

**SOC 481**  
**Environmental Inequality & Justice**  
**T/Th 12:15-1:30**  
**S1 2022**

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**Course description**

SOC 481 Q\* Environmental Inequality and Justice - 3 credits. Prereq: SOC 101 or SOC 102; junior standing, or permission of the instructor. This course explores the history of the environmental inequality and justice in the U.S. with specific attention to research and theories of EJ scholarship within sociology and the application of these concepts to the distribution of environmental contamination across communities. Over the course of the term, we will 1) review the history environmental inequality, 2) explore the foundations of the environmental justice movement, and 3) investigate current and emerging issues that demand the application of an environmental justice perspective. More broadly, we will assess the disproportionate burdens of environmental contamination affecting communities of color and low-income white communities across the US; evaluate claims made by groups affected by these issues; and examine the policy, protest, and civil society responses communities engage in to address inequity and injustice. This course is an experiential learning course that requires 15 hours of fieldwork.

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**Course objectives**

- 1) engage in critical exploration of themes and concepts that inform our understanding of environmental inequality and justice.
- 2) develop an informed perspective of how to achieve an equitable distribution of environmental “good” and “bads”.
- 3) become familiar with the causes and consequences of the present distribution of environmental quality across communities.
- 4) understand and appreciate the diverse voices, strategies, and tactics that inform the ways in communities take action on environmental justice debate issues.

**Course learning outcomes**

- 1) Identify issues of environmental inequality justice and the ways in which these issues reflect and are magnified by legacies of colonization, racism, classism, and other social inequalities.
- 2) Explain points of contention involve in a variety of salient historical and current environmental inequality and justice conflicts.
- 3) Apply sociological theories of environmental justice to a variety of institutions, policies, and recognize and critique others' use of such theories.
- 4) Make a well-reasoned case for what a fair and equitable resolution to environmental inequality would be.

## **Course text**

Readings are available on moodle (online or pdf).

## **Course requirements**

### *Attendance and Class Engagement 10%*

This class is designed to work best if you keep up with the reading and come to class prepared to discuss, ask questions, debate, and otherwise engage class material. Full credit will be awarded for students who are present for and actively *contribute to* class discussion and activities. If you become ill or for some other reason attending class sessions becomes difficult, please communicate with me to discuss how this will impact your grade in the class.

### *Discussion Forums 20%*

There is a discussion forum each week with prompts designed to get you thinking about the material and prepared to fully engage in class discussions. Forum posts are due prior to class time on Thursday. Forum posts should be 1) at least 300 words, 2) directly respond to the prompts by specifically engaging course materials, 3) submitted on time. Late entries will be accepted with a point deduction. You are not required to read or comment on other students' posts, though you may do so if you choose. Top ten forum grades will count toward the final grade and whether make-up credit is possible.

### *Quizzes 20%*

Each week in which reading material is assigned there will be a multiple-choice quiz. You are encouraged complete the quizzes on a weekly basis however you may complete them at your own pace without penalty. Final deadline for quiz completion is the Friday of the last week of classes at 11:59 pm EST.

### *Midterm Essay/Exam 20%*

To be completed during Week 9: several prompts will be provided as a way for you to demonstrate understanding and application of assigned course materials.

### *Final paper/project 30%*

#### **Part 1: Demonstration (10%)**

Choose a product or commodity that you enjoy and examine the human and environmental impact of its production and consumption. Assess the environmental inequalities and privileges related to the production and consumption of the item. Then demonstrate what you've learned: you can write on op-ed or short story, paint a picture, perform a monolog, make a tik tok video / twitter thread / Instagram post, make an infographic, record a podcast, compile a playlist, etc. Whatever you choose must be documented in a way that can be submitted for assessment. Your demonstration will be assessed on the extent to which it shows mastery of course concepts.

## Part 2: Analysis (20%)

Submit an analysis to accompany your demonstration in which you:

- Provide an overview of the product/commodity and its environmental impacts, inequalities, and privileges. Cite your sources.
- Show how your demonstration connects to course material, including specific terms, theories, and concepts from throughout the term.
- Include a conclusion that summarizes the connections between your demonstration and analysis, and what you think can be done to address the environmental impacts and inequalities related to the product/commodity.

*Papers earning the best grades will be well-written and organized, demonstrate a thorough understanding of course material, and make original analytical connections to social psychology using (and properly citing) the course textbook. ASA, APA, or MLA citation style is fine.*

I am happy to help you at any stage of the process. Please contact me or stop in to chat during my office hours if you have questions or want to talk things through!

All assignments will be generally assessed by to the following scale:

A = Exceptional content. Extremely well-written/presented and clearly organized, strong analytical focus, correct use of course concepts, succinctly backs up points with evidence, all material is properly cited. Demonstrates deep and complex understanding of course material. Goes well above and beyond requirements and expectations.

B = Very good content. Well-written/presented and organized, might contain minor spelling and/or grammatical errors. Succinctly summarizes and explains main points of argument, but lacks analytical depth of A-range papers. Demonstrates strong understanding of course material. Exceeds general requirements and expectation to some degree.

C = Average content. Satisfactorily completes assignment requirements, but may contain spelling, grammatical, and/ or organizational errors that detract from the quality of the overall essay/presentation. Key points are present, but insufficiently addressed/analyzed. Demonstrates general understanding of course material. Meets basic requirements and expectations.

D = Below average content. Severe problems with writing or organization, contains numerous spelling/grammatical errors which detracted from the quality of the overall essay/presentation, lacks sufficient number of key points, lacks sufficient explanation/evidence for points made in essay. Demonstrates little understanding of course material. Does not meet basic requirements/expectations.

F = Unacceptable content. Does not complete assignment as instructed. Poorly written and organized, numerous spelling and grammatical errors, lack of any clear points made, no evidence given for ideas, no connection to text or class discussion, or evidence of plagiarism. Demonstrates no understanding of course material. Falls far below requirements and expectations.

## Make-up Policy

Late work may always be turned in for a minor point deduction.

### **Disability/Accessibility Statement**

Office of Accessibility and Disability Services b. Coastal Carolina University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services. This office is located in Indigo House and the phone number is 843-349-2341. Please make an appointment with a staff member in Accessibility and Disability Services so that such accommodations can be considered. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper forms and meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible. It is recommended that this must be completed within the first two weeks of class. Website: <http://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices> ii. Phone number: 843.349.2341

I'm happy to provide accommodations to maximize the success of every student. If I can do to anything help you succeed in the course please reach out!

It is not uncommon for students who have never been diagnosed with a learning disability to be tested and diagnosed in college, when increased academic rigor makes it more difficult to compensate for an underlying disability. If you are struggling in your courses, you may want to contact the Office of Accessibility and Disability to see if disability testing is right for you. <http://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices/>

### **Academic Honesty**

Coastal Carolina University Code of Student Conduct establishes the rights and responsibilities of students attending the University. As such, expectations are established and students are held accountable for academic honesty and integrity. Excerpt from Code of Student Conduct 2015-16, Section III. Academic Integrity Code, pp. 3-4, <http://www.coastal.edu/conduct/documents/codeofconduct.pdf> A. Statement of Community Standards Coastal Carolina University is an academic community that expects the highest standards of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility. Members of this community are accountable for their actions and are committed to creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Any class members who the instructor deems disruptive to the learning environment may be asked to leave class for the day. D. Prohibited Conduct 1. Plagiarism, cheating and all other forms of academic dishonesty a. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following: (i) borrowing words, sentences, ideas, conclusions, examples and/or organization of an assignment without proper acknowledgment from a source (for example, a book, article, electronic documents, or another student's paper); (ii) submitting another person's work in place of his/her own; (iii) allowing someone else to revise, correct or edit an assignment without explicit permission of the instructor; (iv) submitting work without proper acknowledgment from commercial firms, websites, fraternity or sorority files or any other outside sources, whether purchased or not; (v) allowing another person to substitute for them any part of a course for them, including quizzes, tests, and final examinations; (vi) submitting any written assignments done with the assistance of another without the explicit permission of the instructor; (vii) submitting work that was originally prepared for another class without the explicit permission of the instructor; (viii) knowingly aiding another student who is engaged in plagiarism. b. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to, the following: (i) using unauthorized information, materials or assistance of any kind for an assignment, quiz, test, or final examination; (ii) knowingly aiding another student who is engaged in cheating. 2. Furnishing false information to any University

official, faculty member or University office to obtain academic advantage. 3. Forging, altering or misusing any University document or record to obtain academic advantage.

### **Counseling and other support services**

College years are full of tremendous growth and change. You will have a lot of fun, but you might also have periods of stress. Students can go through many things: family problems, difficult relationships, abuse, assault, addictions, or just a general feeling of being overwhelmed. Seeking help is a sign of strength. <http://www.coastal.edu/counseling/>

*Some students may experience hunger or housing insecurity. Any student who faces financial or other challenges which may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support <https://www.coastal.edu/sai/>.*

*Please communicate with me if you are having trouble in class for any reason and I will do my absolute best to help you find the appropriate resources for your survival and success.*

### **Closing of the University for Inclement Weather**

In the event of hazardous weather, faculty, staff, and students are requested to listen to local radio and television stations or visit the Coastal Carolina University website for official University closing announcements. Announcements about hazardous weather are also posted on the University's homepage. Review the [Hazardous Weather and Emergency Conditions Leave Policy](#) (FAST-HREO-220). Instructors may refer to the [Contingency Instruction website](#) or Section VIII N. Contingency Instruction for information about what to do if class has been cancelled.

#### **Student Services**

##### **Academic Support:**

- Link to [Learning Assistance Center](#)
- Link to [Kimbrel Library Website](#)
- Link to [Counseling Services](#)
- Link to [online orientation](#)

##### **Technology Support**

- Link to [Technical Support from Student Computing Services](#)
- Link to [A list of on-campus HelpDesks and the Help Request Form](#)

##### **Other Student Services**

- Link to [Office of the Registrar](#)
- Link to [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- Link to [Student Activities and Leadership](#)
- Link to [Dean of Students Office](#)

### **Grading**

Class engagement:	10%
Discussion forums	20%

Quizzes	20%
Midterm essay	20%
<u>Final project</u>	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

Final grading scale:

A= 90-100%

B+ = 87-89%

B = 80-86%

C+ = 77-79%

C = 70-76%

D+ = 67-69%

D = 60-66%

F = 59% or less

### **Class Schedule**

#### **Week 1 Course introduction**

Aug. 20

[Introduction: Environmental Problems Require Social Solutions](#), pg. 1-14, by Deborah McCarthy Auriffeille and Leslie King, in Environmental Sociology from Analysis to Action. 3rd ed. (PDF or Google Books)

Video: [The Story of Stuff](#)

#### **Week 2 Environmental Inequality and Justice**

Aug. 25, 27

[Environmental Inequality and Environmental Justice](#) by Michael Mascarenhas, in Twenty Lesson in Environmental Sociology, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

[The Summit: Transforming a Movement](#) by Dana Alston in Race, Poverty, and Environment

[Preface: We Speak for Ourselves: The Struggle of Kettleman City](#), pg. 1-9, by Luke Cole and Sheila Foster in From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of Environmental Justice Movements

#### **Week 3 Environmental Health**

Sept. 1, 3

The Sociology of Environmental Health by Sabrina McCormick, in Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

[Environmental Justice and the Precautionary Principle: Air Toxics Exposures and Health Risks among Schoolchildren in Los Angeles](#) by Rachel Morello Frosch, Manuel Pastor, and James Sadd, Chapter 5 in Contested Illnesses : Citizens, Science, and Health Social Movements.

#### **Week 4 Environmental Privilege**

Sept. 8, 10

T- [Introduction: Environmental Privilege in the Rocky Mountains](#) by David Nagiub Pellow in The Slums of Aspen: Immigrants vs. the Environment in America's Eden.

Th- [Cleaning the Closet: Toward a New Fashion Ethic](#) by Juliet Schor in Environmental Sociology from Analysis to Action

#### **Week 5-6 Food**

Sept. 15, 17

T- Producing and Consuming Food by Jason Konefal and Maki Hatanaka in Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Th- [From Farms to Factories: The Environmental Consequences of Swine Industrialization in North Carolina](#) by Bob Edwards and Adam Driscoll in Twenty Lesson in Environmental Sociology, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

Sept 22, 24

T- [Assessing the Scope and Severity of Pesticide Drift](#), pg. 25-38, by Jill Lindsey Harrison, Ch. 2 in Pesticide Drift and the Pursuit of Environmental Justice

Th- [Breaking the Food Chains: An Investigation of Food Justice Activism](#) by Alison Hope Alkon and Kari Marie Norgaard in Environmental Sociology from Analysis to Action. 3rd ed.

#### **Week 7-8 Shelter / The communities in which we live**

Sept 29, Oct 1

T- [The Wrong Complexion for Protection: Response to Toxic Contamination](#) by Robert Bullard and Beverly Wright, Ch. 5 in The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities (Kimble Library ebook)

Th- [The Siting Process: Manipulation, Environmental Blackmail, and Enticement](#) by Dorceta Taylor, Ch. 6 in Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility (Kimble Library ebook)

Oct. 6, 8

T- [Corpus Christi, Texas: Hillcrest Residents Exposed to Benzene in Neighborhood Next to Refinery](#) by Steve Lerner, Ch. 4 in Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States (Kimble Library ebook)

Th- [Place Remaking through Environmental Recovery and Revitalization](#) by Isabelle Anguelovski, Ch. 5 in Neighborhood as Refuge: Community Reconstruction, Place Making, and Environmental Justice in the City (Kimble Library ebook)

### **Week 9 Midterm**

Oct. 13, 15

### **Week 10-11 Energy**

Oct. 20, 22

T- [Internal Colonialism: Native American Communities in the West](#), by Dorceta Taylor, Ch. 3 in Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility (Kimble Library ebook)

Th- [Mountain Top Removal in West Virginia: An Environmental Sacrifice Zone](#) by Julia Fox in Environmental Sociology from Analysis to Action. 3rd ed. (Google Books or PDF)

Oct. 27, 29

T- [Living and Dying on the Fenceline: Response to Industrial Accidents](#) by Robert Bullard and Beverly Wright, Ch. 7 in The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities

Th- Alienation and Militancy in the Niger Delta: Petroleum, Politics, and Democracy in Nigeria, Douglas, et al, Ch. 12 in The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution

Big Oil Wreaks Havoc in the Amazon but Communities are Fighting Back, by Kelly Hearn

### **Week 12- (Un)Natural Disasters**

No classes Tuesday for Election Day

[The Legacy of Bias: Hurricanes, Droughts, and Floods](#) by Robert Bullard and Beverly Wright, Ch. 7 in The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities

### **Week 13: Water**

Nov. 10, 12

T- [Water Justice: Why it Matters and How to Achieve It](#) by Farhana Sultana

Th- [Race, austerity and water justice in the United States: Fighting for the human right to water in Detroit and Flint, Michigan](#) by Cristy Clark, Ch. 13 in Water Politics: Governance, Justice and the Right to Water.

#### **Week 14: Electronics**

Nov. 17, 19

T- [Technology and the Internet](#) by Tatiana Schlossberg, Ch. 2 in Inconspicuous Consumption: The Environmental Impact You Don't Know You Have.

Th- [The Unfair Trade-off: Globalization and the Export of Ecological Hazards](#) by Daniel Faber in Environmental Sociology from Analysis to Action. 2nd ed.

#### **Week 15 Thanksgiving break.**

Nov. 24, 26

#### **Week 16 Finals**

Dec. 1, 3

Work on final paper/project **due December 4, 11:59 pm EST**