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 and by appointment.

The College of New Jersey
Ewing, NJ

First Seminar Program: Environmental Justice

FSP111-05/1 Course Unit/Fall 2013
Mondays and Thursdays, 4:00pm-5:20pm,
Social Sciences Building 225

Course Description

The question of justice—who gets what and why—has occupied humanity for millennia. Today, the problem of environmental justice—who gets to live in healthy, sustainable environments, or not, and why—has become a central concern of political activists, government bureaucrats, academic philosophers, and community organizations. These different actors and organizations have made the case that many environmental problems, such as pollution and climate change, are not only natural or technical problems, but are simultaneously problems of social justice that require political action to be addressed effectively.

In this course, we will investigate the history and theory behind environmental justice movements primarily in the United States. We will consider what conditions and ideas gave rise to contemporary political movements for just access to healthy places to live, work, and play. We will then use environmental justice analyses to examine local, regional, and national environmental justice issues, including transportation, zoning and planning, food, and climate change. In addition, we will meet with representatives from environmental justice movements that are working on these issues, visit sites that demonstrate environmental (in)justice in the region, and engage in service activities that integrate what we discuss in the classroom about environmental justice with hands-on, community-based activities in the greater Trenton region.

FSP Learning Objectives

The objectives of the First Seminar Program are:

- To foster intellectual curiosity;
- To introduce college-level assignments and college-level expectations in terms of writing, reading, research, and oral presentations;
- To improve students' ability to think critically about their world, culture, and their own beliefs;
- To foster a culture of intellectual engagement outside the classroom,
- To encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning; and
- To introduce the concept of a well-rounded education based on a breadth of knowledge that goes beyond students' immediate professional or academic field.

Course Learning Objectives and Outcomes

The objectives of this course are to:

- Introduce contemporary environmental movements and struggles for social justice of the past 50 years;
- Connect the changing ideas about environmentalism and human-nature relations to local, national, and global movements;
- Build students' sense of citizenship and obligation to the communities they live and work in through community engagement activities;
- Identify and experience applications of these ideas and texts to issues in contemporary life; and
- Develop students' writing, critical reading, and critical thinking skills through close examinations of texts and responses to them.

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Utilize an environmental justice framework to understand environmental issues;
- Interpret different environmental struggles from a critical, historically-informed perspective;
- Understand the impact and significance of one's own activities as an environmental actor in the communities in which one lives;
- Demonstrate a general familiarity with the history, style and concerns of environmental justice movements locally, nationally, and globally; and
- Write, read, and think in more informed, critical, and nuanced ways.

Course Expectations

As students in this class, I expect you to:

- 1) Read this syllabus carefully and thoroughly. You are responsible for all the information contained in it for as long as you are enrolled in this class.
- 2) Come to class having prepared the readings for the day (see below for what it means to prepare the readings). If necessary, I will resort to pop quizzes to enforce this expectation.
- 3) Attend class. Three unexcused absences are allowed; more than that will jeopardize your standing in the course. Persistent tardiness will also affect your grade. Please communicate with me if you know you will miss a class so we can make arrangements to make up missed work.
- 4) Participate in class actively in a way that is constructive for and respectful of everyone present.
- 5) Complete all work for the course, as outlined in the Grading and Assignments sections below.

As course instructor, you can expect me to:

- 1) Uphold all aspects of this syllabus, unless all students are informed of any changes to it in class or via email and/or Canvas. I reserve the right to change any aspect of this syllabus.
- 2) Come to class having prepared that session's materials.
- 3) Direct class activities and discussion in a way that is respectful to all participants and includes as many students and views as possible.

- 4) Return work in a timely manner with constructive comments and a justification for the grade assigned.

Office Hours and Email

My office hours are Mondays 11am-1pm, Thursdays 9:30am-11:30am, and by appointment. I encourage you to come by if you'd like to discuss issues raised in class and the readings. If you ever have a question or concern, please feel free to e-mail me. I generally respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Friday; I do not generally check my email during weekends until Sunday evening, unless a written assignment is due the following Monday.

Course Format

This course includes a broad range of texts that discuss environmental justice issues. It is a waste of time for everyone to have me stand in front of the class and lecture for 80 minutes straight twice a week, so you will have to participate actively in each class session.

Pedagogy: We will work through course materials through a participatory pedagogy that emphasizes students' responsibility for learning the material, and provides structured opportunities for class discussion and debate. Participatory learning strategies both develop skills of critical reasoning, and make the classroom itself a laboratory for civic engagement. The core principle of participatory learning mimics that of participatory politics: learn by doing. Throughout this term, students will work collaboratively with each other and with the professor to maximize their own and each other's learning. The strategies we will use to achieve this principle include: lecture-discussion format with reading questions distributed in advance so that students will know what to expect, peer work groups, and structured small group interaction.

Writing Intensive: As a writing intensive course, there will be frequent writing assignments. The best way to improve your writing is to do more of it, often. These assignments are designed to improve your writing skills and comprehension of difficult texts. I take the teaching of writing seriously, and expect you to take these writing assignments with as much seriousness as you would any other assignment.

Community Engaged Learning Project: This course fulfills your Community Engagement Learning requirement by your participation in 8 hours of service. Our exact activity has yet to be finalized; details will be communicated to you as soon as they are determined. You are required to participate; only significant life events will excuse you.

Readings: Because students who take responsibility for their own learning also need to take responsibility for their own reading, close reading is the foundation of participatory pedagogy. What does it mean to do close reading? It doesn't mean just sitting down and mechanically going through the readings; that's a sure way to make even an interesting reading boring. Reading is an active and interactive process between the reader and the text. If you're really reading a text you are also reacting to it. I've included a range of texts in order to provoke a wide range of responses from readers, and reading questions to help guide your reading.

So when I say "do the readings," I mean "engage yourself with the ideas of the text." I understand that some of the texts are quite complex and that not all of them are entertaining. But struggle is part of the learning experience. If it's a long or complex reading, don't try to do it all

in one sitting; take breaks, come back to it, read it in small doses. Taking notes on a text while you read it, or re-read it, is a very good way to engage the text and to make sure you understand it. Other techniques include summarizing the main idea of the text after reading it, identifying unclear terms or passages, writing questions about the text, and doing extra research into the topic via other means (the internet, the library, your fellow classmates). If something remains unclear, talk about it with others outside of class, and/or bring it up in class.

Course Conduct

Diversity and Collegiality: One of the most enriching aspects of an undergraduate education is participating in a classroom with students from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and from a diverse variety of perspectives. In order to facilitate optimal learning within such a diverse environment it is imperative that students listen, analyze and draw upon a diversity of views. To make this possible I expect collegial dialogue across cultural and personal boundaries.

Student Conduct: In order to facilitate student learning, instructors must maintain order and a positive environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior disrupts the classroom environment will be asked to leave. Getting up and leaving the room during class indicates poor engagement with the material and your classmates, and is considered a violation of collegiate etiquette.

Technology in the Classroom: To encourage participation and class discussion most effectively, and to limit disruptions, **turn off (not on vibrate, silent, or airplane mode, but off) all cell phones** during class sessions. **Do not text in class.** It is rude, inappropriate, tells me you're not participating, and shows disrespect to me and your classmates. If you want to chat with your friends during the 80 minutes we're in class, leave the classroom and don't come back.

I reserve the right to forbid the use of laptops in class. They physically get in between students, you will be tempted to do non-course related activities during class, and they distract from what's going on in the classroom. Please come to class prepared to discuss without relying on your laptop.

Special Needs and Accommodations: Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify the professor of this course and contact the Office of Differing Abilities Services (609-771-2571). Accommodations are **individualized** and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. TCNJ's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy is available on the web: <http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/viewPolicy.php?docId=8082> .

Integrity and Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as his or her own, work which has not been done by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but is not limited to: submitting as his/her own a project, paper, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether

the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral. TCNJ's academic integrity policy is available on the web: <http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/viewPolicy.php?docId=7642> .

Grading

Your grade will be based on the following assignments, explained more fully below:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Percentage (approximate)</u>
Entrance and exit papers:	0	0 (-5% if not submitted)
Participation	15	13%
Preparation Papers (4x10)	40	33%
Midterm Essay	20	17%
CEL Activity Paper	10	8%
FSP Presentation	10	8%
<u>Final Essays</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>21%</u>
Total	120	100%

Important: you must complete all assignments to pass this class. Even if you opt to take the class Pass/Fail, you must submit all assignments or you will not receive a grade.

There will be no opportunities for “extra credit.” The number and variety of assignments provide ample opportunity to improve your performance based on feedback from me and your peers.

I do not grant Incompletes except under the most extraordinary of circumstances. Should circumstances arise that you will not be able to complete the requirements for this course, please see me to discuss your options, including Withdrawal.

Assignments

Note: Unless I explicitly state otherwise, do NOT send assignments, including late work, via e-mail. Do not assume that emailing an assignment to me will count as on time or received unless I state that you can and should email something to me.

Entrance and exit papers (0 points; -5% if not submitted)

These less formal assignments are opportunities to reflect upon your goals for the class and help me get to know some of your interests and backgrounds in the course material. The entrance paper is due via Canvas on the day before our scheduled second session. The exit paper is due via Canvas on the last day of classes for the semester. **These are not graded, but are required.** You will lose 5 points from your overall grade if you do not submit both of these.

Entrance Paper (1-2 pages, single-spaced): There are two parts to this. The first is a brief (two paragraphs or so) self-evaluation that provides me with a sense of you as a student. Please tell me: 1) your (anticipated) major, and why you chose it, 2) any prior experience with political science, sociology, environmentalism, or anything that seems relevant to the course (courses, readings, interests, etc), 3) what your expectations are for a course entitled “Environmental

Justice” (that is, what you thought this course would be about before coming to the first class), 4) why you chose this FSP section, and 5) what you hope to learn and take away from this course. There are neither right nor wrong responses on these, and I do not want you to tell me what you think I want to hear. Take it as an opportunity to think about your own goals for the class.

The second part to the entrance paper requires that you think about what you hope to get out of your college experience overall. Why did you decide to come to college? Why did you decide to come to TCNJ, a relatively small, public liberal arts college? What do you understand a liberal arts education to be? How do you see this class, and that you are required to take an FSP at all, as fitting into your educational goals? You need not go into extensive detail for these questions, and I don't want you to search online for a prepackaged answer to these questions. The point is to reflect upon your experiences and understandings of what you want to get out of college.

Exit Paper: This paper is, at a minimum, a one-page, single-spaced self-evaluation of what you got out of the course, what was different from what you expected, how you think you have changed through this course, and any other general reflections, suggestions, or criticisms of the course. This can be as long as you would like, but must be a serious reflection on your experiences in this course and not a superficial ‘this class was good; I liked it’. If I judge that you did not take this assignment seriously, I will ask that you rewrite it and your final grade will be withheld until I receive a revised version.

Class participation (15 points; 13% of final grade)

This part of the final grade will be based on participation in class, which includes:

1) Attendance. I expect students to be present at every class. For every unexcused absence after the third one, your final grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a grade (that is, from an A to an A-, for example). This includes partial absences. If you must leave early, arrive late, or miss class, let me know before class starts to make appropriate arrangements. Should you need to miss a class or assignment due to religious obligations, please contact me in advance to make arrangements. TCNJ's attendance policy is available here: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~recreg/policies/attendance.html>

2) Preparation. I expect you to have done the assigned readings for the day and to have thought about them before class. Being consistently unprepared will significantly affect your final grade. I measure preparation by your ability to ask and answer relevant questions about the day's reading and the themes of the course effectively.

3) Participation. Classroom discussion of readings is a key part of the learning process. By actively taking part you also improve your chances of doing well on the written assignments. Asking questions of your classmates and myself, and engaging in conversation with us, demonstrate interest and engagement with the material and your classmates. Your physical presence in the classroom does not count as participation.

4) Group work. This course includes a variety of in-class group activities. These activities will take different shapes throughout the course, but will make up a part of your participation grade. Occasionally we will do peer evaluations where group members provide the instructor with feedback on their own and their classmates' participation effort.

5) Discussion Questions. You are required to post discussion questions on Canvas at least ten times over the course of the semester (roughly once a week) on days that are not Preparation Paper days. You should post 2-3 questions that pertain to that day's reading. They must be posted by 10am on the day of class to count. These can be questions of clarification/confusion ("I didn't understand X; what does the author mean?"), of interest ("I thought X was really interesting because Y; I'd like to talk about this more in class.") of provocation ("I don't agree with what the author's saying here because of X."), or of anything that you think will contribute to class discussion and to your understanding of the material. The rationale behind these questions is to get you thinking about the reading constructively before coming to class.

Preparation Papers (40 points [4 papers at 10pts each]; 33% of final grade)

Students will write a series of preparation papers over the course of the semester. Preparation papers teach skills of comprehension together with skills of formulating positions for the exchange of ideas in debate with classmates. Preparation papers are no less than 2 and no more than 3 double-spaced pages (12 point Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins) that respond to questions distributed in class. Preparation papers are assigned five times this semester; every student must do **four** of the five assigned preparation papers. **All students must do the first preparation paper, due Monday, September 9th.** You may do all five preparation papers; if you do, your lowest preparation paper grade will be dropped.

On days when preparation papers are due, we will break into peer work groups. The papers take the place of my lecture and must be prepared on time; they provide the basis for the in-class work of group discussion. The goal of a preparation paper is to inform your small group discussion. The content of a preparation paper is a succinct explanation of the main points of the reading and a provocative and thoughtful response to a discussion question in order to spark group discussion. Preparation Paper assignments will be distributed one week before that preparation paper day. During class on preparation paper days, I will distribute a series of questions that your group is responsible for answering as a group.

Class attendance is required of everyone on the days that preparation papers are due. If you absolutely have to miss a preparation paper day, see me **in advance** to make other arrangements.

Midterm Essay (20 points; 17% of final grade)

Your midterm essay will require you to integrate the historical and theoretical background of the Environmental Justice movement covered in the first unit with the empirical cases and information about New Jersey covered in the first part of the second unit. The essay will be due, in class, on Monday, October 14th. You will bring two hardcopies of your completed essay to class and you will upload your essay to Canvas. In class, you will exchange your essay with two of your classmates (determined by me). I and your two classmate peer-reviewers will read, comment on, and edit your essay. On Thursday, October 17th, we will have a writing workshop in class during which you will meet with your peer reviewers and discuss your papers and their comments on them. Taking into account their comments and my comments, you will

revise your essay and submit it online to Canvas by midnight on Friday, October 25th. The essay must be 4-6 pages typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, with references to materials from class properly cited. You will receive a detailed assignment on Thursday, October 3rd.

Community Engagement Activity Paper (10 points; 8% of final grade)

As part of the Community Engagement Learning requirement, you will write a paper that reflects upon our community engagement experience and applies the historical and theoretical information from course readings to our Community Engagement activity. In this paper, you will answer three basic questions: 1. What did you do? In your own words, describe what we did during our activity. 2. What was the significance of what we did? Describe, in the context of course readings, why, how, or if our activities mattered or made a difference in some way. 3. What did you learn? Describe what you got out of this experience, what you learned about the community you live in, what it has taught you about the community you come from, and in what ways it might change how you act or think. If you got nothing out of it, explain why not. This paper is due Monday, November 18th, in-class, and should be no less than 3 and no more than 4 pages, double-space, 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins.

FSP Presentation (10 points; 8% of final grade)

On Wednesday, December 4th, a symposium of FSP courses will take place at which all FSP sections will present a poster, video, or other project reflecting the content of their FSP course and any related activities. As a class, we will decide what form this will take and all students will contribute in some way to this presentation. On Monday, December 2nd, the class session will be dedicated to working on this presentation. A more detailed assignment will be distributed closer to the assignment due date.

Final Essay (25 points; 21% of final grade)

Your final essay will require that you holistically and critically reflect upon Environmental Justice movements and activism in a scholarly and informed way. The essay will be due the day of the scheduled final (as determined by Records and Registration) on Canvas. You will receive a detailed assignment the last day of class, Thursday, December 6th. The essay must be 5-7 pages typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, with references to materials from class properly cited.

<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Submit</u>
2 September	Entrance Paper	Canvas
9 September	Preparation Paper 1	in-class
23 September	Preparation Paper 2	in-class
7 October	Preparation Paper 3	in-class
14 October	Midterm Essay v.1	in-class and Canvas
25 October (Friday)	Midterm Essay v.2	Canvas

7 November	Preparation Paper 4	in-class
18 November	Community Engagement Paper	in-class and Canvas
21 November	Preparation Paper 5	in-class
6 December (Friday)	Exit Paper	Canvas
?? December	Final Essay	Canvas

Late Work: Plan your schedule responsibly: the dates listed above are when assignments are due to me. Unless otherwise stated, Canvas-submitted assignments are due by sunrise the day after the stated due date. Late assignments will lose one-third letter grade each day they are late (an A becomes an A-, etc).

Required Texts

There are three required texts to be purchased for this course:

Belton, Thomas. *Protecting New Jersey's Environments*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0813548876.

Cole, Luke W. and Sheila R. Foster. *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2001. ISBN: 978-0814715376.

Hedges, Chris and Joe Sacco. *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt*. New York: Nation Books, 2012. ISBN: 978-1568586434.

All other readings will be available on Canvas, as marked by "*" in the schedule. In direct repudiation of environmental friendliness, I encourage you to print out the readings and bring them to class.

Class Schedule

I. Justice + Environmentalism = Environmental Justice?

Thursday, August 29: Introductions

Monday, Sept 2: Entrance Paper due

Tuesday, Sept 3: *DiChiro, "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice," *Uncommon Ground*

Reading Questions: Why weren't the issues that concerned the residents of south central LA considered to be "environmental" by mainstream environmental groups? What does environment mean to these movements? How is this different from earlier environmental movements? Why does it matter or make a difference? What's the author's point about "community?"

Thursday, Sept 5: Hedges and Sacco, *Days of Destruction*, xi-xv, 59-113

RQs: What do they mean by “sacrifice zones?” This is not an explicitly environmental, in the conventional sense, book, and their argument is not solely about the environment. But reading the chapter on Camden, how is what they’re discussing related to the environment? What perspective does the DiChiro article provide on their account of Camden? Use the chapter to think about how globalization, the economy, local politics, and the environment interact to create contemporary realities in cities.

II. History and Theory of Environmental Justice

Monday, Sept 9: Cole and Foster, 1-33

Prep Paper 1

Thursday, Sept 12: Cole and Foster, 34-53

RQs: What is meant by “political economy?” Why did Chester get numerous waste facilities sited within its borders? Why and how do the authors differentiate between legal and political issues? How did local politicians help or hinder the situation?

Monday, Sept 16: Cole and Foster, 54-79

RQs: What do Cole and Foster mean by the “problem of causation (58)?” What’s the problem? Why is it difficult to demonstrate environmental racism in court? What is meant by “structural” racism? What are their criticisms of “race-blind” policy?

Thursday, Sept 19: Cole and Foster, 80-102

Monday, Sept 23: Cole and Foster, 103-133

Prep Paper 2

Thursday, Sept 26: Cole and Foster, 151-165

*Bullard, “Environmental Justice in the 21st Century”

III. Environmental Justice issues

New Jersey

Monday, Sept 30: Belton, *Protecting New Jersey’s Environments*, 1-48

Thursday, Oct 3: Belton, *Protecting New Jersey’s Environments*, 49-99

Monday, Oct 7: Belton, *Protecting New Jersey’s Environments*, 100-148

Prep Paper 3

Thursday, Oct 10: Belton, *Protecting New Jersey’s Environments*, 149-205

Monday, Oct 14: Belton, *Protecting New Jersey's Environments*, 206-227
Meet the Author
Midterm Essay Draft due

Thursday, Oct 17: **Writing Workshop on Midterm Essay**

Monday, Oct 21: Hedges and Sacco, *Days of Destruction*, 115-176
 *Barry, ““A Small Group of Thoughtful, Committed Citizens””

Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, and “Natural Disasters”

Thursday, Oct 24: *Wright, “Living and Drying in Louisiana’s “Cancer Alley,””
 *Cutter, “The Geography of Social Vulnerability: Race, Class, and Catastrophe”

Friday, Oct 25: Midterm Essay due

Monday, Oct 28: Mid-semester Break: NO CLASS

Thursday, Oct 31: *Smith, “There’s No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster”
 *Dyson, “Unnatural Disaster”

Monday, Nov 4: *Sze, “Toxic Soup Redux: Why Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Matter after Katrina”
 *Waterhouse, “Failed Plans and Planned Failures”

Food

Thursday, Nov 7: *Gottlieb, “Where We Live, Work, Play... and Eat”
 *Winne, *Closing the Food Gap*, Intro, chapter 4
Prep Paper 4

Monday, Nov 11: *Williams, “Food and Justice: The Critical Link to Healthy Communities”
 *Winne, *Closing the Food Gap*, chapter 6

Thursday, Nov 14: *Winne, *Closing the Food Gap*, chapter 10, Conclusion

Monday, Nov 18: Hedges and Sacco, *Days of Destruction*, 177-224
Community Engagement Activity Paper due

Global Environmental Justice

Thursday, Nov 21: *Roberts, “Globalizing Environmental Justice,” 285-308, *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism*

*Miranda et al., “The Environmental Justice Dimensions of Climate Change”

Prep Paper 5

Monday, Nov 25: *Pellow, “The Global Village Dump: Trashing the Planet”

Thursday, Nov 28: Thanksgiving, NO CLASS

IV. Conclusions

Monday, Dec 2: FSP Presentation work day

Wednesday, Dec 4: FSP Symposium (exact time TBD)

Thursday, Dec 5: *Mohai, Pellow, and Roberts, “Environmental Justice”
Hedges and Sacco, *Days of Destruction*, 260-271

Friday, Dec 6: Exit Paper due

?? Dec ??: **Final Essays due**