

PH 5350: Environmental Justice

Oakland University

School of Health Sciences

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment

Course: PH 5350 (CRN 14580) / HS 4350 (CRN 13819) – Winter 2018; 4 credits

Course times: 5:30-8:50pm, Thursdays

Classroom: 5054 Human Health Building (HHB)

Course description

This course presents the origins, core concepts, and impacts of the environmental justice movement by examining how race and class interact to produce or sustain health inequities. Students will examine how environmental injustices occur through structural and community factors, consequences to health, and responses to environmental injustice.

Learning outcomes

1. Effectively communicate about major environmental justice cases
2. Explain how structural factors and community characteristics influence environmental and health outcomes
3. Describe the health, community, and quality of life consequences of environmental injustice
4. Describe how affected groups, policy-makers, academia, and the media have responded to environmental justice cases
5. Analyze, critique, and contribute to the academic and political conversations about environmental justice

Required readings

There is no required text for this class. *There will be many required readings, however.* We will be utilizing a **course e-reserve** through the Library. You can find the link for the e-reserve on Moodle or at: <https://www2.oakland.edu/secure/library/ereserves/> There will be readings from research articles, news stories, organizational reports, and podcasts.

You can download the readings as we go or download them ahead of time. Additional readings may be assigned throughout the semester, and provided at least two weeks in advance of assigned discussion dates. Two books we will be reading a few chapters from are also available as e-books through the library. For some class topics, optional readings will be provided for further information on specific areas. These will be clearly identified as “optional” readings in the syllabus.

Academic integrity

All members of the academic community at the School of Health Sciences and the larger Oakland University are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity and honesty. This includes plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication, falsification of records or official documents, intentional misuse of equipment or materials, and aiding and abetting the perpetration of such acts. Any misrepresentation of students' work is cheating (i.e., claiming credit for ideas or work that students did not do and seeking a grade from that work). The preparation of reports, papers, and for examinations must represent each student's own efforts. Reference sources should be clearly indicated. The use of assistance from other students or aids of any kind during a written examination,

except when the use of aids such as electronic devices, books, or notes has been approved by the professor, is a violation of the academic conduct standard expected in this course.

The Oakland University policy on academic conduct will be strictly followed with no exceptions. See the catalog under Academic Policies and Procedures for more information: www.oakland.edu/pace/policies-procedures. Any students not upholding academic integrity standards **will receive a zero on the assessment or the overall course grade.**

Course format and expectations

The format of the course is a combination of lectures, discussions, and in-class exercises based on the readings, other media sources, and the instructor's own experiences and research. Attendance and *active* participation in class discussions is expected for all classes.

Classroom expectations

Students registered or taking courses in the School of Health Sciences are expected to behave with professional conduct. Courtesy, honesty, and respect should be shown by students to faculty members, guest lecturers, administrative support staff, community partners, and fellow students. Similarly, students should expect faculty to treat them fairly, showing respect for their ideas and opinions, and striving to help them achieve maximum benefits from their experience. Some topics will be sensitive by nature, and all students are expected to be inclusive to differing ideas and opinions. Students are encouraged to exchange ideas and to integrate personal experiences into the class.

Note: you will lose an overall point (not percent) to your course grade each time you misspell Dr. Mozhgon Rajae's name (yes, seriously).

Students interested in receiving letters of recommendation for graduate school or professional job opportunities from Dr. Rajae should be aware of several important requirements. You must spend appropriate time and energy building a relationship with her through your participation in class and office hours. You will need to earn a final grade of at least a 3.5 in this class.

Emails

Emails directed to Dr. Rajae should at least **include "PH 5350" in the subject line**. Most emails will be responded to within 48 hours, but note that Dr. Rajae may be slower to respond on weekends and evenings.

Electronics

All communication and musical devices (cell phones, iPods, tablets, etc.) are to be **silenced** during class. While laptop computers are permitted, students are encouraged to take notes by hand when possible. Any engagement in distracting or inappropriate browsing during class is prohibited. Students are **not permitted to take photos of lecture slides** in class, unless permission is explicitly granted.

Attendance and evaluation

This class will have a considerable amount of discussion. Your attendance, engagement, and active participation is important—and part of your participation grade. Students are expected to arrive for class on time and to refrain from disturbing the flow of the class through conversation or distracting behavior. Attendance will be recorded weekly. A student who misses the majority of class will be marked absent accordingly.

Students with emergency situations need to notify the professor promptly **in advance** or **no later** than the day of the class/quiz (through email and/or voicemail) if they are unable to be present. If an absence is *not excused* on a quiz or presentation day, a grade of 0.0 will be recorded. It is the responsibility of the student to request opportunities to complete missed assignments, quizzes, or

other course requirements in a timely manner. Students are responsible for all material covered in classes that they miss, even when their absences are excused.

The University add/drop policy will be explicitly followed. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the University deadline dates for dropping the course.

Student accommodations

Students with disabilities who may require special accommodations should make an appointment with campus Disability Support Services, 106 North Foundation Hall (phone: 248-370-3266). Students should also bring their needs to the professor's attention as soon as possible (*before or during the first two weeks of classes*) and provide the "Letter of Accommodations" created by DSS.

For activities such as athletic competitions, where schedules are known prior to the start of a term, students must provide a written schedule showing days they expect to miss classes to their professor *before or during the first two weeks of classes*. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments through their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent.

Evaluation

All components of the course requirements are mandatory and must be passed and completed. Failure to pass **each** required individual course component may result in failing the overall course.

Unless prior arrangements have been made, ten percent (10%) of an assignment grade will be subtracted per day for late assignments or papers after the due date. All assignments must be completed within **five** (5) days (including weekends) of the due date. The main components to the grade are described below.

PH 5350:

The overall final grade you earn in this class will be based on five (5) key components:

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|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Participation (10%) | 40 points |
| 2. Weekly journal (25%) | 100 points |
| 3. Quizzes (25%) | 100 points |
| 4. Final paper (25%) | 100 points |
| 5. Presentation/discussion lead (15%) | 60 points |

Total possible points (100%)	400 points
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Assessments

Participation (10%; 40 points total)

All students are expected to attend class, having read any assigned readings. It is expected that all students will actively participate—contribute to meaningful, critical discussions, not just listening—in class discussions and activities. You may have up to 2 missed classes without any penalty (i.e., losing any points).

Some of the material covered in this course can be sensitive and may yield disagreements. It is important that the tone of the class remain one of respect and care for each other. Each student's contribution to creating such an environment will also be considered in the class participation grade.

Weekly journal reflections (25%; 100 points total)

Students will keep a journal throughout the semester. Weekly reflections are due each week by 11:59pm on the Wednesday before class. This journal should be maintained on Google Docs and will be shared with you from the instructor. The journal should be formatted such that each entry is separated by a heading that contains the class date. Each weekly journal entry should be about 350-600 words.

Your reflections can include any of the following, unless explicitly stated otherwise:

- 1) *Reaction*: What are your critical reactions to the readings?
- 2) *Discussion questions*: What issues would you particularly like to discuss in class?
- 3) *Insight/idea*: What do you see as the most important idea or insight from the readings?

Journal reflections will be reviewed and assessed on (1) completion, (2) readability and coherence, and (3) the degree to which the reflections meet the requirements of the assignment and discuss the assigned readings. Students are permitted to miss a journal entry for *two* classes this semester without having points deducted.

Quizzes (25%; 100 points total)

There will be three quizzes throughout the semester (32-35 points each). The quizzes will cover material from class, readings, and other assigned media. Questions may include multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions.

Final paper (25%; 100 points)

All graduate students taking this course will be required to submit a final paper. The paper should be 3-5 pages in length. The paper should discuss an environmental justice case or issue/a population that experiences a disproportionate environmental burden, including the social and environmental determinants of the disparity, health disparity, and the community response. This should include supporting evidence, such as peer-reviewed papers (at least four are required), newspaper articles, historical documents, organization white/gray papers, etc.

The final paper will be assessed on the amount of research presented, accuracy of information, thoroughness, evidence of understanding of the environmental justice issue, and the clarity of writing. Formatting requirements are explained below.

Presentation/discussion lead (15%; 60 points)

All graduate students will present a summary of their selected EJ case (~30 minutes) and lead a class discussion about the topic (~30 minutes). Students should select a research article to share with the class *at least one week* before their presentation, to foster further discussion on their presentation/discussion day.

Presentation/student-led discussion days will be: March 8 through April 12. Students will submit their presentations (PPT or PDF files) to the instructor by the morning of their presentation. Presentations will be assessed on their clarity, comprehensive coverage, accuracy of information, and the student's preparation to facilitate the class discussion of the topic.

Guidelines for written assignments

The final paper and other written assignments should be uploaded to Moodle on the day that they are due. The paper should be in Word format, in Arial 11-point font, *single*-spaced, with 1-inch margins.

All formal writing assignments that require citations should be written in APA style. Please refer to www.apastyle.org or <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> for more information and guidance.

Grading scale											
A	100%	4.0	B	89%	3.5	C	79%	2.9	D	69%	1.9
	99%	4.0		88%	3.5		78%	2.8		68%	1.8
	98%	4.0		87%	3.4		77%	2.7		67%	1.7
	97%	3.9		86%	3.4		76%	2.6		66%	1.6
	96%	3.9		85%	3.3		75%	*2.5		65%	1.5
	95%	3.8		84%	3.3		74%	2.4		64%	1.4
	94%	3.8		83%	3.2		73%	2.3		63%	1.3
	93%	3.7		82%	3.2		72%	2.2		62%	1.2
	92%	3.7		81%	3.1		71%	2.1		61%	1.1
	91%	3.6		80%	3.0		70%	2.0		60%	1.0
	90%	3.6									
									F	≤59%	0.0

Student Resources

We want you to succeed! And we want you to connect with resources that will help you succeed in this class (and others). The following are resources that are free, incredibly helpful, & available to all:

Office of Disability Support Services (DSS)

The Office of Disability Support Services is responsible for verifying that students have disability related needs for academic accommodations and for planning appropriate accommodations. Students with learning, psychological, or physical disabilities who need academic accommodations can contact DSS in 106 North Foundation Hall or by (248) 370-3266. Website: <https://oakland.edu/dss/>.

Graham Health Center

The Graham Health Center provides affordable health care on campus. You can schedule appointments for health concerns and illnesses, sprains, asthma, etc. The Center is located at 408 Meadow Brook Rd. Call (248) 370-2341 for more information. Website: www.oakland.edu/ghc/

Oakland University Counseling Center

The OU Counseling Center provides mental health services (including personal counseling; psychological and psychoeducational testing; career testing and counseling; substance abuse evaluation, treatment, and prevention; consultation and outreach; and crisis intervention) for students and staff. The Center is located in the Graham Health Center, East Wing. Call (248) 370-3465 for more information. Website: www.oakland.edu/oucc

Center for Multicultural Initiatives (CMI)

The Center for Multicultural Initiatives provides support for underrepresented students and facilitates campus-wide diversity initiatives. Stop by at 104 North Foundation Hall or contact cmi@oakland.edu or (248) 370-4404. Website: www.oakland.edu/cmi/

Veterans Support Services

The Office of Veteran Support Services (VSS) is the campus office responsible for supporting student veterans and military families. Through VSS, veterans and their dependents can be connected to campus and community resources to help ensure they are receiving the benefits they have earned. To learn more about the services afforded from the VSS, visit 116 North Foundation Hall, or contact VSS@oakland.edu or 248-370-2010. Website: www.oakland.edu/veterans.

The Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC)

The Gender and Sexuality Center serves Oakland University's LGBTQIA community by providing and fostering a campus environment that promotes inclusion and understanding around issues of gender and sexuality through education, outreach, and advocacy. The Center offers a variety of resources on safer sex, sexual health, healthy relationships, on and off campus organizations, and information on LGBTQIA topics and needs. It is located at the Oakland Center, Room 49D. Contact the GSC at (248) 3702-4336 or gsc@oakland.edu. Website: www.oakland.edu/gsc/

The Writing Center

The OU Writing Center is open to all students to provide writing consultation to brainstorm ideas, revise drafts, and refine written works. The Writing Center is located in room 212 of Kresge Library. Email ouwc@oakland.edu or call (248) 370-3120. Website: www.oakland.edu/ouwc

English as a Second Language (ESL) Institute

The ESL Institute offers support for English as a second language students at all levels. Visit O'Dowd Hall, Room 326 for more information. Website: www.oakland.edu/esl/

The Tutoring Center

The Tutoring Center offers various free support services, including individual and group peer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and study skills assistance. Everyone learns differently, and the Tutoring Center strives to help students gain control over their academic success. Contact the Center at tutoring@oakland.edu or (248) 370-4454, or visit 103 North Foundation Hall. Website: www.oakland.edu/tutoring.

Registrar's Office

You can access your registration record, class offerings, schedules, and academic calendars (including final exam schedules) at www.oakland.edu/registrar.

Course plan

The class schedule below is a guide of class dates, topic material, readings, and quizzes. To allow for creativity and flexibility, the syllabus will be somewhat dynamic and will likely change to include additional readings. These will be communicated at least two weeks in advance in class & via Moodle.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings
Introduction and foundations			
1	Jan. 4	Intro. & syllabus History of environmental justice movement Intro to race and poverty	(1) Course syllabus (2) Bullard et al. (2007). <i>Toxic Waste and Race at Twenty</i> . United Church of Christ, p. 1-15. (3) National People of Color EJ Summit (1991). Principles of Environmental Justice.
2	Jan. 11	Methods of assessing environmental and health disparities	(1) Taylor (2014). <i>Toxic Communities</i> . New York University Press. Chapter 2: Disproportionate siting. (2) Chakraborty et al. (2011). Disproportionate proximity to environmental health hazards: Methods, models, and measurement. <i>American Journal of Public Health, 101</i> (S1). (3) Bullard et al. (2007). <i>Toxic Waste and Race at Twenty</i> . United Church of Christ, p. 38-48. Optional: Maantay (2007). Asthma and air pollution in the Bronx: Methodological and data considerations in using GIS for environmental justice and health research. <i>Health & Place, 13</i> , 32-56.
Evidence of environmental racism			
3	Jan. 18	Who came first? Market dynamics Path of "least resistance" Siting and manipulation	(1) Taylor (2014). <i>Toxic Communities</i> . New York University Press. Chapter 4: Market dynamics. (2) Pastor, Sadd, & Hipp (2001). Which came first? Toxic facilities, minority move-in, and environmental justice. <i>Journal of Urban Affairs, 23</i> (1), 1-21.
4	Jan. 25	Zoning & segregation Implicit biases	(1) Taylor (2014). <i>Toxic Communities</i> . New York University Press. Chapter 7: The rise of racial zoning. (2) Morello-Frosch & Lopez (2006). The riskscape and the colorline: Examining the role of segregation in environmental health disparities. <i>Environmental research, 102</i> , 181-196. (3) Michigan Civil Rights Commission (2017). The Flint Water Crisis: Systemic Racism through the Lens of Flint. <i>State of Michigan</i> , p. 12-22.
5	Feb. 1	Quiz #1 Case: Flint	(1) Michigan Civil Rights Commission (2017). The Flint Water Crisis: Systemic Racism through the Lens of Flint. <i>State of Michigan</i> , p. 23-113.
6	Feb. 8	Violations, enforcement, and renewal Case: Detroit, Delray neighborhood	(1) Kuehn (2000). A taxonomy of environmental justice. <i>Environmental Law Reporter</i> , 30. (2) Lougheed (2014). Arising from the ashes? Environmental health in Detroit. <i>Environmental Health Perspectives, 112</i> (12). (2) Carlisle (2017). Is this the end of Delray? <i>The Detroit Free Press</i> . https://www.freep.com/story/news/columnists/john-carlisle/2017/12/07/delray-neighborhood-detroit-michigan/676597001/

			Optional: Schulz et al. (2016). Race and the distribution of social and physical environmental risk. <i>Du Bois Review</i> , 13(2), p. 285-304.
7	Feb. 15	Indigenous injustice	(1) Lafond (2017). When fish advisories threaten a traditional way of life. <i>Michigan Radio</i> . (2) TBD
8	Feb. 22	NO CLASS—WINTER BREAK	
Slow violence and structural injustice			
9	Mar. 1	Quiz #2 Slow violence Colonialism	1) Nixon (2011). <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i> . Introduction. 2) Picton (2013). The complexities of complexion: A cultural geography of skin colour and beauty products. <i>Geography</i> , 98(2), 85-92.
10	Mar. 8	Fossil fuels and community contamination Case: Appalachian coal mining	(1) Guiford, G. (2017). The 100-year capitalist experiment that keeps Appalachia poor, sick, and stuck on coal. <i>Quartz</i> . https://qz.com/1167671/the-100-year-capitalist-experiment-that-keeps-appalachia-poor-sick-and-stuck-on-coal/ (2) NPR (2016). Black lung returns to coal country series: As mine protections fail, black lung cases surge. http://www.npr.org/series/156453033/black-lung-returns-to-coal-country (~12 min.) Optional: Freakonomics Radio (2017). Professor Hendryx vs. Big Coal. http://www.wnyc.org/story/professor-hendryx-vs-big-coal/ (~40 min.) O'Rourke & Connolly (2003). Just oil? The distribution of environmental and social impacts of oil production and consumption. <i>Annual Review of Environment and Resources</i> , 28, 587-617. Nixon (2011). <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i> . Chapter 3: Pipedreams, pp. 103-127
11	Mar. 15	Climate justice Case: Puerto Rico <i>Student case discussion</i> <i>[Taylor Williams]</i>	(1) Moellendorf (2015). Climate change justice. <i>Philosophy Compass</i> , 173-186. (2) TBA – Student Optional: Shearer (2012). The social construction of Alaska Native vulnerability to climate change. <i>Race, Gender, & Class</i> , 19(1/2), 61-79.
12	Mar. 22	Education and achievement Role of contamination in the criminal justice system <i>Student case discussion</i> <i>[Rachel Roberts]</i>	(1) Mohai et al. (2011) Air pollution around schools is linked to poorer student health and academic performance. <i>Health Affairs</i> , 30(5), 852-862. (2) Nevin (2007). Understanding international crime trends: The legacy of preschool lead exposure. <i>Environmental Research</i> , 104, 315-336. (3) McCoy (2015, Apr 29). Freddie Gray's life a study on the effects of lead paint on poor blacks. <i>Washington Post</i> . https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/freddie-grays-life-a-study-in-the-sad-effects-of-lead-paint-on-poor-blacks/2015/04/29/0be898e6-eea8-11e4-8abc-d6aa3bad79dd_story.html?utm_term=.1297f85a77aa (4) TBA – Student

13	Mar. 29	<p>Quiz #3</p> <p>Conflicts, war, and veterans</p> <p><i>Student case discussion</i> [Leah Meyers]</p>	<p>(1) Nixon (2011). <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i>. Chapter 7: Ecologies of the aftermath, pp. 199-232</p> <p>(2) TBA – Student</p>
14	Apr. 5	<p>Who claims a space?</p> <p><i>Student case discussion (x2)</i> [Chloe Parker] [Itohowo Akpabio]</p>	<p>(1) The 1A (2017). Get out: Nurturing a bond between black people and nature. https://the1a.org/shows/2017-12-18/get-out-nurturing-a-bond-between-black-people-and-nature (~47 min.)</p> <p>(2) TBA – Student</p> <p>(3) TBA - Student</p>
15	Apr. 12	<p>Where do we go from here? Community development, resilience, and reconstruction</p> <p><i>Student case discussion</i> [Joshua Courter]</p>	<p>(1) Anguelovski (2013). New directions in urban environmental justice: Rebuilding community, addressing trauma, and remaking place. <i>Journal of Planning, Education, and Research</i>, 33(2), p. 160-175.</p> <p>(2) Perkins (2017). On urban farming and ‘colonialism’ in Detroit’s North End neighborhood. <i>Metrotimes</i>.</p> <p>(3) TBA – Student</p> <p>Optional: Ray et al. (2016). School gardens in the city: Does environmental equity help close the achievement gap? <i>Du Bois Review</i>, 13(2), p. 379-395.</p> <p>Jensen. Beyond Hope. <i>Orion</i>. https://orionmagazine.org/article/beyond-hope/</p>
16	Apr. 19	<p>Final Exam: Thursday, April 19th, 7:00-10:00pm Graduate final papers due: 10:00pm</p>	