



ENVS 111A | Environmental and Climate Justice

Session: Extended; **Day:** Online; **Time:** Asynchronous

Credit Hours: 4 Credits Course

Format: 10-week Asynchronous Online for Summer 2023

Brandeis Academic Requirements Fulfilled: DEIS-US, DJW, SS

Professor: Prakash Kashwan | pkashwan@brandeis.edu

Student Hours: By Appointment

Zoom link (for meetings with prior appointments): <https://brandeis.zoom.us/my/pkashwan>

Teaching Assistant: Madeline Rousell | madelinerousell@brandeis.edu

Student Hours: By appointment



Course Announcements

The **Course News & Announcements** forum below is where I post messages for the whole class. These messages are also sent to your Brandeis inbox.

 [Course News & Announcements](#)

Ask the class

Use the **Ask the Class** forum below to pose questions to your classmates and browse past questions. Your classmates can be your best resource when you're having trouble with coursework. I will periodically check this forum to answer questions that are not addressed by students.

 [Ask the Class Forum](#)

Course Policies, Rubrics, Resources, and Lecture Recordings

 [Critical Reading Towards Critical Writing](#)

 [Discussion Forum: Instructions and Rubric](#)

 [8/4 Zoom Town Hall Recording](#)

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[Course Overview](#)

Course Description: This course is designed to inspire students to develop a deep understanding of the ongoing efforts to pursue environmental and climate justice. The success of these efforts depends on whether the policies, programs, and behavioral changes that governments and climate activists are demanding address the root causes of environmental and climate crises, including colonialism, racism, extractivism, and their present-day manifestations. The climate crisis is also intimately connected to the urgent need to address several other environmental crises, e.g., the mass extinction of biodiversity; the crisis of industrial agriculture, and rapidly depleting freshwater resources. Civic energy and joyful solidarities are the principal tools that fuel transformative action. You will read, debate, and reflect on the works of scholars and activists with longstanding and meaningful engagements with Indigenous Peoples, women, non-binary persons, racial minorities, and socially and culturally marginalized groups. More broadly, this course makes use of enjoyable audio-visual resources, popular media articles, and carefully selected peer-reviewed articles written in an accessible language. By the end of the semester, you will develop a comprehensive approach grounded in the research and writings on environmental, climate, and ecological justice.

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Understand and articulate the historical and international dimensions of the climate crisis and its impacts.
2. Explain the evolution and impact of the environmental justice movement and policies in the United States
3. Assess the justice implications of energy and urban transition.
4. Evaluate how policy processes and social movements might advance climate justice.

This class offers well-structured opportunities to engage with others in the class through an online discussion forum designed to foster thoughtful conversations on key themes. Additionally, you will also have an opportunity to seek individual Zoom meetings with the professor.


Grades and Course Assessment:

Course Assessments		Maximum Points	% of Overall Grade
Self-Assessment Quizzes	30 pts x 5*	150	30%
Discussion Forums	60 pts x 3	180	36%
Final Exam	170 pts x 1	170	34%
	TOTAL	500	100%

The course is divided into five modules:

- 1) Introduction: Climate Change, Global Responses, and Justice
- 2) Historical Legacies and International Inequalities
- 3) Environmental Justice in the United States
- 4) Just Transition: Implications of Impending Energy and Urban Transition
- 5) Justice in Climate Action: Lessons from Policy Process and Social Movements.

The class is being offered as an asynchronous online class, which means that students have the freedom to work on the course material at a pace that works best for them. To make the most of this course, you should plan to put in 9 hours of work per week. We look forward to inspiring and enriching deliberations on advancing environmental and climate justice.



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[Module 1: Introduction: Climate Change, Global Responses, and Justice \(June 5 - June 10\)](#)

Note: Course Readings/Materials are to be read and used in the sequence they are listed in the course schedule below.

The Course Material is meant to be cumulative; it starts off with simple and accessible readings in the first module (which includes no journal article) but will get progressively more complex. Every successive module assumes full knowledge of the material covered in the past modules.

Because of the nature of the subject matter at hand, you must work on the course material when you are able to devote uninterrupted attention. Please read the journal article, marked with the header, "Read and Make Notes" at a slow pace and make note of the key arguments they make.

M1.1: Climate Change: The Science, language, and Emotions of climate change

- **Read/Watch:** [U.S. EPA. Basics of Climate Change.](#)
- **Read:** [IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report, Press Release.](#)
- **Read:** Chasen. 2021. [A lack of weather data in Africa is thwarting critical climate research.](#)
- **Watch/Listen:** Climate Reality. 2018. 24 Hours of Reality: "[Earthrise](#)" by [Amanda Gorman.](#)
- **Read:** Hassol. 2023. [The Right Words Are Crucial to Solving Climate Change.](#)

M1.2: Political and Legal Responses to Climate Change

- **Skim Through:** [UN Climate Change. The Paris Agreement.](#)
- **Read:** Harvey. 2022. [The World Will Likely Miss 1.5 Degrees C—Why Isn't Anyone Saying So?](#)
- **Read:** McMahon. 2019. [Appellate Judge Sees Criminal Neglect In U.S. Response To Climate Change.](#) [Please note: this article is meant to introduce students to the rationale that the Federal government offered in the courtroom and Judge Ann Aiken's minority decision; it is not meant as a representation of the current status of the case]
- **Read:** Birnbaum. 2023. [How a small island got world's highest court to take on climate justice.](#)


M1.3 Climate Justice: Introducing the Concept

[Please know that climate justice is a complex concept and the pathways to achieve justice even more complex. It is best to think of peeling the many layers of an onion; imagine a rainbow-colored onion, if you will. This section introduces the first layer. You will continue to solidify your understanding of this core concept until the very end of this class and beyond.]

- **Watch:** Timmons Roberts. [What is climate justice?](#)
- **Read:** Carrington. 2021. [Historical climate emissions reveal responsibility of big polluting nations.](#)
- **Read:** Archie. 2022. [Investments of 125 billionaires have the same carbon footprint as France, study finds.](#)
- **Read:** Leffer. 2022. [Responding to Climate Change the Wrong Way Is Worse Than Doing Nothing.](#)

Take the Module 1 Self-Assessment Quiz (Due June 10, 9pm)

Self-Assessment Quizzes are auto-graded. They are meant to help you review and understand the important pieces of knowledge and insight you've gained from the readings and resources in each of the three sections.


 [Module 1 Self-Assessment Quiz \(Due June 10, 9pm\)](#)

[Module 2: Historical Legacies and International Inequalities \(June 11 - 23\)](#)



Module 2 Historical Legacies and International Inequalities

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M 2.1 Historical Legacies and their Contemporary Effects

- **Watch:** [New colonialism exhibition in London exposes climate emergency role](#)

- **Read and Make Notes:** Whyte, Kyle. 2020. "[Too Late for Indigenous Climate Justice: Ecological and Relational Tipping Points.](#)" WIREs Climate Change 11: e603.
- **Read:** Marris. 2023. [The West Agreed to Pay Climate Reparations. That Was the Easy Part.](#)
- **Watch:** [The Pacific island nation changing the loss and damage debate.](#)

M 2.2 International Footprints of Domestic Climate Action

- Bourke. 2021. "[A further act of colonisation](#)": why indigenous peoples fear carbon offsetting..
- Morris. 2021. [Understanding cobalt's human cost.](#)
- Thea Riofrancos. 2021. [The rush to 'go electric' comes with a hidden cost: destructive lithium mining.](#)
- **Read and Make Notes:** Kramarz, Teresa, Susan Park, and Craig Johnson. 2021. "[Governing the Dark Side of Renewable Energy: A Typology of Global Displacements.](#)" Energy Research & Social Science 74: 101902.

Take the Module 2 Self-Assessment Quiz (Due June 16, 9 pm)



[Module 2 Self-Assessment Quiz \(Due June 16, 9 pm\)](#)

M 2.3 Climate Injustices Across Scales (International, National, and Subnational)

- Read and Make Notes: Olúfẹ̀mi O. Táíwò and Beba Cibralic. 2020. [The Case for Climate Reparations. Foreign Policy.](#)
- Read: Prakash Kashwan and Praneeta Mudaliar. 2021. [Resisting the Cynical Politics of Climate Negotiations.](#) Planet Politics Institute.
- Read and Make Notes: Srivastava, Shilpi, Shibaji Bose, Devanathan Parthasarathy, and Lyla Mehta. 2022. "[Climate Justice for Whom? Understanding the Vernaculars of Climate Action and Justice in Marginal Environments of India.](#)" IDS Bulletin 53: 101-23.

Discussion Forum 1: First post due 6/21, 9 pm; Responses to two peer posts by 6/23, 9 pm




[Discussion Forum 1: First post due 6/21, 9 pm; Responses to three peer posts by 6/23, 9 pm](#)

Note #1: Instructions for how to approach the discussion forums and a grading rubric are available via this [Google Docs](#).

Note #2: Click on the discussion prompt(s). You have to "**reply**" to the discussion prompts to submit your initial response. Then, you are required to reply to at least three peers' responses.

[Module 3: Environmental Justice in the United States \(June 24- July 10\)](#)

Module 3 Environmental Justice in the United States



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M 3.1 Environmental Justice Movement in the United States

- **Read:** Skelton & Miller. 2016. [The Environmental Justice Movement](#). Natural Resource Defense Council.
- **Read and Make Notes:** Whyte, Kyle Powys. 2021. "[Environmental Justice, Indigenous Peoples and Consent](#)." In *Lessons in Environmental Justice: From Civil Rights, to Black Lives Matter, to Idle No More*, ed. Michael Mascarenhas: Sage. 35-49.
- **Read/Listen:** Alston. 2023. [How environmental racism is hurting communities of color in Boston](#).

M 3.2 The Policy Impacts of Environmental Justice Movement

- **Read:** Song and Younes. 2022. [EPA Calls Out Environmental Racism in Louisiana's Cancer Alley](#).

- **Read and Make Notes:** Siddiqi et al. 2022. "[The Road to Justice40: Organizer and Policymaker Perspectives on the Historical Roots of and Solutions for Environmental Justice Inequities in US Cities.](#)" Environmental Justice.
- **Read:** MacDonald. 2023. [How Cities Are Preparing for the 'Silent Killer' of Extreme Heat.](#)

Take the Module 3 Self-Assessment Quiz (Due June 30, 9pm)



[Module 3 Self-Assessment Quiz \(Due June 30, 9pm\)](#)

M 3.3 Environmental Justice Movement and Structural Change

- **Read:** María Paula Rubiano A. 2021. [The event that changed the environmental justice movement forever.](#)
- **Read:** [Britannica Online Encyclopedia](#). Social Structure. [PDF]
- **Read and Make Notes:** Brinkley, Catherine, and Jenny Wagner. 2022. "[Who Is Planning for Environmental Justice—and How?](#)" Journal of the American Planning Association: 1-14.

Discussion Forum 2: First post due 7/07, 9 pm; Responses to two peer posts by 7/10, 9pm




[Discussion Forum 2: First post due 7/07, 9 pm; Responses to three peer posts by 7/10, 9pm](#)

Note #1: Instructions for how to approach the discussion forums and a grading rubric are available via this [Google Docs](#).

Note #2: Click on the discussion prompt(s). You have to "**reply**" to the discussion prompts to submit your initial response. Then, you are required to reply to at least three peers' responses.

[Module 4: Energy Transition: Social & Ecological Consequences \(July 11 - 26\)](#)



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Module 4 Energy Transition: Social & Ecological Consequences

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M 4.1 Introduction to Just Transition

- **Read:** Daphne Leprince-Ringuet. 2018. [To win the climate change battle, we need to talk about gilets jaunes.](#)
- **Watch:** Carbon Brief. 2019. [How can we achieve a just transition to a low-carbon economy?](#)
- **Read:** Lasik. 2023. [A Just Energy Transition Takes an Ecosystem.](#)
- **Read:** Pandey. 2023. [\[Interview\] Global South needs to come together for a better just transition deal, says Louise Naudé.](#)

M 4.2 The Socio-Ecological Consequences of Energy Transition

- **Watch:** Nexus Media. 2021. [Lithium mine pits electric cars against sacred Indigenous land – video.](#)
- **Read:** Lakhani. 2023. [Revealed: how US transition to electric cars threatens environmental havoc.](#)
- **Read and Make Notes:** Fankhauser et al. 2022. ["The Meaning of Net Zero and How to Get It Right."](#) Nature Climate Change 12: 15-21.

Take the Module 4 Self-Assessment Quiz (Due July 17, 9pm)

 [Module 4 Self-Assessment Quiz \(Due July 17, 9pm\)](#)

M 4.3 Urban Inequalities, Climate Gentrification, and Sustainable Just Cities

- **Watch:** Lydon. 2019. [How A Long-Ago Map Created Racial Boundaries That Still Define Boston](#)
- **Read:** Elton. 2020. [How Has Boston Gotten Away with Being Segregated for So Long?](#)
- **Watch:** [Climate Gentrification](#).
- **Read and Make Notes:** Ciplet, David. 2022. "[Transition Coalitions: Toward a Theory of Transformative Just Transitions](#)." Environmental Sociology 8: 315-30.

Discussion Forum 3: First post due 7/24, 9 pm; Responses to two peer posts by 7/26, 9pm

 [Discussion Forum 3: First post due 7/24, 9 pm; Responses to three peer posts by 7/26, 9pm](#)

Note #1: Instructions for how to approach the discussion forums and a grading rubric are available via this [Google Docs](#).

Note #2: Click on the discussion prompt(s). You have to "**reply**" to the discussion prompts to submit your initial response. Then, you are required to reply to at least three peers' responses.

[Module 5: Justice in Climate Action and Policy \(July 27 - Aug 11\)](#)

Module 5: Justice in Climate Action & Policy



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M 5.1 International and Inter-generational Climate Justice

- Future Earth. 2022. [Global distributive justice and systemic transformations key to planetary stability, study finds.](#)
- Berwyn. 2023. [A Long-Sought Loss and Damage Deal Was Finalized at COP27. Now, the Hard Work Begins.](#)
- Lytton. 2023. [Climate Reparations Won't Work.](#)
- **Read and Make Notes:** Klepp and Fünfgeld 2022. "[Tackling Knowledge and Power: An Environmental Justice Perspective on Climate Change Adaptation in Kiribati.](#)" *Climate and Development* 14: 757-69.

M 5.2 Climate Justice Movements

- **Watch:** [The Sea is Rising and so are We | Extinction Rebellion.](#)

- **Read:** Smyth, Ines, and Lucy Walters. 2020. [‘The Seas Are Rising and So Are We!’ – a Conversation between Two Women in Extinction Rebellion](#). Gender & Development 28: 617-35. [\[Full text\]](#)
- **Watch:** Climate Justice Alliance. 2020. [Transition is Inevitable. Justice is Not.](#)
- **Read and Make Notes:** Luke, Nikki, and Nik Heynen. 2020. "[Community Solar as Energy Reparations: Abolishing Petro-Racial Capitalism in New Orleans.](#)" American Quarterly 72: 603-25.

Take the Module 5 Self-Assessment Quiz (Due Aug 1, 9pm)

 [Module 5 Self-Assessment Quiz \(Due Aug 1, 9pm\)](#)

M 5.3 Centering Justice in Climate Policies and Programs

- **Read and Make Notes:** Kashwan, Prakash. 2021. [Climate Justice in the Global North: An Introduction](#). Case Studies in the Environment 5.
- PBS. 2023. [Advancing Climate Justice in New York](#).
- **Watch:** [WE ACT for Environmental Justice's Out of Gas, In with Justice](#).
- Walker. 2023. [2 Years of Justice40: Integrating Environmental Justice into US Climate Policy](#).

Final Exam (Open Book/Open Notes): ...