

Course Information

Course Number: GEOG 430
Course Title: Environmental Justice
Section: 199
Time: Asynchronous
Location: Online
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Breyer
E-Mail: bbreyer@tamu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm via Zoom or by appointment

Course Description

Catalog Description: Exploration into the spatial variability and human geography of exposure to environmental hazards in U.S. and international contexts; emphasizes environmental equity and environmental racism as it relates to occupational, leisure, and residential geography.

How do social inequalities relate to environmental quality? Our course will explore this question by introducing you to environmental justice as a body of scholarship, a social movement, and an approach to policy. You will learn about the history of the environmental justice movement and engage various scholarly debates related to the causes, consequences, and cures for environmental disparities. Along the way, you will explore some of the ways social difference factors into environmental problems, including: resource extraction, hazardous waste, food and water provisioning, and climate change. You will gain experience with critically analyzing environmental justice issues through a series of written assignments, discussion boards, presentations, and an independent research project.

Course Prerequisites

GEOG 201 or GEOG 202

Special Course Designation

None.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- **Define** the historical and contemporary significance of environmental justice
- **Identify** factors that contribute to environmental inequities in various global and local contexts
- **Analyze** causal linkages among environmental inequities, social difference, and health disparities

- **Generate** a clear, researchable question within the scope of an environmental justice case study
- **Synthesize** information from multiple reliable and appropriate sources to write an original argument

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

The following will serve as our textbook:

Walker, G. (2012). *Environmental justice: Concepts, evidence, and politics*. Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203610671>

Because it is freely available as an e-text through the Texas A&M Library, there is no need to purchase this textbook. See <https://catalog.library.tamu.edu/Record/in0000435311>. Other readings will be provided through Perusall at no cost to students.

Course Structure

Course start-up assignments | To get a sense for who you will be learning with in this course, I have a discussion board for you to post a little about yourself. I also ask you to complete a short student survey and a syllabus quiz. Please note that these items also serve to certify your attendance.

Modules | This course is organized around a set of modules. Each module includes pre-recorded video lectures and a Perusall assignment. Because this is an asynchronous online course, you may work through the modules at your own pace, provided you are meeting all due dates.

Video lectures | This course uses video lectures as the primary vehicle for instruction. You are expected to watch all lectures with a critical eye and take careful notes. Because this course is asynchronous, there is no class-wide Zoom meeting to attend at a specific time.

Perusall assignments | You will access the reading and associated media through Perusall, a social learning platform that allows you to leave comments, respond to existing comments, upvote, highlight, etc. Readings are drawn from scholarly articles, book chapters, and popular media. You are expected to read deeply, think critically, and take careful notes. Each Perusall assignment concludes with a quiz in which you will write a short reflection in response to a prompt. Instructions and assessment criteria are provided on Canvas.

Written assignments | You will complete three longer written assignments that build on lectures and readings. To facilitate discussion and peer-to-peer engagement, these assignments will be submitted via discussion board. Instructions and assessment criteria will be provided on Canvas.

Final exam | The final exam consists of a timed essay administered via Canvas.

Grading Policy

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Assignment	Points
Course start-up items	30 points
Perusall assignments (11 x 20 points each)	220 points
Written Assignment 1: Paper sign-up	25 points
Written Assignment 1: Write-up and video	100 points
Written Assignment 1: Response posts	25 points
Written Assignment 2: Film sign-up	25 points
Written Assignment 2: Write-up	100 points
Written Assignment 2: Response posts	25 points
Written Assignment 3: Proposal	25 points
Written Assignment 3: Outline	50 points
Written Assignment 3: Video presentation	50 points
Written Assignment 3: Response posts	25 points
Written Assignment 3: Write-up	200 points
Final exam	100 points
Total	1,000 points

Grading scale

- A 90+ % (\geq 895 points)
- B 80-89% (795 - 894 points)
- C 70-79% (695 - 794 points)
- D 60-69% (595 - 694 points)
- F < 60% (< 595 points)

Late Work Policy

For everything *except* the final exam, 20% of total possible points will be deducted for each day the work is late unless you have an excused absence that adheres to Student Rule 7. See <https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>

No late work can be accepted for the final exam without an excused absence. Firm deadline.

Communications Policy

My office hours are the best way to get answers to your questions. You are officially invited and encouraged to come to office hours to discuss any aspect of this course. If you can't make office hours, email me to set up a separate appointment.

I use Q&A discussion boards to address frequently asked questions about upcoming assignments. Students should post to these discussion boards, come to office hours, or set up appointments rather than emailing me with assignment-specific questions. This approach allows frequently asked questions to receive a quick, consistent response. I will respond to all posts within one business day. If you have a question, it's likely others do, too. Ask away!

This course has the following policies regarding emails to the instructor:

- Please include "GEOG 430" in the subject heading of your email. I use filters to sort the large volume of email I receive. Using this subject heading will ensure your email is sorted correctly so that I can respond promptly.
- Provided you use the required subject heading, you can expect a response to your email within one business day.

University Writing Center statement

The University Writing Center (UWC) has trained peer consultants available to work with you on any kind of writing or speaking project, including research papers, lab reports, application essays, or creative writing, and at any stage of your process, whether you're deciding on a topic or reviewing your final draft. You can also get help with public speaking, presentations, and group projects. They can work with you in person at our Evans or BLCC locations or via Zoom or email. To schedule an appointment or to view our handouts, videos, or interactive learning modules, visit writingcenter.tamu.edu. If you have questions, need help making an appointment, or encounter difficulty accessing our services, call 979-458-1455 or email uwc@tamu.edu.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Statement

Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are transforming how we approach creative processes. AI tools have evolved from basic features like grammar and spell checking (e.g., Grammarly, MS Word Spell Check) to advanced capabilities, including text generation (ChatGPT, etc.), image creation, coding assistance, and audio generation. Despite these advancements, AI tools do not replace the fundamental skills of drafting, revising, and reflecting on your own work, nor do they substitute for locating, evaluating, incorporating, and properly citing sources. The Association for Writing Across the Curriculum states:

"Writing to learn is an intellectual activity that is crucial to the cognitive and social development of learners and writers. This vital activity cannot be replaced by AI language generators"

AI technologies will continue to shape how we approach creative pursuits like writing. However, to be truly creative, we must present our authorship with honesty and integrity. Thus, in this course, it is permitted to use generative AI tools to explore ideas. However, submitting AI-generated content is

considered academic misconduct under Texas A&M University Student Rule 20. Students must write in only their own words. If you use generative AI tools as you develop your ideas, you must clearly cite how the AI tools were used and document how they contributed to your work.

Academic Freedom and Classroom Discussion Statement

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning.

- Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom discussing the subject which the faculty member teaches.
- Texas A&M will not penalize or discipline members of the faculty because of their exercise of academic freedom.

Along with this freedom comes responsibility. It is the responsibility of faculty members to ensure that topics discussed are related to the classroom subject. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

- It is not the proper role of the university or any outside agency to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.
- Engaging with new ideas and perspectives helps students grow intellectually and is beneficial to the educational process.

Course Schedule

Major tasks with deadlines and a list of class topics are provided below. All items are due at 11:59 pm CST on the due date unless otherwise indicated. As instructor, I reserve the right to change the course schedule or content as needed depending on the pace of the class. You will be notified of any changes to the syllabus through an announcement on Canvas. You are expected to check Canvas frequently to stay on top of deadlines and announcements.

Assignment	Due date
Course start-up items	Friday, May 30
Written Assignment 1: Paper sign-up	Monday, June 2
Perusall assignments for modules 2-3	Wednesday, June 4
Written Assignment 1: Write-up and video presentation	Friday, June 6
Written Assignment 1: Response posts	Monday, June 9
Written Assignment 2: Film sign-up	Monday, June 9
Assignments for modules 4-6	Wednesday, June 11
Written Assignment 2: Write-up	Friday, June 13
Written Assignment 2: Response posts	Monday, June 16
Written Assignment 3: Proposal	Monday, June 16
Assignments for modules 7-9	Wednesday, June 18

Written Assignment 3: Outline	Friday, June 20
Assignments for modules 10-12	Monday, June 23
Written Assignment 3: Video presentation	Wednesday, June 25
Written Assignment 3: Write-up	Monday, June 30
Written Assignment 3: Response posts	Monday, June 30
Final exam (opens Friday, June 27)	Tuesday, July 1

Module	Topic
1	Course start-up
2	Introduction and history of the environmental justice movement
3	Geographies of pollution
4	Flood vulnerability
5	What counts as ‘the environment’?
6	What is just?
7	Settler colonialism
8	Exporting waste
9	Neoliberal environments
10	Food justice
11	Green gentrification
12	Climate justice

University Policies

This section outlines the university level policies that must be included in each course syllabus. The TAMU Faculty Senate established the wording of these policies.

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student’s grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

Texas A&M at College Station

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Texas A&M at Galveston

You can learn more about the Honor Council Rules and Procedures as well as your rights and responsibilities at tamug.edu/HonorSystem.

Texas A&M at Qatar

You can learn more about academic integrity and your rights and responsibilities at Texas A&M University at Qatar by visiting the [Aggie Honor System](#) website.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Texas A&M at College Station

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Texas A&M at Galveston

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (409) 740-4587 or visit tamug.edu/counsel/Disabilities.

Texas A&M at Qatar

Disability Services is located in the Engineering Building, room 318C or at +974.4423.0316 or visit <https://www.qatar.tamu.edu/students/student-affairs/disability-services>.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Texas A&M at College Station

Students wishing to discuss concerns related to mental and/or physical health in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [University Health Services](#) or download the [TELUS Health Student Support app](#) for 24/7 access to professional counseling in multiple languages. Walk-in services for urgent, non-emergency needs are available during normal business hours at University Health Services locations; call 979.458.4584 for details.

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Texas A&M at Galveston

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with the Counseling Office in the Seibel Student Center, or call (409)740-4587. For additional information, visit tamug.edu/counsel.

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the Galveston Campus' [Title IX webpage](#).

Texas A&M at Qatar

Texas A&M University at Qatar students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to visit the [Health and Wellness](#) website for more information.

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors influencing a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care practices by utilizing the resources and services available through [University Health Services](#). The [TELUS Health Student Support app](#) provides access to professional counseling in multiple languages anytime, anywhere by phone or chat, and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24-hour emergency support at 988 or 988lifeline.org.

Texas A&M College Station

Students needing a listening ear can contact University Health Services (979.458.4584) 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988) or at 988lifeline.org.

Texas A&M at Galveston

Students who need someone to talk to can call (409) 740-4736 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays or visit tamug.edu/counsel for more information. For 24-hour emergency assistance during nights and weekends, contact the TAMUG Police Dept at (409) 740-4545. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988) or at [988lifeline.org Links to an external site..](#)

Texas A&M at Qatar

Texas A&M University at Qatar students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to visit the [Health and Wellness](#) website for more information.