

Public Health 238: Fall 2020
Environmental Health and Justice in the Rochester Community
Wed 9-10:15 and Fri 9-11:40 (Computer Science Bldg 209)

Instructor: Katrina Smith Korfmacher, PhD
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Course Description: Environmental justice is closely related to community health. This course explores community problem-solving in the face of decades of policy, economic, and social forces that have created and sustained patterns of inequity. There are many ways to approach environmental justice. This class uses the conceptual frame of “Policies, systems, and environments” (PSE) to orient public health toward changing the institutions, rules, norms, and practices that drive social determinants of health. Particularly in the environmental field, these efforts focus on how communities, researchers, and government can collaborate to promote health equity. We will focus particularly on the role of research, analysis, and data in informing community solutions. This course will provide students with the tools to use their multidisciplinary skills to promote PSE change through engagement with several current environmental health justice issues in Rochester, New York.

This course provides students with a methodological, conceptual, and experiential foundation in addressing problems at the local level. The course is built around three case studies: subsistence fishing, design of the built environment, and climate adaptation. As feasible under current pandemic-related restrictions, students will have the opportunity to interact with local people, places, and programs through community visits and independent projects. Students will engage in benchmarking research, practice diverse data collection strategies, and gain experience integrating multidisciplinary information. Students will undertake a semester-long community engaged project in which they leverage knowledge to address a locally-identified environmental justice need.

Prerequisites: Not open to freshman. Prerequisites; PH 101, PH 116, or PH 102; or by permission of instructor for students with significant policy, community change, or environmental management background.

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Define environmental justice in the context of urban revitalization in the U.S.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of science in community-engaged policy processes
- Analyze institutional, structural, and cultural barriers to community-professional collaboration.

Student Evaluation: Students’ process and products will be evaluated accordingly to determine the final grade for the course:

- Module synthesis products (3 short papers/projects, 10% each): 30%
- Climate Justice in Rochester project (interim products, presentation and report) 30%
- Weekly tasks (approximately 12, 2 points each): 24%
- Class Participation/Preparation: 16%

Readings: (To be completed prior to the class for which they are assigned)

Several chapters will be assigned from two books:

- Korfmacher, Katrina Smith. 2019. Bridging Silos: Collaborating for Environmental Health and Justice in Urban Communities. MIT. FREE DOWNLOAD: <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/bridging-silos>
- Ottinger, Gwen. 2013. Refining Expertise: How responsible engineers subvert environmental justice challenges. New York University Press.

Additional readings will be assigned from diverse sources including community groups and government agencies in addition to the academic literature.

Module synthesis products: Students will produce three synthetic products (short papers) for each section of the course (10% each, 30% total).

Independent project: Implementing Climate Justice in Rochester (product, report and presentation):

Each student will undertake an independent project to help Rochester implement to share their findings with the community, write a 5-10 page report analyzing the issue, and present to the class. (30% total)

Weekly tasks: each week, students will submit short assignments (data collection, reflections, summaries, etc. for 2 points each (2 for completion, 1 if incomplete or late, 0 if not completed) (24% total).

Class participation/preparation: in addition to attending every class and several outside events, you are expected to contribute to group learning through active, prepared, thoughtful, and respectful engagement in class discussions and exercises. This is encouraged by including “participation” as part of the final grade. Remember that there are multiple ways to participate and that quality matters more than quantity; please see me if you have questions or concerns. **If you must miss a class, notify me as soon as you are aware of the situation (or as soon as possible after, if it is an emergency).** YOU are responsible for connecting with other students to get notes/materials/updates. (16% total)

Events and community visits: several community visits will be scheduled to enable students to interact direction with people and places engaged with our main topics and case studies. When possible, these will be scheduled during class hours, but several evening/weekend events should be expected.

Technology: Except when requested by the instructor for a particular class, **do NOT use computers, tablets or phones during class.** If you need to take notes in class on a keyboard or to refer to readings, please talk to me to discuss this; in this case, you will be expected to disconnect from the internet during class (with obvious exceptions when needed for connectivity to ZOOM, etc.).

Extensions: If a situation arises which makes you unable to complete an assignment on time, you may request an extension if you meet one of the two criteria listed below. Barring an excused extension from the professor, **late assignments will be marked down 10% for every 24-hour period.** Some assignments may have a different policy, i.e. they may not be accepted at all after the due date; this will be specified when the assignment is given (e.g. see ‘weekly tasks’ above). You **MAY** be granted an extension IF you contact the professor at least 24 hours before the day/time the assignment is due (or as soon as the situation arises, if within 24 hours) by email or in person **AND**

- The situation was unforeseeable (i.e., family emergency, severe illness) – not that you have three tests on the same day, a sports event, or a long-weekend trip.
- You are ill or have another extenuating circumstance

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. Incoming University of Rochester students must read and sign an academic honesty policy statement to indicate that they understand the general principles upon which our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty. Suspected violations will be pursued vigorously following the College's procedures for academic dishonesty. Forms of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism: representing someone else's work or writing as your own. *When in doubt, cite the source of your information, and never use someone else's text in your work without putting it in quotes and fully citing.*
- Cheating: using unauthorized information or sources for an assignment or exam.
- Assisting others in academic dishonesty, falsifying information, or using your work from another course or project as work in this class.

You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. I encourage you to consult with the College Writing Center. All graded work will require citations and "Works Cited" following the MLA format. **Please confirm by taking the Academic Honesty 'quiz' on Blackboard.**

CLASS MEETINGS: The class meets every Wednesday from 9-10:15. We will meet most Fridays from 9:00-11:40. Friday classes will be a mix of community visits, meeting on-campus as a group or via Zoom; and independent/team project work. Due to the current circumstances, we'll need to be as flexible as possible - please check Blackboard **EACH DAY BEFORE CLASS** to confirm location/class plan. Some of the community visits may involve transportation by bus and walking; if you may require accommodation in these situations, please speak with the instructor as soon as possible.

EXPECT CHANGES: the syllabus (readings, topics, assignments, and due dates) may change depending on the class progress, interests, and opportunities that arise as well as pandemic-related factors. You are responsible for announcements made in class or communicated via Blackboard, email, etc. (remember to get details from a classmate if you miss class!). **Check Blackboard regularly** for updates and assignments.

STATEMENT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

The University is committed to protecting the health and safety of the entire community – students, faculty and staff. For this reason, it is mandatory that everyone wear a mask in University buildings and observe appropriate social distancing, including classrooms. Masks have been provided to students, faculty and staff and classrooms have been specifically assigned to allow for social distancing to support these requirements. **You must wear a mask appropriately (e.g. over nose and mouth) if you are attending class in person, and you must do this for every class session and for the entire duration of each class session.** If you fail to do this, you will be politely reminded of the requirement and then asked to leave if you do not comply.

If you do not want to wear a mask, you may consider taking the course remotely (online). This may require you to complete a set of online requirements different from the in-person requirements, although these will be equivalent in their learning objectives. Students who refuse to adhere to requirement for mask wearing or social distancing the course will be in violation of the COVID-19 Community Commitment and will be referred to the Student Conduct system through a COVID-19 Concern Report. Such referrals will lead to student conduct hearings and may result in disciplinary action. Students who feel unable to wear a mask may contact the Office of Disability Resources to explore options for accommodations. Students requiring accommodations may be asked to participate in the course through synchronous or asynchronous learning as part of this accommodation.

Tentative Class Schedule (8/30/20):

CLASS	Topic
1 (8/26)	Introduction to the course and environmental justice
2 (8/28)	Defining EJ; Project Design
3 (9/2)	History of EJ; Class principles
4 (9/4)	<i>Cobbs Hill Field trip</i>
5 (9/9)	Wastewater surveillance for SARS-CoV2
6 (9/11)	<i>Wastewater treatment field trip (alt: Drinking water and env. justice)</i>
7 (9/16)	Subsistence fish consumption in Rochester
8 (9/18)	<i>Project consultations</i>
9 (9/23)	Drinking water and Environmental Justice
	<i>Climate Justice Project Topic Proposal due Thursday 9/24 9PM (2 points)</i>
10 (9/25)	Overview of water and EJ/(alt: <i>Wastewater treatment field trip (rain date)</i>)
11 (9/30)	Toward the Healthy City: Urban Planning and the Rochester environment
	<i>Module Synthesis #1 due Thursday 10/1 9PM (10 points)</i>
12 (10/2)	Project work day
13 (10/7)	Bikes, infrastructure, and equity
14 (10/9)	Trails to justice: Recommendations for Rochester's future
15 (10/14)	Transportation equity: Active transportation food, and jobs
16 (10/16)	Toward the Healthy City: Urban Planning and the Rochester environment
17 (10/21)	
18 (10/23)	
19 (10/28)	
	<i>Climate Justice Project Update due Thursday 10/29 9PM (3 points)</i>
20 (10/30)	
21 (11/4)	
	<i>Module Synthesis #2 due Thursday 11/5 9PM (10 points)</i>
22 (11/6)	The changing climate of Rochester: EJ implications
23 (11/11)	Climate and Health: Planning for Health impacts
24 (11/13)	
25 (11/18)	
26 (11/20)	Last in-person class
27 (11/25)	First remote class – project consultations
28 (12/2)	<i>Project presentations (remote – group A) (5 points)</i>
29 (12/4)	<i>Project presentations (remote – group B)</i>
	<i>Final Climate Justice Project due 12/7 9PM (20 points)</i>
30 (12/9)	Last class (remote)
(12/13)	<i>Module Synthesis #3 due 9 PM (10 points)</i>