

History 279: Environmental Justice

GEP: Historical Perspectives and U.S. Diversity

UWSP – History Department
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Why do some people suffer the effects of pollution more than others? That question guides this course, a history of the environmental justice movement. Students will learn how the civil rights movement and the environmental movement merged—at least some branches of the two—to form the environmental justice movement. Driving this resulting movement is the recognition that people marginalized socially, whether by race, class, or gender, often suffer from a disproportionate amount of environmental health hazards.

In this course, we will study the historical reasons for marginalization and how they played out spatially in the American landscape. We will then turn toward the fight against this environmental pattern, studying how marginalized Americans organized the environmental justice movement.

Enduring Understandings:

Conflicts over nature have had cultural and political dimensions.

Environmentalism has had a varied membership and an assortment of goals in American history.

Learning Outcomes: After taking this course, students will be able to:

- use primary sources to examine the environmental justice movement
- describe competing claims about the past
- analyze how environmental and civil rights concerns merged in the 20th century
- describe various dimensions of marginalization, particularly environmental injustice
- explain how the civil rights movement addressed environmental inequalities

Course Structure: To understand environmental justice, three historical patterns must be taken together: the civil rights movement; the environmentalism; and the growth of cities in the twentieth century.

Early in the semester, we will examine the African American migration from the rural South to the urban North. The migration was fueled by hope for a better life, and we will read about the African American push for parks and healthy neighborhoods that exemplified this hope. Likewise, we will look at the workplace of northern factories that undergirded this American dream. Unfortunately, in these factories and neighborhoods, twentieth-century African Americans faced pollution that threatened health and community.

As the semester progresses, we will examine how the reaction to this environmental injustice came as the civil rights movement matured and environmentalism widened. The resulting environmental justice movement fought its battles in the context of new civil rights and environmental laws, and the movement's successes and failures are our final focus.

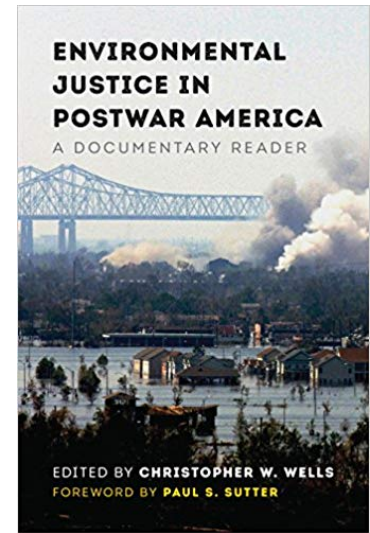
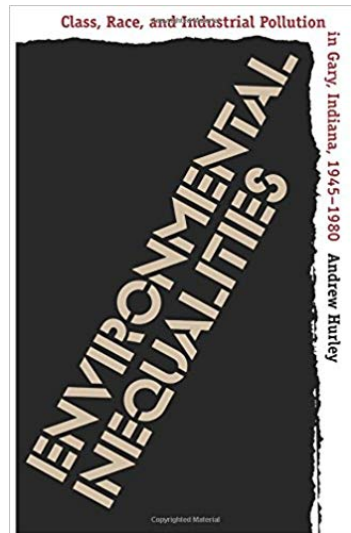
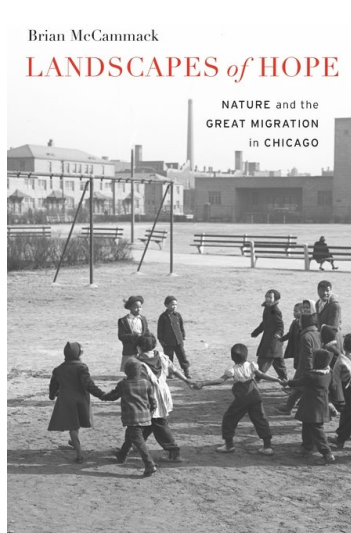


Dr. Prendergast's Office Hours: This semester, I will not be seeing students in person. Office Hours will be held via Zoom from 2:00 to 3:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A link will be available in Canvas. (Other times will work, too, as my schedule allows.)

Email: nprender@uwsp.edu Email is a great way to get a hold of me.

(If you're uncertain about how to write an email to a professor, then this is a great template:

<https://medium.com/@portwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ac0e4087>)



Purchase Book: Brian McCamack, *Landscapes of Hope: Nature and the Great Migration in Chicago* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

E-Book via Library: Andrew Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, and Industrial Pollution in Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

Text Rental Book: Christopher Wells, editor, *Environmental Justice in Postwar America: A Documentary Reader* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018). BRING TO CLASS ON FRIDAYS, STARTING IN OCTOBER

Canvas: There will also be additional articles, book chapters, and other materials available on Canvas.

Assignments and Grading: There are twenty Topic Assignments, three Unit Papers and one Final Paper.

20 points for **Unit One Paper**

25 points for **Unit Two Paper**

25 points for **Unit Three Paper**

30 points for **Final Paper**

100 points total



We will use the following grade schedule:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.99	C+ 77-79.99	D+ 67-69.99	F 59.99 and below
A- 90-92.99	B 83-86.99	C 73-76.99	D 60-66.99	
	B- 80-82.99	C- 70-72.99		



Course Policies: For information on plagiarism, consult <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights>. See Chapter 14, *Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures*, pages 5 -10, for the disciplinary possibilities if you are caught cheating. As an instructor deeply concerned with fairness in the classroom, I pursue each and every case of plagiarism and cheating. Please note that turnitin.com is used for the essay assignments.

Life Happens: I understand that life might make it difficult to complete some assignments, attend class, or simply to do well. I also know that some real learning has to take place in this class. You will have more opportunities in life if you can analyze, think critically and communicate effectively. This class has to be one of your priorities. I do my best to be flexible, but need to adhere to some standards. So, if something comes up, let's talk.

Equity of Educational Access: If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester. They will then notify me, in a confidential memo, of the accommodations that will facilitate your success in the course. Disability Services Office, 103 Student Services Center, Voice: (715) 346-3365, TTY: (715) 346-3362, <http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm>.



Note: *The syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced via email, or on Canvas may be necessary.*

Lecture and Discussion Our course is a mixture of lecture and discussion. Mondays and Wednesdays will lean more on lecture, although with plenty of moments for dialogue between professor and student. Lectures will not be recorded, so students must attend.

Most Fridays show “Discussion” on the syllabus. These days will often include in-class readings and analytical exercises that will drive class conversation. Our goal is to apply readings and lectures from earlier in the week to a specific scenario. On a couple occasions, you’ll see “Online Activity.” These days will be similar to Discussion but conducted online asynchronously.

Together, our lectures, readings, and discussions will help students put together their unit paper.

Coming Back to Campus

How normal will things be? Aside from the wearing of masks, holding to a seating chart, and having office hours via Zoom, our course will be normal in all respects. We meet in person, read, write papers, and so forth.

Will there be Zoom meetings? No, not as a regular part of our course meetings. I will use Zoom exclusively for office hours, though.

Will we have any online class meetings at all? On occasion, but not through Zoom and not as synchronous events. A few times during the semester, we’ll be better served by doing an online activity instead of meeting in person. Such occasions will be announced in class and via email ahead of time if not already scheduled.

Is everything going to be on Canvas? We’ll use Canvas sparingly. You can track your grades there, get a copy of the syllabus, find paper descriptions, and locate readings listed as “Canvas” on the syllabus schedule...but not much else. Think of Canvas as a filing cabinet, not a meeting room.

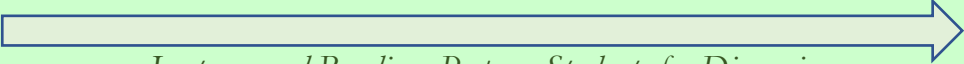
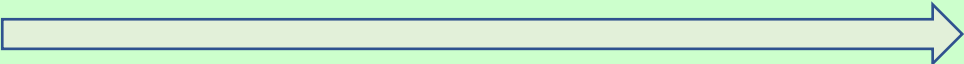
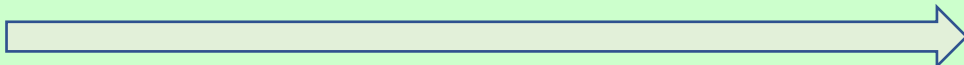
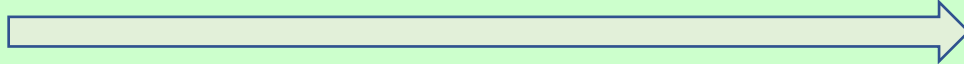
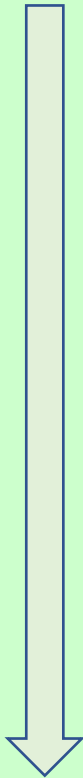
Mask Policy: <https://www.uwsp.edu/coronavirus/Documents/UWSPChancellorOrder%208.6.2021.pdf> We will follow that policy without exception.

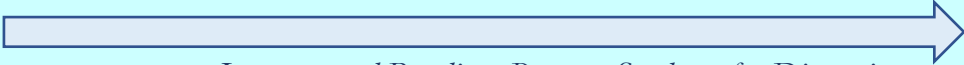
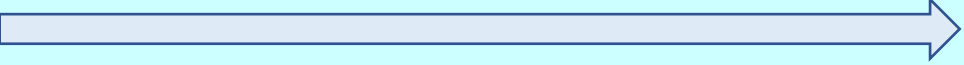
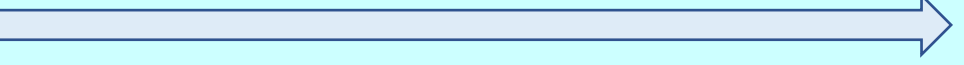


Please note that I cannot hold class if even one student is unmasked.

Vaccines: I myself am vaccinated. I took the vaccine to protect myself, but more importantly to protect my wife and son. My son is too young to get vaccinated, so it’s important that my vaccination buffers him against infection. My wife is also vulnerable: in her case, due to medicine she must take to battle Multiple Sclerosis. But again my vaccination provides an important buffer. For me, these were the reasons to get the vaccine.

There are also more uplifting and fun incentives to vaccinate. The university has prizes, including scholarships, laptops, parking passes, and shopping sprees available. See details: <https://www.uwsp.edu/coronavirus/Pages/ItsWorthAShot.aspx>

The State of Wisconsin is offering \$100 to get vaccinated before Labor Day: <https://www.wpr.org/wisconsin-will-give-you-100-if-you-get-covid-19-vaccine-labor-day>

Schedule				
<i>Please note that I cannot hold class if even one student is unmasked.</i>				
Introduction: Environmental Justice				
Week 1			Friday Sept 3 Introduction	
Unit 1: Great Migration				
Week 2	Monday September 6 LABOR DAY	Wednesday September 8 Inequality in the Rural South Read: <i>Reconstruction</i> (Canvas)	Friday September 10 Discussion In Class Readings	<i>Discussion and Online Activities Prepare Students for Papers</i>
 <i>Lectures and Readings Prepare Students for Discussion</i>				
Week 3	Monday September 13 The Northern Industrial City Read: <i>Escaping the Dark Gray City</i> (Canvas)	Wednesday September 15 Segregation in the City Read: 15-32, <i>Landscapes of Hope</i> Optional: Intro and all of Ch.1	Friday September 17 Online Lecture: National Parks and Segregation (Canvas)	
				
Week 4	Monday September 20 Seeking Nature Read: 69-86, <i>Landscapes of Hope</i> Optional: all of Ch. 2	Wednesday September 22 The Importance of Parks Read: 105-127, <i>Land. of Hope</i> Optional: all of Ch. 3	Friday September 24 Discussion In Class Readings	
				
Week 5	Monday September 27 Significance of Camping Read: 176-198, <i>Landscapes of Hope</i> Optional: all of Ch. 4	Wednesday September 29 New Deal Read: 199-217, <i>Land. of Hope</i> Optional: all of Ch. 5	Friday October 1 Discussion In Class Readings	
				
Unit One Paper Due by Midnight, Monday October 4th				

Unit 2: The Postwar City				
Week 6	Monday October 4 Class, Race, and City Landscape Read: Ch. 1, <i>Env. Inequalities</i> Unit One Paper Due Midnight	Wednesday October 6 Perils of Pollution Read: Ch. 2, <i>Env. Inequalities</i>	Friday October 8 Discussion. In Class: "Where We Work," <i>EJPA</i>	<i>Discussion and Online Activities</i> Prepare Students for Papers
 <i>Lectures and Readings Prepare Students for Discussion</i>				
Week 7	Monday October 11 Redlining Read: <i>Federal Subsidy and the American Dream</i> (Canvas)	Wednesday October 13 Public Housing Read: <i>Troubled Waters</i> (Canvas)	Friday October 15 Discussion. In Class: "Where We Live," <i>EJPA</i>	
				
Week 8	Monday October 18 Open Housing Read: <i>Selma of the North</i> (Canvas)	Wednesday October 20 Urban Renewal Read: <i>Urban Renewal</i> (Canvas)	Friday October 22 Discussion In Class: "Where We Live," <i>EJPA</i>	
				
Week 9	Monday October 25 Model Cities Read: <i>Neighborhood</i> (Canvas)	Wednesday October 27 African American Env. Read: Ch. 5, <i>Env. Inequalities</i>	Friday October 29 Discussion In Class: "Where We Play," <i>EJPA</i>	
 Unit Two Paper Due Monday, November 1st				
An Environmental Justice Movement				
Week 10	Monday November 1 Earth Day Read: <i>Earth Day</i> (Canvas) Unit Two Paper Due Midnight	Wednesday November 3 Middle Class Env. Read: Ch. 3 <i>Env. Inequalities</i>	Friday November 5 Discussion. In Class: "Race, Env., and Gov.," <i>EJPA</i>	<i>Discussion and Online Activities</i> Prepare
				

<i>Lectures and Readings Prepare Students for Discussion</i>				<i>Students for Papers</i>
Week 11	Monday November 8 Working Class Env. Read: Ch. 4, <i>Env. Inequalities</i>	Wednesday November 10 Env. Coalition Read: Ch. 6, <i>Env. Inequalities</i>	Friday November 12 Discussion In Class Reading	
Week 12	Monday November 15 Love Canal Read: <i>Love Canal</i> (Canvas)	Wednesday November 17 Warren County Read: <i>Warren County</i> (Canvas)	November 19 Discussion In Class: "Toxics, Warren County..." <i>EJPA</i>	
Week 13	Monday November 22 Native America and EJ Read: <i>Navajo Nation and Uranium</i> (Canvas)	Wednesday November 24 Online Activity	Friday THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 14	Monday November 29 Mexican Americans and EJ Read: <i>Mathis, Texas</i> (Canvas)	Wednesday December 1 Mexican Americans and EJ Read: <i>Smelertown</i> (Canvas)	Friday December 3 Discussion In Class Reading	
Unit 3 Paper Due Monday, December 6th				
Week 15	Monday December 6 Environ. Justice Today Read: "Building the Movement," <i>EJPA</i> Unit Three Paper Due Midnight	Wednesday December 8 Environ. Justice Today Read: "Part 3," <i>EJPA</i>	Friday December 10 Final Paper Workshop	
Final Exam Week	Final Paper Due in Canvas by end of Final Exam Period: Tuesday, December 14th, 2:30pm			

