

Fall 2023
ENVI 291 1 Credit Course
Markim 201

Environmental Justice in Practice

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this new course offering in Environmental Justice, students will learn from local community organizers and activists working across race, class and culture towards a more radical, emancipatory and climate just future here in the Twin Cities and in Greater Minnesota. Students will meet approximately twice a month to learn directly from various communities and community leaders about their distinct and collaborative approaches to land, water, and air stewardship. You will also have the opportunity to learn about various organizing strategies and campaigns for environmental justice through in class work and traveling to sites off-campus.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- students will develop an understanding of grassroots environmental justice practices
- students will apply principles of environmental justice to local environmental campaigns
- students will reflect on their experiences and assess their role within local communities

REQUIRED TEXTS

No texts are required for purchase

COURSE POLICIES

Expectations

Community Agreements

This course was designed with the intention to balance time spent in the classroom with time spent in community spaces. With logistical limitations and only eight total “meetings,” it is paramount that students attend the maximum possible number of listed events, both to share the same experience as the rest of the class and to develop a more embodied understanding of environmental justice campaigns in Minnesota communities. It is expected that students prioritize attendance, active listening, and participation, as there are few other formalized means of assessment in the course. (See “Course Grades” below for a more detailed description of assessment protocols.) A list of community agreements will be developed in a collaborative exercise by instructors and students on the first day of class; these agreements will dictate expectations for all participants for the duration of the course.

Community Agreements (9/5/23)

- Patience and grace in conversation (active listening)
- Curiosity—allow space for learning/understand (you can change your stance!)
- Start class with personal check-ins
- Know each other (by name, by pronouns)
- Bring your full, honest, nuanced Self
- Use of technology—show up how you want others to as well (mutual respect)
- Respect visited/shared community space (be)
- Step Up, Step Back (Why Am I (Not) Talking WAIT, WAIT)
- Validate strong emotions/reactions about intense/heavy conversations
- Embrace the subjectivity of “environment”
- Tech-free visits (on and off campus)
- **Consent for photos in-class and at campus events (revisit on 9/23)**
- **Masking required for all on-campus course events (incl. gallery tours & guest speakers) & encouraged for off-campus transportation & events**

Communication/Email Preferences

We have created a [Google Space](#) for students to connect to each other and share out events or relevant articles, campaigns, etc.

We will do our best to reply to any emails as soon as possible. Please grant us at least 48 hours before following up on an email and know that if it is an urgent request there are campus resource links below for emergency support.

Course Grades

Course grades are based on a check basis. All students start the term with an “A.” Because we meet so irregularly, course participation and engagement matter. If you cannot make a class session or need to make up a 1:1 or Final Course slide, please make time to see either Sam or Kiri in Office hours as soon as possible.

Support

We are learning and working together under enormous constraints during an ongoing global pandemic, increasing acts of state violence, community organizing against anti Black and settler colonial state violence, unprecedented levels of unemployment and evictions, wildfires, etc. Most students are young people leading active lives outside of college. Urgent conditions may arise for you or your family members during this course. While we do not require precise details (significantly, in some circumstances it may be against your interests to inform me fully), we do need to be made aware when students require additional support or flexibility during this course.

Accommodations

If you are sick, stay home and focus on your health and wellness. If you need other resources or accommodations here is a small list of student support services available to Macalester students:

[Hamre Center for Health and Wellness](#)

[Disability Services](#)

COURSE SCHEDULE

*Syllabus is subject to change

Date	Event	Notes
<p>Tues, Sept 5 3-4:30pm Markim 201</p>	<p><u>Framing Environmental Justice in Practice</u> <i>Guiding question</i>– What does it mean to “practice” environmental justice?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cecilia Martinez, Executive Director of CEED, Profile of Environmental Justice Organizers in Twin Cities, by Pollen Midwest. [10mn read] 2. Orenstein, Walker. New Maps Show Where Minnesota Businesses Might Need Environmental Justice Analysis Under Law. Minnesota Post, July 21, 2023. [10mn read] <p>“The environment isn’t just ‘out there,’ [...] It’s where we live, work, play, pray, and learn. That context is important.” –Cecilia Martinez</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intro Survey ● Preliminary discussion ● Cumulative Impacts open house: Sept. 12th, 1-3pm (virtual)
<p>Saturday, Sept 23 8am-6pm pick up and drop off at Leonard Center</p>	<p><u>Environmental Justice in Northern / Rural MN</u> <i>Guiding question:</i> What characterizes environmental justice in rural communities? What opportunities / challenges arise? How does this affect narrative, strategy, visibility?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why Wild Rice Harvesting in Minnesota is Endangered by Baratunde Thurston. PBS. August 2022. [7:14mn] 2. Andrew Hazard. Survival of wild rice threatened by climate change, increased rainfall in northern Minnesota. Sahan Journal. August 14, 2023. 3. Orenstein, Walker. What you need to know about the talon metals plan to mine metals for evs in Minnesota. Minnesota Post, June 21, 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trip to Palisade, MN ● Include COVID recommendations in info email & masking requirements for all on-campus class activities ● Introduce 1:1 Assignment <p><u>EJ Community Org Links</u></p> <p>Mille Lacs Band’s Water Over Nickel Initiative</p> <p>Tamarack Water Alliance</p> <p>Honor the Earth on the Talon Mine</p>
<p>Tues, Oct 3 3-4:30pm</p>	<p><u>Scaling Environmental Justice: Reflecting on work from the Gulf to the Headwaters</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Headwaters Hub Reflections (45mn)

<p>Meet at Law Warschaw Gallery</p>	<p><i>Guiding discussion questions:</i> How are artists, organizers, community members, and scholars re-framing histories and relationships to the Mississippi River? What do these River stories from the Gulf to the Headwaters reveal to us about our relationships to each other and our more-than-human kin?</p> <p>During this class session, we will visit the <i>Insurgent Ecologies: Hotter Than July</i> exhibition curated by Tia-Simone Gardner, Media Cultural Studies and Heather Everhart, Director, Law Warschaw Gallery. The larger question their exhibition asks is how can our work as art and cultural producers challenge and disrupt systems rooted in racial enslavement, colonial conquest, displacement, maritime and potamic capitalism?</p> <p>Before Class:</p> <p>-Listen-Stevie Wonder’s Master Blaster (Jammin) & read Hanif Abdurauqib’s review of Hotter Than July, Pitchfork 2022.</p> <p>-Reflect-What is your relationship or experiences with River? What or who is the Mississippi River? What are some names of the many names or songs, films, books, people that come to mind when you think of the River?</p> <p>-Read- Select 1-2 “readings” from below to discuss in-class</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shana Griffin, Displacing Blackness: Cartographies of Violence, Extraction and Disposability, 2020. 2. Tia-Simone Gardner. There’s Something in the Water. Agitate Journal, 2021. 3. John Kim. Anthropocene and Media, Anthropocene Curriculum, 2019. 4. Andrea Carlson, On the Uncompromising Hand: Remembering Spirit Island, Open Rivers, 2018. 5. Vicente Diaz, Preserving Two Cultures with the Micronesian and Dakota Canoe. TPT Originals, 2020. [12:22mn] 6. Stephanie Lindquist, Mutual Earthly Delights, Mississippi River Open School, 2023. 7. Dameun Strange, Art Is TPT Originals Interview, 2020 [4:59] 8. Witt Siasoco, Community Artist Witt Siasoco Believes Art Can Do More, TPT Originals, 2020. [5mn] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visit Insurgent Ecologies Exhibition, Law Warschaw Gallery ● Formally introduce / assign 1:1s as a follow-up from HtE relational organizing <p>EJ Links</p> <p>Spring 2023 Insurgent Ecologies Exhibition, New Orleans</p> <p>New Orleans Center for the Gulf South (Tulane University)</p> <p>Mississippi River Open School for Kinship & Social Exchange</p> <p>PUNCTUATE Initiative</p>
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<p>Saturday, Oct 7</p>	<p><u>Witnessing Environmental Justice in North Minneapolis</u> <i>Guiding questions:</i> What characterizes environmental justices “on the fencelines” or in urban communities? What opportunities / challenges arise for North Minneapolis residents and community members? How does this shape their approaches to narrative, strategy, visibility? How do they engage with counter-tours and counter-mapping as an EJ practice?</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Juxtaposition Arts & Community Members for Environmental Justice. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Northside Environmental Justice Tour: River & Art Edition. Virtual Tour. b. A Future Park at Upper Harbor Terminal 2. Avian Kian. Black Minnesotans disproportionately affected by environmental pollutants. <i>Minnesota Post.</i> Feb 17, 2023 3. Environmental Justice Health Alliance Coming Clean & NRDC “Life at the Fenceline” [4mn] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trip to North Minneapolis hosted by Roxxanne O’Brien & CMEJ ● 1-4:30pm ● Meet at the Leonard Center (facing Snelling) <p><u>EJ Community Org Links</u></p> <p>Juxtaposition Arts</p> <p>Community Members for Environmental Justice</p>
<p>Tues Oct 17th 3 - 4:30pm Davis Court</p>	<p><u>Part 1: Reflections on grassroots environmental Justice organizing in the Twin Cities</u> <i>Guiding question:</i> What principles & practices are necessary for building sustainable & successful environmental justice campaigns?</p> <p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What was your path to environmental justice work? (CMEJ + Parks & Power) ● What was accomplished in the most recent state legislative session? ● What is the status of current campaigns? How can Macalester students get involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (EAB) ● tie-in for Mississippi River Grant is to connect students to direct social justice organizing (approaching ecology from a lens focused w/in Humanities & critical framework) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guest Speaker: Activist-in-Residence: Roxxanne O’Brien ● 1:1 completion deadline by Oct 23 <p><u>EJ Community Org Links</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CMEJ music video ● Parks & Power EAB interviews <p>[Link Parks & Power Campaign Materials]</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tie-in with other MN EJ campaigns — threats from law enforcement <p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> For Roxxanne O’Brien Feeling Fear Means Something Needs to be Done, My North News, 2021. Racism is Toxic: Roxxanne O’Brien. TPT Interview [6:23mn] March 20, 2022. Roxxanne O’Brien: Building Power, Women’s Press. 2019. 	
Thurs, Nov 9th	<p>Governing Environmental Justice <i>Guiding question:</i> How does the power of the state complicate (compromise?) grassroots efforts to win safer, healthier, and more just environmental outcomes for marginalized communities?</p> <p>Readings: EPA folder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read “EPA 1971” Read “Toxic Wastes and Race in the US” Read “Biden Executive Order” Skim EPA EJ Small Grants Files 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam Wegner will lead a session on EJ and state governance mechanisms and practices <p><u>EJ Community Org Links</u></p>
Tues, Nov 28 *Turkey Break 11/22-11/26	<p><u>Part 2: Reflections on grassroots environmental Justice organizing in the Twin Cities</u> <i>Guiding questions:</i> How do we reconcile advances in climate legislation with tradeoffs for environmental justice campaigns? Where do we find more alignment between global climate priorities and local community needs?</p> <p>Readings: TBD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest Speaker: Fernanda (Olinca) Acosta <p><u>EJ Community Org Links</u></p> <p>Unidos Minnesota</p>
Tues, Dec 5 Celebration Bonfire at Sustainability Center	<p>Final Reflections <i>Guiding questions:</i> What’s the status of EJ work in Minnesota? Why are some EJ campaigns “stronger” than others? Where do you see yourself in EJ work in the next 6-12 months?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Walidah Imarisha & adrienne maree brown, Octavia’s Brood Interview on Laura Flander’s Show, 2015. [15:21mn] Julian Aguon. To Hell With Drowning, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonfire Reflections at Sustainability Center Final: 1 Slide & in person reflections

	<u>Atlantic, 2021.</u>	
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