1. Course Description and Philosophy
This course examines global environmental issues through a social justice lens. As the global community has struggled to address global environmental problems including climate change, forest loss and degradation, and biodiversity loss, they have increasingly recognized the need for just solutions—solutions that not only recognize the disproportionate impacts that environmental policies may have on diverse stakeholders but solutions that actively seek to prevent and mitigate injustice. In particular, evidence demonstrates that socially, economically, and politically marginalized communities across the globe experience disproportionate burdens from environmental pollution. Moreover, they are increasingly asked to bear the costs of environmental conservation. In this course we seek to explain why and how these inequalities emerge in order to understand how they can be addressed.

The course is organized in three main parts. We will first explore the theories and concepts of environmental justice and examine the ethical dimensions of environmental justice research and practice. In the second part of the course, we will assess the empirical research on different environmental justice issues and cases to understand what drives environmental injustices. We will conclude by asking ourselves what can be done to address these histories of inequality. Students will contribute to our collective learning by developing case studies and research proposals to advance the study of environmental justice in a global perspective.

2. Learning Objectives
The overarching goals of this seminar is to cultivate critical thinking, writing, and reading skills. By the end of this course students will be able to:
(1) Prepare appropriately to participate effectively in class discussion, including challenging and offering substantive replies to others’ arguments, comments, and questions, while remaining sensitive to the original speaker/writer and the classroom audience.
(2) Analyze patterns and interactions between different actors, institutions, and environmental issues to develop theoretical frameworks for understanding how environmental injustice is produced locally, regionally, and globally.
(3) Identify connections between the realities faced by environmental justice communities across the globe. 
(4) Explore and design research strategies for understanding and addressing environmental justice from community, science, government, policy, and practitioner perspectives
(5) Demonstrate independent research skills, including the ability to read and write critically and analytically, and communicate effectively

3. Our Contract
By enrolling in this course, you and I are entering into a contract with each other. I will work hard to be prepared, enthusiastic, fair, and respectful of every student and their opinions. I will be accessible and try my best to return graded materials within two weeks. By enrolling in the class, you have agreed to
(1) attend and prepare for class, (2) participate by asking questions and joining in class discussions, (3) read the assigned material and complete assignments on time, (4) comply with class policies established in this syllabus, and (5) uphold Northwestern University’s commitment to academic integrity (see http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/).

4. Course Requirements
In this seminar, our regular class meetings will consist of in-depth discussions and activities centered around the day’s topic. Please come to each class prepared by completing the required readings and assignments. The requirements for this class include:

- **Course engagement**: each student should regularly contribute to class discussions by engaging thoughtfully with the course materials, asking questions, and actively contributing to deepening our collective understanding of the topics; participate enthusiastically in in-class activities; attend the field trip; and take notes. In each class, one student will be responsible for taking notes from the discussion and distributing these to the class through Canvas.

- **Reading Responses**: each student will submit two 500-word reading responses. One must cover April 5 or April 19 in Part I of the course and one must cover a session in Part II of the course. I will pass out a sign-up sheet during our first meeting. The second response must be for a session other than your selected case topic. The responses must be posted on the discussion board by 8am on the day we will discuss the topic.

- **Research Project**: will unfold in multiple steps and include a 3-4 page literature review, a 1 page research statement, a presentation and discussion leadership (incl. selecting 1-2 readings for the class), a 10-12 page case study, and a 2 page grant proposal plus budget, ethics statement, and presentation. All assignments should be double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman, 1” margins, with the exception of the grant proposal, which must follow the guidelines outlined here: https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/how-apply

Specific guidelines for each assignment will be made available on Canvas well in advance of the due date. All students are responsible for visiting the course website regularly to check for the most current schedule, readings, assignment prompts, course policies, and web links for facilitating class discussion.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points (%)</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>150 (30%)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student choice at 8am</td>
<td>Reading Responses (500 word responses to a prompt)</td>
<td>50 (10%)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Progressive Research Project</td>
<td>300 (60%)</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26 - May 17</td>
<td>- Literature Review and Research Question</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Case Study Presentation and Discussion</td>
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<td>3, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 24</td>
<td>- Grant Proposal Presentation</td>
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<td>4, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>- Written Case Study and Grant Proposal</td>
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<td>4, 5</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>500 (100%)</td>
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5. Course Materials
(1) Course materials are available through Canvas. In addition to our selected readings, you are expected to read the posted discussion papers and come to class with discussion questions.

(2) There is one field trip that will cost $10 per student.
6. Policies
While technology in the classroom has its advantages, it is often distracting to your fellow classmates. During class meetings, with the exception of the daily note-taker, all laptops, tablets, phones, and recording devices must be turned off and put away. Please talk with me if you have questions or concerns about this policy or require accommodations. No recording of any kind (audio, video) is permitted without my permission.

Grading:
All grades will eventually be scaled to a 100-point system: A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (<60).

In calculating course grades, **any missing assignment will be counted as a zero—something that will seriously affect your course grade.** If you have questions or concerns about your grades, please come to my office hours or schedule an appointment to see me. Please **do not wait** until the end of the quarter to ask how you can improve your grade.

Citation and Plagiarism:
Please refer to Northwestern’s resources on academic integrity for guidance on how to properly use and credit research in your work. [http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/).

| Suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean's Office. |
| For more information on Northwestern’s academic integrity policies, see [http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/index.html](http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/index.html). |

Attendance:
One unexcused absence is allowed for any reason; each unexcused absence thereafter will lower your final grade by partial letter (e.g., A- to B+, B+ to B). Excused absences require proper documentation, such as a health center or doctor’s note, to be submitted within one week of the absence. In all cases, you are fully responsible for all course material, announcements, and notes missed due to absences. If you are late to class, please enter quietly; I’d prefer a minor disruption to you missing an entire class.

Late Assignments:
Assignments turned in late without a valid extension will lose one partial letter grade for each day, e.g. an A- paper turned in one day late will become a B+. **Extensions must be requested before the due date.** Because our collective learning relies on each other’s contributions, I will not grant extensions for reading responses or the case study presentation/discussion. If you have read this far in the syllabus, please email me a picture of a pika. No extensions will be granted the day an assignment is due except for documented medical or personal emergencies. Computers crashing, file corruption, and other technology problems are not generally considered valid excuses for late work.

Accommodation:
Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class **(by April 5)**. All information will remain confidential.

**Disclaimer:** This syllabus is a living document and is designed to guide our learning. In the spirit of reflexivity, I reserve the right to adjust the schedule, readings and assignments as appropriate and/or necessary. Updates will be posted on our course Canvas site.
DUE: Please bring two recent (last 12 months) news articles to class that discuss environmental justice, one in the US and one in any other country.

**Key Questions:** What is (global) environmental justice? What are the current critical questions in environmental justice research and practice? How do different scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and communities conceptualize environmental justice?

**Readings:** (55 pages + 25 recommended)


**Research Skills:** Conducting literature reviews, identifying research questions, and developing a thesis

DUE: Please visit the Environmental Justice Atlas at http://ejatlas.org. Explore the map and pick two different types of cases to read about and share with the class.

**Key Questions:** Why are some people denied the basic right to a clean and safe environment? Why are some groups disproportionately burdened with pollution? Why are some groups disproportionately burdened with the costs of producing environmental goods? Why are some groups disproportionately denied access to environmental amenities? What is the nature of environmental injustices? How can we empirically study these questions? What questions do we need to ask to understand environmental justice? What are the implications of different methodological approaches for understanding and addressing environmental justice questions? What is epistemic violence?

**Readings:** (82 pages + 61 recommended)

**Methods**


**Theories**


**Recommended**


**Research Skills:** Ethical approaches to data collection, analysis, and research design

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Class #3 (4/12, W) **NO CLASS:** Reschedule for Little Village Toxic Tour with the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, www.lvejo.org, date to be determined. This field trip is subsidized by WCAS, but each student will have to contribute $10.

**DUE:** Please visit http://lvejo.org and read about the history of environmental justice issues in this Chicago neighborhood. Also, Visit the Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Justice Website https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice and open their EJ Screen Mapping Tool using NU’s zipcode: 60208; your hometown zipcode (if you are from the US); and Little Village's zip code: 60623. Under the “Add Maps” tab, select one or more of the maps and explore the different types of EJ issues present in these communities. What do these data tell you about each case and comparatively?

**Key Questions:** How do different communities experience environmental injustice? What are the social relations of production and power that produce the outcomes in communities like Little Village? What political, social, and economic processes lead to the denial of rights to a clean and safe environment? Why? How do communities resist and advocate for justice? How do different types of data tell the stories of environmental justice? What rights and duties do different actors have in environmental justice communities?
Readings: (57 pages)

Research Skills: Taking field notes, ethnographic research

*** DUE: Friday, April 14: Literature Review and Research Question by 5pm***

Class #4 (4/19, W) Environmental Justice Practices, Frameworks, and Movements

Guest Speaker: Chas Jewett

DUE: Please bring 2 news articles that have been published in the last six months that discuss the case of Standing Rock and the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Key Questions: What coalitions form to address environmental justice? What factors motivate different environmental justice movements? What strategies are deployed and to what effect? Where do environmental justice movements converge and diverge? What are the “optimal disruptive” processes for addressing environmental justice concerns?

Readings: (83 pages)


**Research Skills:** Writing case studies and developing grant proposals.
Visit: https://undergradresearch.northwestern.edu/proposal-writing

***April 22 is Earth Day – Check our Canvas site for information on activities***

*** DUE: April 26 – May 17: Case Study Presentation and Discussion***
*Readings for Case Studies should be submitted one week before your scheduled session*

## PART II: CASES IN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

### Class #5 (4/26, W): Climate Change and Environmental Justice

**Key Questions:** This session will focus on the interstate dynamics of climate justice through the lens of vulnerability. How can we define vulnerability and how does vulnerability relate to justice and climate change? What are the social, economic, and political dynamics that shape responses to climate change and what are the subsequent justice effects?

**Key Policies:** The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

**Readings:** To be selected by students

### Class #6 (5/3, W): Biodiversity and Environmental Justice

**Key Questions:** This session will focus on the justice dynamics surrounding knowledge, identity, and property rights in biodiversity conservation. What explains the emergence of injustice in biodiversity conservation? How can these injustices be avoided, reduced, or corrected? What rights and responsibilities do different rights-holders and duty-bearers have and who decides?

**Key Policies:** The Convention on Biological Diversity, the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefits-sharing, and the Cartagena Protocol, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Conservation Initiative on Human Rights

**Readings:** To be selected by students

### Class #7 (5/10, W) Extractive Industries and Environmental Justice

**Key Questions:** This session will focus on the conflicts that emerge in communities impacted by extractive industries. What explains the distribution of socio-economic and environmental
benefits and impacts related to extractive industries? What are the rights and responsibilities of communities, corporations, and governments?

Key Policies: UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights

Readings: To be selected by students

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Class #8 (5/17, W): Livelihoods and Environmental Justice

Guest Speaker: Doug Kiel or Laura Zanotti (tentative)

Key Questions: This session will focus on the disruption and displacement related to the political economies of land, forests, water, and waste trading. What is the relationship between land, livelihoods, and environmental justice? What explains the rise of environmental justice claims related to land in global environmental governance? How do different communities experience environmental injustice and justice? How can we understand the justice implications of international trade in waste, especially electronic waste? How do different actors respond to different types of environmental injustice and to what effect?

Readings: To be selected by students

*** DUE: Wednesday, May 24: Grant Proposal Presentations***

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PART III: CASES IN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Class #9 (5/24, W): Towards the Future of Environmental Justice Research

DUE: Grant Proposal Presentations

Guest Evaluator: Peter Civetta, Director of Undergraduate Research, Northwestern University

Key Questions: What can political scientists contribute to environmental justice? Do we need a new word for justice? If so, what is it? What can be done to correct these histories of environmental inequalities and injustices?

Readings: (19 pages)