

Assignment Descriptions

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Accurately define and explain the historical context of environmental justice, from both scholarly and activist perspectives.
2. Confidently discuss key environmental justice concerns in regions around the world.
3. Interpret local environmental justice concerns within broader geopolitical and economic contexts.
4. Participate effectively in group discussions.
5. Share your own work and engage with that of peers through a poster presentation.
6. Express evidence-based arguments in quality written form, using effective structuring.
7. Take action to affect an environmental justice issue of interest to you.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment	Learning objective	Points	Due date*
Research Project Proposal	2, 3, 6	5	September 23
Quiz to check for understanding	1	15	September 30
Action Project	7	15	TBD (likely October)
Action Project Reflection	7	15	October 28 (tentative)
Poster Presentation	2, 3, 4, 5	20	File due no later than November 11. Students will present on November 18.
Research Project	2, 3, 6	20	December 10, by 5:00 PM.
Class participation and peer engagement	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10	N/A
Total		100	

*Unless otherwise indicated, assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the due date.

FORMATTING AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

For all written work, please use Times New Roman, 12-point font or Calibri, 11-point font, with double spacing, one-inch margins, and page numbers included at the bottom of each page. Be sure to appropriately cite any sources used—whether course readings or outside literature—using APA format. Please use Zotero to organize references and cite correctly.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Research paper proposal

This proposal is intended to help you prepare a strong final project and to receive early feedback on your plans from the instructor. The proposal is due early in the semester so that you can use the information learned in class to refine your plans and carry them out effectively before the end of the term. All final project topics must be approved by the instructor via the proposal. Before beginning work on the final project proposal, read the complete explanation of the research project assignment itself, below.

The proposal should include the following components:

1. Identify an environmental justice concern in a place of interest to you, and explain why you are choosing this topic.
2. Provide a brief overview of the topic based on your current knowledge.
3. Identify a clear research question that you can investigate through a literature review. Explain what information and resources you will need to obtain to be able to answer this question, based on your current knowledge.
4. Create an annotated bibliography of at least ten references that you will use to study your topic. At least five of these should be academic sources, such as from a peer-reviewed journal, or official data, such as from the World Bank. For each reference, include the full citation and 3-4 sentences summarizing the work and how it will help you answer your research question.

Proposals should be 2 pages in length, not including the annotated bibliography. Please submit your paper via Blackboard, where it will be automatically checked by plagiarism software.

The proposal is worth 5 points, and will be graded using the following rubric:

Essay component	Effectively answers questions 1-3	Provides a high-quality annotated bibliography with at least 10 references and descriptive paragraphs, including five academic/formal sources.
Points	1 X 3 = 3	2

3. Quiz to check for understanding

The quiz is designed to ensure that students understand basic definitions and history of environmental justice and related theory that will then be applied throughout the rest of the course. The quiz is worth 15 points, and will consist of questions in formats such as multiple choice or true/false. It will be administered via Moodle. If you do not have a laptop that you can bring to class on the day of the quiz, please let Professor Odell know.

4. Environmental Justice Action Project

Environmental Justice is as much or more a source of social action as a scholarly subject. Thus, this assignment is an opportunity for you to take action on an environmental justice issue in our own

community. I am working with the Praxis Office to schedule a class service project. I will give you complete details later in the semester. By actively participating in the action project, you will receive full credit for this assignment, or 15 points. If you are unable to participate due to a scheduling conflict or accommodation, please reach out to me as soon as possible to discuss an alternative.

Action Project Reflection

After participating in the Action Project, write a 3-page paper reflecting on your experience that puts our your experience into conversation with the environmental justice scholarship we are exploring in class. You may consider some of the following questions in your response:

- How does the project relate to local and/or global environmental justice themes studied in class?
- What did you learn by carrying out the project?
- What challenges did you find?
- What were the impacts of our project?
- How will this project affect you moving forward?

Be sure to structure your paper with an introduction, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion, and cite any outside literature used.

The project will be graded based on the following rubric:

Component	Paper effectively responds the prompt, demonstrating that you have thoughtfully considered the context and impacts of the Action Project, and how they relate to EJ activism and scholarship studied in class.	Follows guidelines, effectively structured, with minimal typos, and correct citations (if relevant)
Points (worth 15 total)	13	2

6. Research Poster Presentation

You will have the opportunity to present and receive feedback on the preliminary findings of your research project (see below) through a poster session in class. Design is up to you, but general tips include:

- Text: use a font and size that is easy to read from several feet away. Avoid large amounts of text, instead using bullet points or headings to draw attention to key themes that viewers may ask you questions about and that you can discuss verbally in greater detail. Cite any outside sources used, via a small "References" section.
- Visuals: Use photographs, charts, etc. to supplement your text and attract viewers' attention. All images should be cited appropriately.
- Break the page into sections--three columns are recommended.
- Pay attention to how viewers will approach the poster: for example, in English, we read from left to right and from top to bottom, so viewer's natural tendency will be to start in the top-left of your poster and work their way toward the bottom-right.

Your poster should cover the following key topics:

- Overview of the topic you are studying, with a clear research question
- Overview of the place-based context in which you are studying it
- Key findings
- Your analysis
- Preliminary conclusions/implications
- References

You should include citations on the poster just as you would in a paper. These can be parenthetical or as endnotes, with a list of references at the end of the poster.

Poster files must be submitted before class no later than November 11 to allow sufficient time for printing. Students will then display and present their posters to each (and possibly the broader Bi-Co community) in a poster session on November 18. On presentation day, presenting students should stand by their poster to give a brief oral presentation about what their poster covers and answer questions. The rest of the class and the instructor will circulate around the room to view the presentations. You should prepare a set presentation that you will give to Professor Odell for a grade (more details on timing and structure will be given later in the semester).

The presentation is worth 20 points, and will be graded using the following rubric:

Presentation component	Poster effectively introduces the project topic using the guidelines above	Poster is visually appealing and has minimal errors	Student gives an effective verbal overview of their poster and effectively answers questions
Points (20 total)	8	4	8

7. Environmental Justice Research Project

This assignment is designed to give you the opportunity to use the knowledge and tools you have gained in class to research and write about a specific environmental justice issue in a place of interest to you. Drawing on academic literature, reputable news sources, government publications, and/or other reliable data, write a 10-13-page paper on your topic that includes the following clearly defined sections. Please use section headers. If you determine that your particular topic is better suited to a different organizational scheme, that is fine, but please be sure to still cover the key topics listed below.

1. **Introduction** that presents your research question, summarizes your findings, and introduces your argument/thesis statement
2. **Background** of the issue (the who/what/when)
3. **The place or context** in which the issue takes place: pay attention to the physical and human geography
4. **Findings:** What does existing literature say about the topic?
5. **Your analysis** of the environmental justice issues at play and how they fit into global political economic trends
6. **Conclusion** summarizing your findings and offering recommendations for ways forward and implications for broader environmental justice research and/or activism.

All sources must be clearly cited using APA format. The paper is worth 20 points, and will be graded as follows:

Paper Component	Effectively completes each section of the paper. For Background, Place, and Analysis in particular, information and arguments should be substantiated with reliable sources and effective citation management.						Paper is polished, effectively structured, and has minimal typographical errors
	Intro	Back-ground	Findings	Place/context	Analysis	Conclusion	
Points (20 total)	2	3	3	3	3	2	4

8. Class participation and peer engagement

As a seminar, a core learning method of this class is group discussion and engagement with the diverse perspectives of peers on course topics and readings. Thus, students are expected to be present and prepared in class, and participate actively and respectfully in discussion. This includes both expressing one's own perspective and remaining quiet at times to create space for others to share their views. Students who engage actively and respectfully with peers and come to class having read the required readings can expect to receive a full participation grade. If you feel anxious or uncomfortable speaking in class, please reach out to me to discuss other ways to engage with the material.

Students should follow all university health policies, and not come to class when sick. If you must miss class, please contact me. I will share with you materials such as PowerPoints that were used that day. You may make up participation points for a missed class by submitting a 3-page reflection paper on that week's readings and materials within one week of the last consecutive absence. Every student has one "free" absence that does not count toward the participation grade. Please remember that to receive attendance points beyond these absences, even for an excused absence, you will need to make up the class as described above. Students can receive 0.5 points of extra credit if they do not use the "free" absence.

Participation is worth 10 points, and will be graded based on the following rubric:

Component	Attendance. There are 14 class sessions. Students can miss 1 session without needing to make it up. 0.5 points per session X 13 sessions = 6.5 points. Attending or making up all 14 sessions would result in 0.5 points of extra credit.	Contributes effectively to class discussion, both via making comments and leaving space for peers to comment.
Points (10 total)	6.5	3.5