

Course Syllabus



ENVH 475/575 Environmental Justice and Population Health Course Syllabus

Spring 2025

Contact information

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Course times and locations

Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00 – 5:20 PM

Health Sciences Education Building 235

*Note: No class session on June 5th - it will be an open office hours session.

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish people of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Duwamish, Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.

Course Description

This course will critically examine environmental justice as a social movement, with a focus on environmental and occupational exposures and related health outcomes and health disparities. Students will explore the ways in which environmental racism, inequality, and injustice lead to disproportionate impacts of pollution on Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities. Students will also explore how environmental justice intersects with race, class, and health by reviewing a broad range of

current and historical case studies. Students will critically examine efforts by community advocates, academics, government agencies, and public health practitioners to promote a clean environment and healthy, thriving communities and evaluate several historical and emerging approaches to addressing environmental injustice.

The course will be divided into two modules. In the first module, we will set the foundations of environmental justice and population health through frameworks, methods, and tools used in environmental justice. The second module will focus on different topics of environmental justice.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the foundational concepts of environmental justice, including drivers of environmental injustices and how environmental racism affects health.
2. Explain how environmental justice, race, class, public health, and health intersect.
3. Provide examples of culturally responsive community engagement practices and environmental justice research methods.
4. Apply critical thinking skills to addressing emerging environmental justice issues.
5. Communicate effectively with key stakeholder groups.
6. Demonstrate an ability to work collaboratively to solve environmental justice challenges.

Additionally, students enrolled in ENV H 575 should be able to:

1. Analyze the ways in which differences in power and privilege related to race, class, culture, language, politics, and/or economics can lead to environmental injustice.
2. Apply a variety of methodological frameworks and approaches to emerging environmental justice issues.

Textbooks

No required or recommended textbooks. All readings will be posted or linked on Canvas.

Grading

Course grades will be based on the following for 475 students:

- Assignments 45%
- Take Home Quiz 20%
- In-class discussions and activities 10%
- Final project 25%

Course grades will be based on the following for 575 students:

- Assignments 40%

- Take Home Quiz 15%
- In-class discussions and activities 10%
- Final project 25%
- Lightning talk 10%

Assignments

There are independent assignments that are graded individually. Points assigned to each assignment may vary. Assignments will include a combination of creating a self-assessment, identifying environmental justice issues, creating a communications product on environmental justice, and building towards your final project. Please refer to the Assignments page on Canvas for additional details.

Quiz

To assess knowledge and application of course material (readings, lectures, topics discussed by guest speakers), each student will individually complete one quiz to summarize and apply content learned. The quiz will be open book, open notes. Students will be given a week to complete the quiz in their own time. The quiz for 475 students will have multiple choice, true/false, matching and/or short answer questions. In addition to the questions for 475 students, 575 students will also be asked to read an environmental justice scenario and write a short essay that requires students to analyze and evaluate the case study, and to formulate strategies and recommendations to address the environmental justice topic.

In-class discussions and activities

During class, students are expected to actively participate. This includes active listening, sharing experiences and perspectives, asking and answering questions, and work and interacting with classmates and the instructors. Activities may be in pairs or in groups to engage in discussions, case studies, and other learning activities. If you cannot attend class for a valid reason, please contact the instructor, in advance if possible, to make arrangements to make up work, and you should plan to catch up on what happened with a classmate.

- 10%: Students will receive full credit when they complete at least 16 class session activities; thoughtfully contributing to class activities; show interest in and thoughtfully responding to other students' comments; show respect for others' perspectives; and actively participate in all class activities; and offers analysis and synthesis of class material and preparation.
- 8-9%: Students will receive 8-9% when they complete 13-15 session activities; makes thoughtful comments when called upon; contributes occasionally without prompting; shows interest in and respect for others views; participates actively in some activities; and offers straightforward points from class materials and preparation.
- 5-7%: Students will receive 5-7% when they complete 10-12 session activities; prepare and/or contribute minimally; or do not offer to contribute in class.
- 1-4%: Students will receive 1-4% if they are not prepared for class, do not contribute to discussion; shows disrespect to other people's perspectives, or complete less than 10 session activities.

Final project

This individual assignment will require students to apply content from the class to critically analyze an environmental justice issue, historical or current, local, regional, or national, domestic, or global. There are three final project options.

1. Research & analysis paper: Write a paper analyzing an environmental justice topic. Students may consider topics we discussed in class or use the Environmental Justice Atlas to pick a case study from anywhere in the world. The goal of this paper should be to discuss the environmental justice topic, analyze how the topic relates to population health, current/past work to address this topic, and provide student's own discussion/perspectives as students connect to concepts discussed in class. Please include the following components. 575 students must also include the bolded objectives. For 475 students, these bolded words are optional.

- Environmental justice issue: Describe an environmental justice topic and a population or community affected by the issue.
- Evidence: Examine primary or secondary data on the topic.
- Application of class material: Describe at least one method or tool discussed in class, relevant to the topic. **Compare/contrast at least two concepts/methods in EJ discussed in class.**
- Analysis and perspectives: Explain/**analyze** potential promoters and barriers to advance environmental justice in this topic. Examine how power and privilege affects this environmental justice topic. Describe or discuss/**critique** at least one strategy conducted by an environmental justice organization or individual to promote environmental justice in the chosen topic.

2. An environmental justice champion paper: Write a paper on an environmental justice champion (either an individual or a group/organization). A student may consider champions from personal walks of life, individuals discussed in class, beyond. A student engaged in environmental justice work on or off campus (such as volunteering with a community organization) may pick the organization to champion their work through this final project. The goal of this paper should be to identify a person/organization who has done work in environmental justice, analyze/evaluate the environmental justice topic and the champion's contribution to it, and evaluate promoters and facilitators for the champion's topic/work. Please include the following components. 575 students must also include the bolded objectives. For 475 students, these bolded words are optional.

- Environmental justice issue: Describe the person/organization and how their work contributes to environmental justice and the context of their work (such as what geography or community they work in)
- Evidence: Evidence: Discuss/**examine** primary or secondary data/information as it relates to the champion's environmental justice topic. Examine how power and privilege affects this environmental justice topic.
- Application of class material: Describe at least one method or tool discussed in class, relevant to the topic. **Compare/contrast at least two concepts/methods in EJ discussed in class.**

- Analysis and perspectives: Explain/**evaluate** the opportunities/challenges /strategies in environmental justice related to the topic.

3. Alternative project: As an alternative to writing a paper, you can choose to create an original work of art related to environmental justice. This could include, but isn't limited to, spoken word, song, painting, photography series, video, board games, etc. If you choose this option, you must discuss your concept or idea with the instructor in advance.

Lightning talk – 575 students only

575 students will individually create and deliver a 4-minute lightning talk on an environmental justice topic to the class. The goal is to deliver an effective oral presentation in plain language, clearly articulate the importance of the topic to environmental justice, and effectively discuss how it relates to environmental justice and population health.

Late assignment policy

Life happens. Every student will be given a one time "late assignment pass (up to 48 hours max), no questions asked pass." You do not need to email the instructor to use this "pass." For the one-time late assignment, after 48 hours, the total possible points for any graded assignment will be reduced by 10% for each day late. For all other late assignments, grades will be reduced by 10% for each day late without a 48-hour grace period. This "pass" can only be used for Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Illness related expectations

If you feel ill or exhibit respiratory or other symptoms, you should not come to class. Seek medical attention if necessary and notify your instructor(s) as soon as possible by email. Follow the [COVID-19 Public Health Flowchart](https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/COVID-19-public-health-flowchart.pdf) [↗\(https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/COVID-19-public-health-flowchart.pdf\)](https://www.ehs.washington.edu/system/files/resources/COVID-19-public-health-flowchart.pdf) if you have COVID-19 symptoms, exposure or test positive, and adhere to the [UW Face Covering Policy](https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/face-covering-policy) [↗\(https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/face-covering-policy\)](https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/face-covering-policy).

Additional recommendations include getting your [annual flu shot \(https://wellbeing.uw.edu/flu-vaccination/\)](https://wellbeing.uw.edu/flu-vaccination/) and getting boosted with the updated COVID vaccines (available [at clinics and pharmacies, as well as through UW Medicine](https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/vaccines/) [↗\(https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/vaccines/\)](https://www.washington.edu/coronavirus/vaccines/) and local health agencies).

Please check your email and CANVAS announcements daily BEFORE coming to class. If we need to conduct class remotely because the instructor or a guest speaker is unable to attend in person, we will send all registered students an email and/or post a CANVAS announcement with a Zoom link for remote instruction or a plan for making up the class.

Religious Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) [\(https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) [\(https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) [\(https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using [the Religious Accommodations Request form](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) [\(https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) [\(https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) [\(https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/\)](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/).

Access & Accommodation

Your experience in this class is important to me. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please activate your accommodations via myDRS so we can discuss how they will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), contact DRS directly to set up an Access Plan. DRS facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations. Contact DRS at [disability.uw.edu](https://portal.deo.hhs.washington.edu/disability.uw.edu) [\(https://portal.deo.hhs.washington.edu/disability.uw.edu\)](https://portal.deo.hhs.washington.edu/disability.uw.edu).

Academic Integrity

Students at the University of Washington (UW) are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct, professional honesty, and personal integrity.

The UW School of Public Health (SPH) is committed to upholding standards of academic integrity consistent with the academic and professional communities of which it is a part. Plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, and other misconduct are serious violations of [the University of Washington Student Conduct Code](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-121) [\(https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-121\)](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-121) (WAC 478-121). We expect you to know and follow the university's policies on cheating and plagiarism, and the SPH Academic Integrity Policy. Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to University of Washington regulations. For more information, see the [University of Washington Community Standards and Student Conduct](https://www.washington.edu/cssc/) [\(https://www.washington.edu/cssc/\)](https://www.washington.edu/cssc/).

Writing Skills

Effective communication through writing is an important transferable skill for all career pathways. Establishing a strong foundation in writing skills will help you be successful throughout your future

course work and career. This course includes written assignments with the goal of helping you get feedback on and improve your writing skills. If, however, you feel that you could benefit from additional resources to improve your writing skills, a list of UW and other online resources can be found on [the SPH website](https://sph.washington.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Writing-Resources-4.3.19.pdf) [↗\(https://sph.washington.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Writing-Resources-4.3.19.pdf\)](https://sph.washington.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Writing-Resources-4.3.19.pdf) and on the DEOHS intranet (<https://portal.deohs.washington.edu/index.php/academic-support-writing-resources> [↗\(https://portal.deohs.washington.edu/index.php/academic-support-writing-resources\)](https://portal.deohs.washington.edu/index.php/academic-support-writing-resources)).

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Coursework

All work submitted for this course must be your own. Any use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, when working on assignments is forbidden. Use of generative AI will be considered academic misconduct and subject to investigation

The assignments in this class have been designed to challenge you to develop creativity, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills. Using AI technology will limit your capacity to develop these skills and to meet the learning goals of this course.

If you have any questions about what constitutes academic integrity in this course or at the University of Washington, please feel free to contact your instructor to discuss your concerns.

Inclusion & Diversity

Diverse backgrounds, embodiments and experiences are essential to the critical thinking endeavor at the heart of University education. In SPH, we are expected:

1. To respect individual differences, which may include, but are not limited to, age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender, immigration status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and veteran status.
2. To engage respectfully in the discussion of diverse worldviews and ideologies embedded in course readings, presentations and artifacts, including those course materials that are at odds with personal beliefs and values.
3. To encourage students with concerns about classroom climate to talk to their instructor, adviser, a member of the departmental or SPH EDI Committee, the Assistant Dean for EDI, or the program's director.

Classroom Climate

The Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences (DEOHS) strives to create welcoming and respectful learning environments that promote access and opportunity for all students, regardless of their experiences, perspectives, identities, and abilities. The DEOHS, along with The UW School of Public Health, seek to ensure all students are fully included in each course. We strive to create an environment that reflects community and mutual caring. Students are encouraged to talk to

instructors, advisors, members of the departmental or SPH Diversity Committee and/or program director with concerns about the classroom climate.

We are co-creators of our learning environment. It is our collective responsibility to develop a supportive learning environment for everyone. Listening with respect and an open mind, striving to understand others' views, and articulating your own point of view will help foster the creation of this environment. We engage our differences with the intent to build community, not to put down the other and distance ourselves from the other. Being mindful to not monopolize discussion and/or interrupt others will also help foster a dialogic environment.

The following guidelines can add to the richness of our discussion:

- We assume that persons are always doing the best that they can, including the persons in this learning environment.
 - We acknowledge that systematic oppression exists based on privileged positions and specific to race, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and other social variables and identities.
 - We posit that assigning blame to persons in socially marginal positions is counter-productive to our practice. We can learn much about the dominant culture by looking at how it constructs the lives of those on its social margins.
 - While we may question or take issue with another class member's ideology, we will not demean, devalue, or attempt to humiliate another person based on her/his experiences, value system, or construction of meaning.
 - We have a professional obligation to actively challenge myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and growth.
- [Adapted from Lynn Weber Cannon (1990). Fostering positive race, class and gender dynamics in the classroom. *Women Studies Quarterly*, 1 & 2, 126-134.]







We are a learning community. As such, we are expected to engage with difference. Part of functioning as a learning community is to engage in dialogue in respectful ways that supports learning for all of us and that holds us accountable to each other. Our learning community asks us to trust and take risks in being vulnerable.

Here are some guidelines that we try to use in our learning process:

- LISTEN WELL and be present to each member of our group and class.
- Assume that I might miss things others see and see things others miss.
- Raise my views in such a way that I encourage others to raise theirs.
- Inquire into others' views while inviting them to inquire into mine.
- Extend the same listening to others I would wish them to extend to me.
- Surface my feelings in such a way that I make it easier for others to surface theirs.
- Regard my views as a perspective onto the world, not the world itself.
- Beware of either-or thinking.
- Beware of my assumptions of others and their motivations.

- Test my assumptions about how and why people say or do things.
- Be authentic in my engagement with all members of our class.

If you feel like this class is not living up to that commitment, there are several ways you can and seek resolution:

- If you feel comfortable doing so, begin by discussing your concern with the instructor and/or teaching assistant. Your instructor is expected to take your concerns seriously and work with you to identify a resolution.
- If you are not comfortable discussing the concern with the instructor, or you did so and the issue has still not been resolved, contact Trina Sterry, DEOHS Manager of Student and Academic Services (tsterry@uw.edu) to discuss your concern. She can also connect you to the appropriate member of DEOHS faculty leadership as needed.
- If you prefer to discuss your concern directly with someone from the School of Public Health (SPH) Dean's Office, you can review [the SPH Student Concern Policy](https://sph.washington.edu/students/student-concern-policy)  (<https://sph.washington.edu/students/student-concern-policy>) and follow the procedures described there, including reaching out to the SPH Assistant Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Victoria Gardner (vg@uw.edu). If you prefer to anonymously report your concern, you can email dcinfo@uw.edu or use the SPH Bias Incident Report Form.
- If your concern is related to a bias incident, you can review the [UW's guidance on reporting bias incidents](https://www.washington.edu/bias/)  (<https://www.washington.edu/bias/>), which includes a link to the UW Bias Reporting Tool.
- If you have experienced sex or gender discrimination, including sexual assault, relationship or intimate partner violence, stalking, sexual harassment, or other sexual misconduct, you have the right to make a formal complaint and request an investigation under Title IX. Information about Title IX reporting options is available at <https://www.washington.edu/titleix/report/>  (<https://www.washington.edu/titleix/report/>). The University also has other designated offices to help you avoid and/or report sexual harassment: SafeCampus (<https://www.washington.edu/safecampus/>  (<https://www.washington.edu/safecampus/>)); Office of the Ombud (<https://www.washington.edu/ombud/>  (<https://www.washington.edu/ombud/>)); and University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office (<https://www.washington.edu/uciro/>  (<https://www.washington.edu/uciro/>)).

Pronouns

We share our pronouns because we strive to cultivate an inclusive environment where people of all genders feel safe and respected. We cannot assume we know someone's gender just by looking at them. So we invite everyone to share their pronouns.

Bias Concerns

The Office of the Dean has a [student concern policy](https://sph.washington.edu/students/student-concern-policy), a faculty concern policy and standard HR procedures for staff concerns. Our 2018 climate survey states that most people in SPH do not report bias incidents because they do not know where to go. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of bias to someone they feel comfortable with, including instructors, advisers or department staff. They can email dcinfo@uw.edu for immediate follow up. Bias concerns can be anonymously and confidentially reported via the online form found here: <https://sph.washington.edu/about/diversity/bias-concerns>. Data is collected by the Assistant Dean for EDI and the Director of Program Operations for Student and Academic Services and tracked for resolution and areas are identified for further training.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment based on the recipient's sex that is characterized by:

1. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person who has authority over the recipient when:
 - Submission to such conduct is an implicit or explicit condition of the individual's employment, academic status, or ability to use University facilities and services, or
 - Submission to or rejection of the conduct affects tangible aspects of the individual's employment, academic status, or use of University facilities.
2. Unwelcome and unsolicited language or conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment, or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance.

If you believe that you are being harassed, or have observed harassment, you can report it to SPH using the [bias concerns link](https://sph.washington.edu/about/diversity/bias-concerns). The University also has designated offices to help you: [SafeCampus](https://www.washington.edu/safecampus/); [Office of the Ombud](https://www.washington.edu/ombud/); [Title IX Investigation Office](https://www.washington.edu/titleix/report/); and [University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office](https://www.washington.edu/compliance/uciro/).