GEOG 383.99/703.86 Environmental Justice
Hunter College Summer Session I
June 2, 2008-July 9, 2008
Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:40-9:48
Room: HN 1021

Instructor: Hamil Pearsall
Office Hours: Please email me to set up an appointment
Office and phone: HN 1032, 212-772-5265
Email: cpearsall@clarku.edu (preferred contact)
Department Office and Phone: 1006 Hunter North, 212-772-5265

Course Description
Why do children in West Harlem have elevated asthma rates? Do all communities across New York City have equal access to open space? What can be done to ensure that low-income neighborhoods have the same environmental quality as their wealthier counterparts? This course will analyze these questions through the lens of environmental justice. Environmental justice is concerned with the equitable distribution of environmental burdens and benefits and access to decision making for all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income. We will examine the history, theoretical frameworks, research methods, and future directions of the environmental justice movement in the United States (US). To ground our theoretical and methodological discussions, we will consider several case studies from New York City.

Class will include lecture, discussion, and guest speakers. Skill building exercises will consist of reading, writing, presenting, critiquing, and working as a team, all of which are critical to the study of environmental justice. This course was designed with Environmental Studies majors in mind but can be equally valuable to Geography majors/minors and those interested in the subject.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Identify and understand key moments in the environmental justice movement in the US
- Compare and contrast theoretical frameworks used to analyze environmental justice
- Compare and contrast methods used to analyze environmental justice
- Examine real world situations through the lens of environmental justice

Required text:
ISBN-10: 0262693429

The book will be available through the campus book store. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.
Grading:
20% - Attendance and active participation (throughout the term)
20% - Reaction papers (2)
15% - Student-led discussion session (1)
  5% - Project proposal (1)
20% - Written component of group project (1)
15% - Oral presentation of group project (1)
  5% - Group project peer review (1)

Participation is an important part of your grade! Please come prepared to each class with comments or questions about the assigned readings. Because participation is such an important part of class, it’s extremely important that you come to and actively participate in each session. Having said that, I understand that life happens. Students may take one unexcused absence during the session; absences beyond that will be noted and will negatively affect your grade.

Reaction Papers will be assigned throughout the semester to evaluate your understanding of the readings and class material. Each assignment will be in the form of a short reaction paper (page limit: 2 pages, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, double-spaced) and will ask you to synthesize/analyze/critique a particular set of the readings. Papers will be graded on content, clarity of argument, and style. There is a five-point penalty per day (on a 100-point scale) for late papers.

The student-led discussion sessions will give each of you the opportunity to moderate a discussion with your peers on a set of readings. Discussion leaders/moderators should prepare questions in advance that highlight new concepts and interesting issues introduced in the readings and link concepts raised or discussed in previous classes. These questions should be emailed to the instructor by 5p the day before the discussion takes place (i.e. if you are moderating a discussion on Thursday, June 4th, you should email your questions to the instructor before 5p on Wednesday, June 3rd.

The group project is a session-long research project, and students should begin early and feel free to contact the instructor with questions. Working in groups two or three, students will select a case study that demonstrates one particular issue of environmental (in)justice and provide a critical analysis of this case study using the theoretical, analytical, and methodological approaches covered in class. You may choose a local, national, or international case study.

Groups will submit a project proposal early in the term (page limit: 1 page, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, double-spaced) and will also submit a final written report (page limit: 10 pages, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, doubled-spaced) describing the case study, including its impact on the local community, a critique of community, public and government response, as well as recommendations for future actions. These papers are due the last day of class. References and appendices are expected and do not count towards the page limit. Group members will receive the same grade for the proposal and written component of the group project.
Oral presentations of group projects will be held the last week of classes. Groups will have 30 minutes (including Q and A). Students should take this assignment seriously, as it counts for 15% of their final grade.

Each group member will complete a peer review of the group project, which will count towards 5% of their final grade. The purpose of the review is to understand how each group member experienced the collaborative process. This will be a blind review meaning that the review will be between the instructor and the reviewer only. The reviews will not be shared among group members.

**Hunter College Grading System**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97.5%-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92.5%-97.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90%-92.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.5% - 89.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82.5% - 87.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80% - 82.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.5% - 79.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 77.4%</td>
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**Course policies:**

- **Academic Honesty:** In this class you are expected to abide by Hunter College’s Academic Integrity Policies.
  
  "Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures."

- Plagiarism, cheating, lying, stealing, or falsification will not be tolerated, and students caught doing so will be reported to the Academic Integrity Review Council. Please refer to the following or speak with me if you have any questions:
  http://studentservices.hunter.cuny.edu/advising/advising_policies_integrity.htm

- **Technology in the classroom:** Please turn your cell phones off during class. In other words, no talking, texting, emailing, or IM-ing, please! Musical devices are not allowed. Computers are welcome as long as they are used for class purposes.

- **Late assignments:** Late assignments will be penalized 5 points per day (on a 100-point scale). Students should consult the instructor at least 48 hours before the deadline if they wish to receive an extension (without a penalty). If a student fails to submit an assignment by the end of the session (Thursday, July 9th), s/he will receive a 0 for that assignment.
Outline of class topics:

Introduction
- Definitions of environmental justice
- Background on U.S. Environmentalism
- History of the U.S. environmental justice movement

Theoretical frameworks
- Theories of social justice
- Core concepts of environmental justice
- Local, national, and international perspectives

Addressing environmental justice
- EJ research: Successes and Challenges
- EJ Activism
- Transformative politics of EJ

Future directions of the Environmental Justice movement
- Environmental Justice-Sustainability nexus
- Adoption of EJ principles into public policy
Book chapters can be found in Sze (2007) *Noxious New York*. All other articles (full citations included on following page) will be posted on Blackboard. Books will be placed on reserve in the library.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues, June 2nd</td>
<td>Introductions, definitions and course overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs, June 4th</td>
<td>Background on the US Environmental Movement</td>
<td>(Gottlieb 2001a)</td>
<td>In-class report of article from popular media on EJ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues, June 9th</td>
<td>History of U.S. Environmental Justice Movement</td>
<td>(Bullard 1990; Gottlieb 2001b; Sze 2007 Ch 1)</td>
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<td>Thurs, June 11th</td>
<td>Theories of Social Justice</td>
<td>(Harvey 1996a; Garrett 2002)</td>
<td>Project Proposal</td>
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<td>Tues, June 16th</td>
<td>Core concepts of Environmental Justice In-class film: Race: The Power</td>
<td>(Been 1994; Harvey 1996b; Pulido 2000)</td>
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<td>Thurs, June 18th</td>
<td>“Third World” Environmental Justice</td>
<td>(Leichenko and Solecki 2008; Schroeder et al. 2008)</td>
<td>Response Paper I</td>
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<td>Tues, June 23rd</td>
<td>Global to Local In-class film: Global Dumping Ground</td>
<td>(Sze 2007 Ch 4)</td>
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<td>Tues, June 30th</td>
<td>EJ activism Case study: Childhood asthma</td>
<td>(Sze 2007 Ch 3; Terrell et al. 2008)</td>
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<td>Thurs, July 2nd</td>
<td>Transformative politics of EJ activism Case Study: G/W incinerator</td>
<td>(Gandy 2002; Sze 2007 Conclusion)</td>
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<td>Tues, July 7th</td>
<td>Future of EJ Movement</td>
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<td>Thurs, July 9th</td>
<td>Final Presentations</td>
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<td>Written component of final project</td>
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Bibliography


