

Environmental Justice Ecology in Syracuse

Honors 360

Tuesdays 2:00-4:45
Bowne Hall, room 306A

Professor Tom Perreault

Office hours by appointment only

Eggers 144F
315.443.2607
taperrea@maxwell.syr.edu

Together with Syracuse University, I would like to acknowledge with respect the Onondaga Nation, firekeepers of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the indigenous peoples whose ancestral lands were stolen by white settlers, and where Syracuse University and what we now call Central New York are located.

Course Overview

This course examines issues of environmental quality and social justice, using the city of Syracuse as our laboratory. I take as axiomatic the premise that all people have a right to live in a clean environment free from hazardous pollution or contamination, and to the natural resources necessary to sustain health and livelihood. This involves clean air, soil and water, but also access to green spaces such as parks and tree cover. With this as our starting point, we will question why, and through what social, political and economic processes, some people are denied this basic right. How is it that certain groups of people do not have access to basic resources, or are systematically burdened with pollution or environmental hazards to a greater extent than other groups? What are the social relations of production and power that contribute to these outcomes? What can be done? We will begin the class by reading, thinking, talking and writing about the core concepts social justice; race and class; and environmental justice. We will then spend the rest of the semester considering how these concepts come together in the city of Syracuse, with a focus on urban segregation and inequality. In particular we will examine the displacement and marginalization of the Onondaga Nation and the Southside neighborhood; the ongoing controversy over rebuilding I-81; and questions of climate injustice.

Please note: In this class we will examine some difficult issues, including race and racism; class, poverty and economic inequality; white privilege and white supremacy; and the colonial history (and present) of the United States. At times you may feel uncomfortable discussing these topics. As a class our goal will be to be as open, honest and inclusive as possible in these conversations. If at any point in the semester you feel uncomfortable with a topic we are discussing, please let me know. You may opt out of particular conversations, but you are expected to engage with these issues in one way or another, since they are central to the topic of the class.

Required Readings

All readings will be posted on Blackboard in the order in which you should read them. There are no books required for this class.

Course Requirements

This class will be run as a seminar. That means that our in-class meetings will revolve around group discussion based on a set of weekly readings. I will lecture a little bit from time to time, and we will have some guest speakers, but most of our classroom time will be spent in group discussion. In order for this to work, class participation is essential. You *have* to do the weekly readings and come to class ready to discuss them every week. I will provide questions each week to help guide your reading. You can earn up to 20 points (8%) of your total grade for **participation** – this will be based on your active engagement in class discussion. You will also be responsible for submitting **weekly reading critique papers**. Your critique papers should not merely summarize the readings, but rather should engage critically with the concepts the papers raise. For instance, what are the central analytical concepts that the authors discuss? What is the significance of those concepts and how do they relate to other concepts we have read about? Your reading critique papers should be 1-2 pages (single spaced) and are due in class each week. No late critique papers will be accepted without prior arrangements. If you must miss a week of class, please email your paper to me prior to our regular class meeting. You have a total of 10 readings critique papers due during the semester, worth 10 points each.

If you know you will miss class for religious purposes, athletic events or other reasons, please let me know *as soon as possible* (ideally within the first two weeks of the semester).

You also have a **final research paper** due on Friday, December 6. This paper should examine an issue of environmental justice in Syracuse. Papers should be about 5000 words (roughly 10-12 pages). You will present your final papers on the last day of class, December 3. A brief **paper proposal**, outlining your paper topic and listing some sources, is due on or before October 29.

Finally, once during the semester you will present a **'found object'** to the class. Think of this as show-and-tell for college students. I would like you to find something in your everyday life that relates in one way or another to the themes we discuss in class. Your 'found object' could be an actual thing (a rock, a piece of paper, a pen – whatever), or a photograph of that thing. Or it could be an article or website that is particularly relevant to class. The point is to bring it to class and present it in the context of the themes we are discussing. In other words how does that thing – the rock, the photograph, the article, etc. – represent environmental injustice, segregation, racism, social mobilization, etc.? Your 'found object' presentation should open up possibilities for reflection and discussion.

Grading

- Reading critique papers (10 x 10 pts each) = 100 points
- Class participation 20 points
- Final paper proposal 10 points
- Paper presentation 10 points
- Found object presentation 10 points
- Final research paper 100 points

TOTAL 250 points

Dates to Remember

- September 16: Drop deadline and financial deadline
- October 22: No class meeting and no weekly paper due*
- October 29: Final paper proposal due in class
- November 19: No class meeting and no weekly paper due*
- December 3: Student presentations of final papers (no weekly paper due*)
- December 6: Final papers due no later than 4pm

* critique papers are due in class every week except 10/22, 11/19 and 12/3.

I will make every effort to return graded papers to you the week after they are due in class. I will also do my best to keep you updated as to your progress in class through Blackboard and Orange SUccess. However, *it is your responsibility to keep track of your own grade and to plan your semester accordingly*. If you are ever uncertain about your status in the class, please obtain updated grade information from me.

Communication

I will use Blackboard and email to contact you outside of class hours if necessary. It is your responsibility to check your Syracuse University (i.e. @syr.edu) email address on a daily basis.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism on course assignments is a serious offense, and is not acceptable. The University defines plagiarism as:

"The submission of any work by a student is taken as a guarantee that the thoughts and expressions in it are the student's own except when properly credited to another. V

iolations of this principle include giving or receiving aid in an exam or where otherwise prohibited, fraud, plagiarism, the falsification or forgery of any record, or any other deceptive act in connection with academic work. Plagiarism is the representation of another's words, ideas, programs, formulae, opinions, or other products of work as one's own, either overtly or by failing to attribute them to their true source" (Section 1.0, Syracuse University *Academic Rules and Regulations*).

Plagiarism is a very serious breach of academic honesty, and will not be tolerated in this class. **The first time a student is found to be plagiarizing, s/he will automatically receive a score of 0 for the plagiarized assignment. If the student is caught plagiarizing a second time, s/he will automatically receive an F for the course.** There will be no exceptions. Students are responsible for knowing University definitions and rules regarding academic honesty. For more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, please see: <http://researchguides.library.syr.edu/content.php?pid=28194&sid=205457>

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. Under the policy, students found in violation are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. Syracuse University students are required to read an online summary of the University's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

The Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric establishes recommended guidelines for the determination of grade penalties by faculty and instructors, while also giving them discretion to select the grade penalty they believe most suitable, including course failure, regardless of violation level. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

Disability-Related Accommodations

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 304 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to Dr. Perreault and review those accommodations with him. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>

Religious Observance

I will make every effort to accommodate religious holidays or other observances. If you know you will miss class for reasons of faith, please let me know in advance.

Student Athletes

I make every effort to accommodate practice and competition schedules for student athletes. Please provide me with your schedule well in advance of anticipated absences. Go Orange!

Classroom Etiquette

Please use common sense and common courtesy in your behavior in lecture and discussion section. Arrive to class on time. If you *must* arrive late, please enter the room quietly and don't let the door slam behind you. Please don't talk or read during class. Persons behaving in a discourteous manner will be asked to leave the classroom. Classroom behavior will be considered in factoring final grades.

Electronic Devices

Use of electronic devices is not permitted in this class. This includes phones, laptops, and tablets. Please be sure your phones are silenced *before* coming to class. Texting, checking email, surfing the web, or use of social media during class will not be tolerated. This is common sense and common courtesy. Please plan to take notes the old-fashioned way: with pen and paper.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Define and critically discuss the following concepts (individually and in relation to one another): social justice, environmental justice, race, racism, class, inequality, white privilege, white supremacy, segregation, and redlining
- Engage critically in writing to a set of assigned readings
- Carry out independent research based on original research
- Present research results in a coherent, well-organized written report
- Present research results orally in a concise, coherent manner

Course Schedule

Week/Date	Topic	Readings
<i>Week 1:</i> August 27	Course introduction	
<i>Week 2:</i> September 3	What are talking about when we talk about social justice?	Young 1990 Israel & Frenkel 2018 Nixon 2011
	<i>Reading critique paper 1 due in class</i>	
<i>Week 3:</i> September 10	Environmental justice	Bullard 2000 Bullard 2019 Pulido 2000 Pulido 2015
	<i>Reading critique paper 2 due in class</i>	
<i>Week 4:</i> September 17	Race, class & structures of domination	Coates 2018 Pulido 2016 Glassman 2010
	<i>Reading critique paper 3 due in class</i>	
<i>Week 5:</i> September 24	Field Trip 1: Skä•noñh-Great Law of Peace Center Onondaga Nation history (Guest speaker: Dr. Phil Arnold and Sandy Big Tree) Read the pages for “Culture,” “History,” and “Land Rights” on: https://www.onondaganation.org	
	<i>Reading critique paper 4 due in class</i>	
<i>Week 6:</i> October 1	Field Trip 2: Onondaga Lake Toxic Legacies	Perreault et al. 2012 ASLF 2009
	<i>Reading critique paper 5 due in class</i>	

Week 7:
October 8 Segregation and urban inequality 1:
Redlining, urban renewal, etc.
(visit Bird Library to see redlining maps) Rothstein 2017
How to decimate a city*

(Guest speakers: Catherine Landis and Neil Patterson on indigenous participation in environmental planning)

*(www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/11/syracuse-slums/416892/)

Reading critique paper 6 due in class

Week 8:
October 15 Segregation and urban inequality 2:
Syracuse and the spatial concentration
of urban poverty Jargowsky 2015
CNY Fair Housing

(Guest speaker: Niki Fabricant, Towson University, on EJ in Baltimore [via Skype])
Readings: TBA

Reading critique paper 7 due in class

Week 9:
October 22 No class (Tom in Florida) – work on your final paper proposals

(no papers due)

Week 10:
October 29 **Field Trip 3:** I-81 & urban renewal UJTF (“Building equity...”)
(Executive summary + pp. 7-33)
+UJTF Recommendations

Also, read through the following websites:

- <https://www.ujtf.org/i-81-campaign>
- http://syracusethenandnow.org/Redlining/HOLC_Maps.htm
- <https://www.cnyhistory.org/2018/02/15th-ward/>
- <https://jalopnik.com/the-highway-was-supposed-to-save-this-city-can-tearing-1836529628>

Reading critique paper 8 due in class

Paper proposal due in class

Week 11:

November 5

Field Trip 4: Southside

Adams 2003
POC 2006

Reading critique paper 9 due in class

Week 12:

November 12

Climate justice: FEMA flood mapping

Pralle 2019

(Guest speakers: Dr. Sarah Pralle and Dr. Pete Wilcoxon on flood mapping in the Onondaga Creek watershed)

Reading critique paper 10 due in class

Week 13:

November 19

No class (Tom in Bolivia)

Week 14:

November 26

Thanksgiving week – no class

Week 15:

December 3

Student presentations

Final papers due Friday, December 6 by 4pm in my mailbox, 144 Eggers Hall

Bibliography

Adams, Cay 2003. "Shaping this place: A history of the creek and the community." Chapter 2 in Cay Adams, "Defending our place: Protest on the southside of Syracuse." Unpublished MA thesis, Department of Geography, Syracuse University.

ASLF 2009. "The Onondaga Lake Superfund Site: A Citizen's Guide." Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Syracuse, New York.

Barnett, Clive 2010. Geography and ethics: Justice unbound. *Progress in Human Geography*, 35(2): 246-255.

Bullard, Robert 2000. *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*. Boulder: Westview.

Bullard 2019. Environmental justice in the 21st century: Race still matters. *Phylon*, 3(4): 151-171.

- CNY Fair Housing 2014. "Analysis of impediments to fair housing: Syracuse and Onondaga Country, NY." CNY Fair Housing, Syracuse, New York.
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi 2017. "The case for reparations" In *We Were Eight Years in Power*. New York: One World, pp. 163-208.
- Glassman, Jim 2010. Critical geographies II: Articulating race and radical politics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(4): 506-512.
- Isreal and Frenkel 2018. Social justice and spatial inequality: Toward a conceptual framework. *Progress in Human Geography*, 42(5): 647-665.
- Jargowsky, Paul A. 2015. "The architecture of poverty: Civil unrest, the concentration of poverty, and public policy." The Century Foundation.
- Nixon, Rob 2013. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Perreault, Tom, Sarah Wraight and Meredith Perreault 2012. Environmental injustice in the Onondaga Lake waterscape, New York state, USA. *Water Alternatives*, 5(2): 485-506.
- POC 2006. "Executive summary" of Partnership for Onondaga Creek legal filing under Title VI.
- Pralle, Sarah 2019. Drawing lines: FEMA and the politics of mapping flood zones. *Climatic Change*, 152: 227-237.
- Pulido, Laura 2000. Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in southern California. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90(1): 12-40.
- Pulido, Laura 2015. Geographies of race and ethnicity I: White supremacy vs. white privilege in environmental racism research. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(6): 809-817.
- Pulido, Laura 2016. Flint, environmental racism and racial capitalism. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, 27(3): 1-16.
- Rothstein, Richard 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of how our Government Segregated America*. New York: Liveright Publishing, pp. 39-99.
- UJTF n.d. "Building equity in the construction trades: A racial equity impact statement." Unpublished report, Urban Jobs Task Force/Legal Services of Central New York.
- Young, Iris Marion 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.