

Brooklyn College
GSCI 2050: Environmental Studies
Spring 2015

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Time: MW 11:00-12:40
Location: Room Roosevelt 217R

Course Overview:

Environmental problems make headlines every day. How can we help to develop participatory citizens who understand the complex scientific and social issues behind the headlines, make informed decisions, and meet these environmental challenges? The Global Environment will help you to gain the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions regarding the environment and the earth's future. We will look at the global environment through a **socio-ecological justice** framework. A socio-ecological justice framework highlights the links between our current political economy and modern state and the "myriad environmental problems for human and nonhuman communities all over the globe" (Gruenewald, 2004). This framework highlights the ways in which environmental crises are inseparable from social crises and are often experienced differently by different social groups. By the end of this course you will have a better understanding of the connections between such varied topics as pollution, deforestation, climate change, food production, soil depletion, economics, biodiversity, history, poverty, and social justice. The course stresses a systems approach in evaluating problems and potential solutions as well as an understanding of the critical role of power and privilege in many of the environmental challenges facing the world. My educational philosophy is not to stand up in the front of the room and lecture to you. I strongly believe that you all have much to contribute to this class and I will expect that you take full responsibility for your individual and our collective learning. Your participation in daily journal reflections, class discussions, and our course blog will be places for you to engage and dialogue with one another and the course readings. The spring semester is dedicated to zooming in on our lived experiences where we will conduct collective participatory research using Photovoice to unpack and deconstruct our relationship to our neighborhoods and communities with a specific focus on equity and action.

Guiding Questions:

- How is our current way of life/society tied to the earth both directly and indirectly?
- Do we accept things (the structures in society including political, cultural, economic, educational, religious systems) as they are or as changeable?
- How do you define the dominant culture(s) in society today and how do these dominant culture(s) impact/affect people and places, humans and habitat? Is this impact equal for all people?
- What are our responsibilities as citizens today? How are we being prepared to think about our role in the global economy? Our role in ensuring a sustainable future?
- What are the cultural and ecological conflicts that come from a preparation of young people to participate in the global economy?
- What are the purposes of education/schooling in the larger arena of cultural and ecological conflict?
- How does change happen? Can one person make a difference?
- What does it mean to be critically conscious?

Required Texts:

Sensoy, O. (2012). *Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

I will make copies of these for the class but they will also be available as .pdf versions on the class website
Bowers, C. A. (2001). Introduction. In *Educating for eco-justice and community*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Cahill, C., Rios-Moore, I., & Threatts, T. (2008). Different Eyes/Open Eyes: Community-Based Participatory Action Research. In J. Cammarota & M. Fine (Eds.), *Revolutionizing education: youth participatory action research in motion*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). Youth Participatory Action Research: A Pedagogy for Transformational Resistance. In *Revolutionizing education: youth participatory action research in motion*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Checkoway, B. N., & Gutierrez, L. M. (2006). Youth Participation and Community Change: An Introduction. *Journal of Community Practice*, 14(1-2), 1-9.

Gallagher, W. (2007). The Crime of the Cities. In *The power of place: how our surroundings shape our thoughts, emotions, and actions*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Kilbourne, J. (2000). In your face...all over the place: Advertising is our Environment. In *Can't buy my love: how advertising changes the way we think and feel*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Sharkey, P. (2013). The Inheritance of the Ghetto. In *Stuck in place: urban neighborhoods and the end of progress toward racial equality*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wang, C. C. (2006). Youth Participation in Photovoice as a Strategy for Community Change. *Journal of Community Practice*, 14(1-2), 147–161.

Course Requirements & Assignments:

Attendance: As a college course, there is a strict attendance policy. You are allowed to miss two days. Any more than two days will result in 5 points taken off your attendance grade. Please let me know in advance if you are going to be absent.

In-class Participation: Contributing your voice to our class discussions is important for everyone. However, I do understand that this can be intimidating at first and that some of you are more comfortable with expressing your thoughts than others. I hope that by the end of the course you all find the best way to share your thinking with the class.

Online Participation: It is expected that you will continue class discussions and share new ideas and information through our course blog. You can access the blog through the course site as well as instructions on creating new blog posts. Throughout the semester you will be expected to contribute to the class blog (in addition to your reading/video reflections). You must create 5 **new posts** and at least 10 **thoughtful comments** on other posts. New posts can be about anything you find interesting and related to our class. In your post be sure to include images, links, why you posted the particular thing you posted, and how you are relating it to concepts from class.

Reading/Video and Response (R&R): For each reading or video assigned you will be required to write a 200–250 word reflection on our course blog prior to class.

Collective Participatory Research Projects in Local Environments: For each unit we will conduct a collective research project utilizing participatory data collection methods. All of these research projects will be published on our course website and explore issues related to your own lives and communities.

- **Unit 1: Critical Literacy: Advertising is our Environment**
- **Unit 2: Mental Mapping: Investigating Places that Matter**
- **Unit 3: Photovoice: Visualizing Youth Urban Environments**

Final Class Reflection: At the end of the semester you will complete a self-assessment that will help us determine your grade. This reflection will ask you to show evidence of your participation and contribution to your individual as well as our collective learning. Evidence will be in the form of your participation in class and online discussions, engagement with the readings on the blog, attendance, and reading reflections.

Late Days: For your reading/video reflections, you will have a total of six (6) Late Days that you may use for the semester. That is, all your reading/video reflections may be late a total of six days (or parts thereof). There is not penalty for using Late Days. Note that a day is a day: Wednesday is a day, Saturday is a day, Easter is a day, etc. Note that computer problems, death, simple laziness, wedding, travel and emergency surgery all mean the same (as far as late papers are concerned); you must expend Late Days if you wish to submit a late reflection.

Grading: Here it the breakdown of points for all assignments throughout the course. Feel free to use the table below to keep track of your points.

Assignment	Possible Points	Points Earned
Attendance	20	
In-class Participation	20	
Blog Posts	30	
Reading/Video Reflections	40	
Final Class Reflection	15	
Unit 1 Research Project	25	

Unit 2 Research Project	25	
Unit 3 Research Project	25	
TOTAL POINTS	200	

University Policies:

University's policy on Academic Integrity: The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. **A plagiarized project proposal paper (part or whole) will generate a final course grade of 'F'.**

Student Disability Services: In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her.

Non-attendance because of religious beliefs: As you read the syllabus/calendar, please note any conflicts between any assignments given here and possible nonattendance because of religious observance or for any other reasons you may have. Please notify me at the beginning of the semester (first two scheduled class meetings) via e-mail so that an appropriate accommodation can be negotiated. For further information, please see the BC Catalog.

Policy on Incompletes: Students have only one semester to submit work for a course in which they have received an INC. For example, the deadline for submission of work for a course taken in the fall 2014 is May 1, 2015.

Course Schedule:

UNIT 1: Introduction to Social Justice Education			
Dates	Reading/Video	Assignments Due	In Class
Wednesday, January 28	<i>Is everyone really equal?</i> Preface, Prologue, Appendix, Glossary, Amazon Reviews	No assignment due	Reading and Discussion Video: Changing Education Paradigms
Monday, February 2	<i>Is everyone really equal?</i> Chapters 1 & 2	Reading and Reflection Introduction Blog	Discussion Video: TED Talk Chimamanda Adichie: The Danger of a Single Story
Wednesday, February 4	<i>Is everyone really equal?</i> Chapters 3 & 4	Reading and Reflection Blogging	Discussion Video: Neoliberalism as a Water Balloon
Monday, February 9	<i>Is everyone really equal?</i> Chapters 5 & 6	Reading and Reflection Blogging	Discussion TED Talk: Bryan Stevenson: We Need to Talk about an Injustice
Wednesday, February 11	<i>Is everyone really equal?</i> Chapters 7 & 8	Reading and Reflection Blogging	Discussion Video: A Class Divided
Monday, February 16	<i>Is everyone really equal?</i> Chapters 9 & 10	Reading and Reflection Blogging	NO CLASS
Wednesday, February 18	In your face...all over the place: Advertising is our Environment	Reading and Reflection	Discussion TED Talk: Cameron Russell: Looks aren't everything. Believe me, I'm a model. TED Talk: Renee Engeln: An epidemic of beauty sickness
Monday, February 23	Critical Literacy: Advertising is our Environment Photograph Ads in your neighborhood		Data Analysis

Wednesday, February 25	Critical Literacy: Advertising is our Environment Photograph Ads in your neighborhood	Data Analysis	
Monday, March 2	Critical Literacy: Advertising is our Environment Complete your data analysis and research page	Sharing of Projects/Reflection	
UNIT 2: Local Environmental Issues and Ecojustice			
Dates	Reading/Video	Assignment	In Class
Monday, March 9	Video: Home	Video and Reflection Blogging	Discussion Video: The Story of Stuff Reading: The Earth Charter
Wednesday, March 11	Video: Park Avenue	Video and Reflection Blogging	Discussion Video: TED Talk Naomi Klein: Addicted to Risk
Monday, March 16	Video: Whose Barrio?	Video and Reflection Blogging	Discussion Video: TED Talk Majora Carter: Greening the Ghetto
Wednesday, March 18	Video: My Brooklyn	Video and Reflection Blogging	Discussion
Monday, March 23	The Crime of the Cities	Reading and Reflection	Mapping and map discussion
Wednesday, March 25	Mental Mapping: Investigating Places that Matter Continue Group Themes in Google Docs		Map Discussions Continued
Monday, March 30	Mental Mapping: Investigating Places that Matter Continue Group Themes in Google Docs		Common Group Themes
Wednesday, April 1	Mental Mapping: Investigating Places that Matter		Class Themes and Project Reflections
UNIT 3: Photovoice Research			
Dates	Reading/Video	Assignment	In Class
Monday, April 6	N/A	Mental Map Research Reflection Photovoice Images	NO CLASS
Wednesday, April 8	N/A	Photovoice Images	NO CLASS
Monday, April 13	1. Youth Participation and Community Change 2. Youth Participatory Action Research	Reading and Reflection	Introduction to Youth Community Research and Photovoice
Wednesday, April 15	Youth Participation in Photovoice as a Strategy for Community Change	Reading and Reflection	Introduction to Photograph Discussions
Monday, April 20	Introduction: <i>Educating for eco-justice and community.</i>	Reading and Reflection	Photograph Discussions
Wednesday, April 22	N/A	Write Personal Photovoice Narrative	Photograph Discussion Generate common themes for presentation
Monday, April 27	N/A	Write Personal Photovoice Narrative	Share and Analyze Class Narratives
Wednesday, April 29	The inheritance of the Ghetto	Reading and Reflection	Prepare Final Presentations
Monday, May 4	Different Eyes/Open Eyes: Community-Based Participatory Action Research	Reading and Reflection	Prepare Final Presentations
Wednesday, May 6	N/A	Prepare for Final Presentation	Final Presentations
Monday, May 11	N/A	Prepare for Final Presentation	Final Presentations
Wednesday, May 13	N/A	Final Reflection on Photovoice Final Course Reflection	Exhibit Preparations