

SUST 334: Environmental Justice Practicum

Fall 2020

3 Credits

Tues & Thurs 11:00-12:15pm

Location: Remote via Zoom

Instructor: Eileen O’Shaughnessy

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Office: Caster Hall (Biology Building), room 163B

Office Hours: On Zoom by appointment

*“Ecology without social justice is little more than gardening.”
-Enrique Viale*

One of the first things we learn as students of environmental justice is that environmental hazards and toxins are not distributed across communities equally. Communities of color have historically been on the frontlines of both environmental racism and on the frontlines of activism calling for environmental justice and sustainability. In these times of accelerating change and deepening inequalities, what can environmental justice- which is both a social movement and an academic field of study -teach us about cultivating resilience, restoring balance, and sustaining life? In this course, we will co-create a learning community in search of answers to this question. Students will leave this course with hands-on experience and tools to both practice and theorize environmental justice and sustainability.

Course Objectives:

- Develop intellectual, practical, and creative skills to move towards sustainability and environmental justice.
- Gain a thorough understanding of environmental justice and environmental racism.
- Work with peers to organize an environmental justice-oriented project for the benefit of the campus or community
- Complete 5 hours of “digital” community engagement via webinars, trainings, etc.

Required Course Materials:

- Articles available on UNM Learn

Grading Scheme:

Class Participation (Attendance, Engagement in the Classroom):	20%
Reading Engagement	20%
Op/Ed	10%
Environmental Justice Project (see full rubric below):	40%
Digital Community Hours (5 hrs):	10%

A+ 99-100%	B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D+ 67-69%	F 60% or lower
A 93-98%	B 83-86%	C 73-76%	D 63-66%	
A- 90-92%	B- 80-82%	C- 70-72%	D- 60-62%	

Class Participation:

This class relies on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. In order for the course to be effective, all students MUST have the reading assignments completed and be prepared for an in-depth discussion each class. Students should bring the assigned reading to class, along with note-taking materials. Active listening and mutual respect are requirements for this course. Our course covers topics that you may not agree with or may elicit intense and emotional reactions from you. While some readings may challenge you or make you feel uncomfortable, take this as sign that you are learning and pushing the boundaries of what you took for granted. I ask that you keep an open mind and challenge yourself, while being respectful of the authors we read, your fellow classmates, and me. Hate speech, constant interruptions, and disrespect will not be tolerated.

*Please turn off and put away all cell phones during class. Refrain from facebook, email, and anything other than a word doc for note taking as it is distracting to all around you. *This is true for Zoom too! Please be present to our class when we are together: virtually or in-person..**

Reading Engagement:

For classes where reading(s) are assigned, you will be expected to come to our class session with the following items for EACH reading assigned:

1. A discussion question (i.e. a question that will help us unpack the reading as a class)
2. A productive comment regarding something that struck you about the reading (i.e. “I hated it.” Or “I loved it.” are not productive comments in that they do not produce more inquiry or discussion.) What struck you about the reading specifically and why?

Each class session, you will post these two items in the Zoom chat at the beginning of class. I will grade this on a Complete or Incomplete basis. If you are absent or don’t turn in a reading engagement in class and you email me it at a later time, I will give you half credit. It is very important that you stay on top of your readings as this is a discussion-based class.

Op/Ed:

You will write an op/ed style opinion paper (600-800 words) about an environmental justice issue of your choice. This could be a local, national or international issue. Your op/ed must present a convincing argument as to why this is an important issue of environmental justice and how the inequality is/was created –what are the relevant social, political and/or economic factors?

Your piece must also make a case for why this issue must be addressed, and you should suggest potential solutions or paths to a solution -perhaps a policy or social movement tactic. Your goal is to be persuasive and to mobilize support and shift opinions. Thus, your writing should be concise and clear – op/ed pieces are not complicated. Their goal is to make a coherent and convincing point that will engage and persuade the reading audience. Please also submit information on this issue (for example, a newspaper article or a snippet from another credible source) to provide me with context and background. We will discuss examples in class. Everyone will post their op/ed on Learn. You are required to then post at least one comment on another student’s op/ed. I will also provide feedback so that you can revise and submit your op/ed to the newspaper or blog of your choice for publication. This is due on October 13th.

Environmental Justice Project:

This project is the central facet of the class. You will work in teams throughout the semester to design, troubleshoot, and implement a project that will be beneficial to our campus or community. Your project should respond creatively to the justice issues we face in our communities. You will take one environmental justice issue as a “case study” to respond to and educate others about. We will discuss possible projects in class

and brainstorm ideas together. Your project should address some aspect of this issue either creatively, educationally, or practically.

The project is divided into 5 parts (outlined below.) More detailed instructions for each part will be discussed in class.

Part 1: Logic Model due Sept. 15th (10%): Each team will turn in one “Logic Model” worksheet outlining their project.

Part 2: Proposal/Proposal Presentation due Oct. 6th (20%): Each team will turn in one project proposal and present on their proposal for the class.

Part 3: 2 Progress Reports due Oct. 29th & Nov. 24th (15%): Each team will turn in two separate reports on our tumblr site (sust334.tumblr.com) on their project’s progress worth 5% each.

Part 4: Final Presentation due Dec. 8th (25%): Each team will present their project at the end of the semester for the class and possibly the wider campus/community.

Part 5: Final Reflection Paper due Dec. 8th (30%): Each team member will turn in one individual reflection paper (4-5 double-spaced type-written pages) including a description of their contribution to the team’s end product. The papers must reference at least 3 class texts and 2 outside scholarly sources.

Community Hours:

In non-Covid 19 times, we would be spending a considerable amount of time off-campus, connecting to community groups and events in Albuquerque and beyond. In order to stay safe, I will not require any in-person “community hours” this semester. Instead, you will be required to complete 5 hours of digital community outreach and education. There are a number of free webinars, events, and trainings available right now online which connect directly to our course topics. I will provide a list of these webinars and if you come across one you think might apply, please email me to receive my approval. You will write one paragraph for each webinar/online event or training you complete describing how it enhanced your education and submit that paper (total 5 hours) at the end of the semester. This will be submitted on Learn.

Attendance Policy and Late Work:

Regular attendance is crucial to maintaining a committed and vibrant intellectual atmosphere. You are allowed TWO absences, and after two absences **your overall participation grade will be lowered by 5 points for each additional absence.** *Documented* medical and family emergencies are not included. (Note: Stellar participation in class has the potential to raise a borderline grade. Attendance problems or lack of engagement can lower your grade.) Unless you have made prior arrangements with me, late papers will be graded after a 10% reduction **for each day past the due date.** This does not apply to documented medical or family emergencies. Late reading responses will receive half credit.

Academic Dishonesty:

See pathfinder.unm.edu/common/policies/academic-dishonesty.html for the official policy. Let me know if you have any questions. Always cite your sources (whether you quote directly or paraphrase) to clearly to avoid problems with plagiarism. We will discuss plagiarism in detail at the beginning of the semester so as to avoid any confusion.

Accommodation:

Accessibility Services (Mesa Vista Hall 2021, 277-3506) provides academic support to students with disabilities. If you think you need alternative accessible formats for undertaking and completing coursework, you should contact this service right away to assure your needs are met in a timely manner. If you need local assistance in contacting Accessibility Services, see the Bachelor and Graduate Programs office.

Immigration Status:

As an educator, I fully support the rights of undocumented students to an education and to live free from the fear of deportation. I pledge that I will not disclose the immigration status of any student who shares this information with me unless required by a judicial warrant, and I will work with students who require

immigration-related accommodations. For more information and/or resources, please contact the New Mexico Dream Team at info@nmdreamteam.org.

Trigger warning: sexual assault and related issues:

According to UNM policy your instructor is a "mandatory reporter" required to report sexual assault, misconduct, and harassment they observe or learn of through communications with students. Students who bring such information to the attention of their instructor may become subject of an investigation by the Office of Equal Opportunity. Your option is to first contact a confidential reporting location such as LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center, WRC, or the LGBTQ office to assess your options without creating automatic actions beyond your control. Nonetheless, your SUST instructor remains a resource and direct contact with UNM if you so desire.

Schedule:

***Note*:** I don't plan on it, but I reserve the right to change our schedule if I deem necessary. I will always give as much advance notice as I can and communicate the changes both in class and via email.

Class/Class's Theme	Date	Topic	Read/Discuss	Assignment Due
Class 1: Introductions	Tues, Aug. 18 th	Syllabus review, Introductions, and Course Expectations "The Impossible Train Story" Video	Syllabus	
Class 2: Introductions	Thurs, Aug. 20 th	Intro to EJ Principles Foundational understandings of "environment"	"Principles of EJ" First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit 1991; Selections from <i>Silent Spring</i> , Rachel Carson	Reading Engagement
Class 3: What is Environmental Justice?	Tues, Aug. 25 th	The origins of the movement; environmental racism	"Toxic Wastes and Race in the U.S." Commission for Racial Justice, UCC (p.ix-xvi; 15-27)	Reading Engagement
Class 4: History of the Environmental Justice Movement	Thurs, Aug 27 th	What are the historic "tributaries" that flow into the "river" of environmental justice?	"A History of the Environmental Justice Movement" in <i>From the Ground Up</i> , Luke Cole & Sheila Foster	Reading Engagement

Class/Class's Theme	Date	Topic	Read/Discuss	Assignment Due
Class 5: Institutional Racism	Tues, Sept. 1 st	What is structural racism? Redlining and Environmental Racism	“Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California”, Laura Pulido; “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”, Peggy McIntosh	Reading Engagement
Class 6: Environmental Racism	Thurs, Sept. 3 rd	A deeper look at environmental racism Begin process of matching team members. Skills exercise.	Excerpts from <i>Environmental Justice in New Mexico</i> by Valerie Rangel	Reading Engagement
Class 7: Race and the Environment	Tues, Sept. 8 th	How does race & racism impact the way we experience and view the “environment”?	Excerpts from <i>Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors</i> - Carolyn Finney ;“Conclusion” from <i>Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism</i> -Carl Zimring	Reading Engagement

Class/Class's Theme	Date	Topic	Read/Discuss	Assignment Due
Class 8: Institutional Racism/Settler Colonialism	Thurs, Sept. 10 th	<p>What's colonialism got to do with it?</p> <p>In class short film: "Frontera!"</p> <p>Assign: Individual field trip to the "La Jornada Monument" (ABQ Museum)</p> <p>Groups chosen: begin work on logic models and panels (move towards topics)</p>	Excerpts from <i>An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States</i> , Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz; Excerpt from <i>Understories</i> by Jake Kosek	Reading Engagement
Class 9: Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger	Tues, Sept. 15 th	Understanding the historical context of environmental justice in relationship with the current moment	Intro from <i>Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger</i> by Julie Sze	Reading Engagement Logic Models due
Class 10: The Nuclear Legacy	Thurs, Sept. 17 th	What is the legacy of nuclear colonialism in New Mexico?	"Nuclear Natures: In the Shadows of the City on a Hill" from <i>Understories</i> by Jake Kosek	Reading Engagement
Class 11: Water, Air, Land in New Mexico	Tues, Sept. 22 nd	<p>The Mixed Waste Landfill</p> <p>The Precautionary Principle</p>	"Toxic Waste: Everything Has to Go Somewhere" from <i>The Orphaned Land</i> by VB Price	Reading Engagement
Class 12: Climate Justice/Climate Crisis	Thurs, Sept. 24 th	Deep Adaptation as a Strategy and Starting Point	"Deep Adaptation: A Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy" by Jem Bendell	Reading Engagement
Class 13: Climate Justice/Climate Crisis	Tues, Sept. 29 th	<p>What is Climate Justice?</p> <p>What is Climate Debt?</p>	"Restoring Environmental Justice" and "Conclusion" from <i>Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger</i> by Julie Sze	Reading Engagement

Class/Class's Theme	Date	Topic	Read/Discuss	Assignment Due
Class 14: Climate Justice/Climate Crisis	Thurs, Oct. 1 st	What does courage look like in the face of potential collapse? Solastalgia and ecological grief	"Courage: Facing Up to the Unraveling of the Biosphere" from <i>Developing Ecological Consciousness</i> by Christopher Uhl	Reading Engagement
Class 15: Campus/Community Projects	Tues, Oct. 6 th	Teams present their proposals Peer feedback on proposals		Team Project Proposal and Presentation due
Class 16: Drawdown strategies for climate change	Thurs, Oct. 8 th	What are concrete strategies for carbon reduction?	Excerpts from <i>Drawdown</i> edited by Paul Hawken	Reading Engagement
Class 17: Systems Thinking: the Web of Life	Tues, Oct. 13 th	What does it mean to be interconnected within the web of life?	"Cultivating Community: Intimacy with Earth's Web of Life" from <i>Developing Ecological Consciousness</i> by Christopher Uhl	Reading Engagement and Op/Ed due
Class 18: International Environmental Activists Under Attack	Thurs, Oct. 15 th	Why are environmental activists under attack worldwide? Understanding "eco-terrorism" Timeline of civil rights suppression	"Revolutionary Ecology" by Judi Bari In-class film <i>Berta Didn't Die, She Multiplied</i>	Reading Engagement
Class 19: Toxic threats, cancer, and healing justice	Tues, Oct. 20 th	Toxic threats, cancer, and healing justice Toxics Release Inventory	"Ecological Roots" and "Afterward" Sandra Steingraber	Reading Engagement
Class 20: Waste	Thurs, Oct. 22 nd	Trash, Waste, and Garbage	<i>What We Leave Behind</i> , Derrick Jensen & Aric McBay	Reading Engagement

Class/Class's Theme	Date	Topic	Read/Discuss	Assignment Due
Class 21: Gentrification	Tues, Oct. 27 th	What is gentrification? How does gentrification intersect with environmental justice in Albuquerque?	Excerpts from <i>How to Kill a City</i> by P.E. Moskowitz ; "Urbanicide of Burque" from <i>Environmental Justice in New Mexico</i> by Valerie Rangel	Reading Engagement
Class 22: Sacred Spaces	Thurs, Oct. 29 th	What does "the sacred" mean in the context of environmental justice?	"The Sacred and the Superfund" from <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> , Robin Wall Kimmerer	Team's progress report #1 due
Class 23: Election Day	Tues, Nov. 3 rd	No class	Vote!	VOTE!
Class 24: The Great Turning	Thurs, Nov. 5 th	What is the "greening of the self" and how does it apply to our studies? "The Great Turning" Model	"The Greening of the Self" Joanna Macy; "Imagining Earth" Geneen Marie Haugen	Reading Engagement
Class 25: Learning from Mycelium	Tues, Nov. 10 th	The possibilities of phyto and myco-remediation	Interview with Paul Stamets from <i>Truths Among Us</i> by Derrick Jensen	Reading Engagement
Class 26: Fracking and Extractive Industries	Thurs, Nov. 12 th	What are the environmental, political, social, and long-term costs of fracking? What is the global outlook?	"Fracking: The Boom and Its Consequences" Ian Dunlop; "Intro" Bamberger & Oswald	Reading Engagement
Class 27: Indigenous Wisdom and Scientific Knowledge	Tues, Nov. 17 th	What would it mean to widen our ecological consciousness?	Excerpt from <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> by Robin Wall Kimmerer	Reading Engagement
Class 28: Emergent Strategy	Thurs, Nov. 19 st	What strategies exist to move us toward healing and sustainability?	Selections from <i>Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds</i> by adrienne maree brown	Reading Engagement

Class 29: Indigenous Resistance & Standing Rock	Tues, Nov. 24 th	What did Standing Rock teach us about water, sustainability, and settler colonialism?	Excerpts from <i>Our History is the Future</i> by Nick Estes	Team's progress report #2 due
Class 30: "Things-taken" Break	Thurs, Nov. 26 th	No class		
Class 31: Looking to the horizon	Tues, Dec. 1 st	What does "hope" look like in the context of our studies this semester?	Excerpts from <i>Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities</i> , by Rebecca Solnit; "People of Corn, People of Light" in <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> by Robin Wall Kimmerer	Reading Engagement
Class 32: Campus/Community Project	Thurs, Dec. 3 rd	Course evaluations Final preparations for presentations	"Our Way into the Future" and "Evening Thoughts" by Thomas Berry	Reading Engagement Community Hours Log Due
Class 33: Final Presentations	Tues, Dec. 8 th	Final Presentations (12:30-2:30pm)		Project Papers and Presentations due

"Nature also teaches me persistence and perseverance, because in the end 'nothing stops nature.' If a rose can grow out of the concrete, then so can we."

-Micah Hobbes Frazier

Have a wonderful summer!