eastern) each week.

### Individual Assignments (17 points)

Detailed assignment prompts will be provided when the related units are released.

In each assignment you will engage with the readings and course discussions to synthesize and create a written or mixed-media project that you will submit individually.

Late assignments will be accepted, details of the policy will be explained on the course site.

Points will be assigned based on an evaluation that reflects the criteria set out in the detailed prompt for each assignment.

#### **A Definition** (5 points)

using ideas from the readings to share the meaning of environmental justice  
[first due date February 12 11:59p on cuLearn]

#### **A Mixtape** (6 points)

using ideas from the readings to curate a collection of songs that tell a themed environmental story  
[first due date March 19 on cuLearn]

#### **An Action** (6 points)

description of an environmental justice action you would like to take  
[first due date April 14 on cuLearn]

Final grades will be determined through the percent of points accumulated.

Remember that: "Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean." (source: Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Undergraduate Teaching Regulations and Procedures 2019-2020, 18)

### **University Academic Accommodations:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy Obligation:** write to the professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

**Religious Obligation:** write to the professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with the professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

**Survivors of Sexual Violence:** As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

**Accommodation for Student Activities:** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

### **University Definitions of Plagiarism:**

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

(source: Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Undergraduate Teaching Regulations and Procedures 2020-2021)