

**PHLT 238/PSCI 216: Spring 2023**  
**Environmental Health and Justice in the Rochester Community**  
**Tues 2-3:15; Thus 2-4:40 in LeChase Room 184**

**Instructor:** Katrina Smith Korfmacher, PhD  
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**Course Description:** Environmental justice is a key to health equity. 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); 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 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 environmental justice issues in Rochester, New York.

This course provides students with a methodological, conceptual, and experiential foundation in addressing problems at the local level. 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. A semester-long community engaged project will leverage analysis, research, and synthesis to address a locally-identified environmental justice need.

**Prerequisites:** Not open to first year students. Prerequisites; PHLT 101, 116, or 102; or by permission of instructor for students with significant policy, community change, or environmental 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 collaborative problem-solving.

**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%
- Equitable Climate Refuge 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:

- 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>

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: Equitable Climate Refuge project (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.). Most classes will be recorded in case someone is sick and the recording can help them access the course materials.

**Extensions:** Rare. Assume that **late assignments will be marked down 10% for every 24-hour period.** 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. 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

**CLASS MEETINGS:** The class meets every Tuesday from 2-3:15. We will meet most Thursdays from 2:00-4:40. Thursday classes will be a mix of community visits, meeting on-campus as a group or via Zoom; and independent/team project work. Some of the community visits may involve transportation by bus and walking; if you may require accommodation, please let me know 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. 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. Sign up to get email notification of announcements; I send lots.

**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](http://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.**

**Tentative Class Schedule (DRAFT as of 1/23/23):**

| <b>CLASS</b>            | <b>Topic</b>   |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 (1/12)                | Introduction to the course and environmental justice; first 'field trip'             |
| 2 (1/17)                | Environmental Justice: History and Definitions                                       |
| 3 (1/19)                | Env. Justice "metrics" Workshop: EPA's EJScreen and other tools                      |
| 4 (1/24)                | Introduction to CBPR; Class principles   |
| 5 (1/26)                | Geographic Information Systems Workshop: Mapping urban forests (IN STUDIO X)         |
| 6 (1/31)                | Toward the Healthy City: Land use, urban planning and environmental health           |
| 7 (2/2)                 | Climate refuges and environmental justice (meet in classroom, then move to iZone)    |
|                         | <b>Module Synthesis #1 due Sunday 2/5 9PM (10 points)</b>                            |
| 8(2/7)                  | <b>Guest speaker</b> Shalini Beath, City of Rochester: Climate Planning in Rochester |
| 9 (2/9)                 | x  |
|                         | <i>Climate Justice Project Topic Proposal due Thursday 9PM (2 points)</i>            |
| 10 (2/14)               | <i>Wastewater treatment field trip</i>   |
| 11 (2/16)               | <i>Water and Environmental Justice</i>   |
|                         |  |
| 12 (2/21)               | <i>Individual meetings on Climate Justice</i>  |
| 13 (2/23)               | <i>Toward the Healthy City: Urban Planning and the Rochester environment</i>         |
| 14 (2/28)               | <i>Drinking Water: Informal Education and Environmental Health Literacy</i>          |
| 15 (3/2)                | <i>Transportation equity: Active transportation food, and jobs</i>                   |
| <b>SPRING<br/>BREAK</b> |  |
| 16 (3/14)               |  |
| 17 (3/16)               |  |
| 18 (3/21)               |  |
| 19 (3/23)               | <b>Community Visit:</b> The Tree Canopy Initiative                                   |
|                         | <b><i>Climate Justice Project Update due Thursday 9PM (3 points)</i></b>             |
| 20 (3/28)               | <i>Healthy Waterways &amp; Health Impact Assessment</i>                              |
| 21 (3/30)               | <b><i>FIELD TRP? WORKSHOP? THE Impact Project: Transportation, Air, and EJ</i></b>   |
| 22 (4/4)                | Subsistence fish consumption and environmental health literacy                       |
|                         | <b><i>Module Synthesis #2 due Sunday 9PM (10 points)</i></b>                         |
| 23 (4/6)                | <b>Community Visit:</b> One Health and Refugee Fishing in Rochester                  |
| 24 (4/11)               | X  |
| 25 (4/13)               | <b>Community Visit:</b> Foodlink & Lexington Ave Garden                              |
| 26 (4/18)               | X  |
| 27 (4/20)               | <b>Project presentations (in class) (5 points)</b>                                   |
| 28 (4/25)               | The future of EJ in Rochester  |
|                         | <b><i>Final Project due 9PM (20 points)</i></b>                                      |
|                         | <b><i>Reflection due 9 PM (XX points)</i></b>  |