Urban and Environmental Policy 101
Society and Environment; Tu and Th 10:05-11:30a
Martha Matsuoka (Section 1), Johnson 203
Mijin Cha (Section 2), Johnson 105

Office Hours
Martha Matsuoka; UEP Dept #201; T/TH 3-4:30 or by appointment
Mijin Cha; UEP Dept #104; T/TH 3-4:30 or by appointment

What is this course about
This course is an introduction into issues at the intersection of “urban” and “environment”. It is for those interested in learning more about these concepts and the path forward towards creating more just and equitable environments and cities. This course introduces students to the political, economic, and social aspects of the environment with a focus on the role of government, policy, and social change. The course is designed for students considering a UEP major and those who want to take the class because you are interested. The course is structured for us, as a group, to learn about these issues and discuss them in small groups, in our sections, and in a larger group when we combine sections. It is an opportunity for you to meet others interested in asking and answering complex questions about our cities, the natural world, and our global context.

What are the goals of this course?
The goals of this course are to examine the idea of “environment” and how it relates to the urban context. This course explores the intersection of race, poverty, and the environment and introduces how issues of race, class, and workers’ rights interact with the environment. Finally, this course will help students begin to critically examine environmental issues and movements.

Course Requirements

Participation (20%): You are expected to do all of the course readings and keep up to date. This is a reading intensive seminar. Attendance and preparation is required. Participation in class (coming to class and being a part of it) counts for 10% of your grade. You may only miss class once without prior approval. And you may miss once with approval. Any additional absences will result in an automatic decrease by one grade (a B will become a B-, for example). Your participation grade also includes attending 2 events related to the class - a tour of the Los Angeles Ports and two walking tours of Highland Park. You are expected to write up 2-3 pages on the event, your participation, and a brief analysis. Your participation in class will also be
evaluated based on your ability to contribute to the class discussions as a whole. Be mindful of your own contribution but also the overall classroom dynamic. Listen attentively to others, recognize when to “step up” and “step back” to contribute to a productive discussion that enables meaningful participation by others in the class.

**Reflection Papers (30%)**: There are three reflection paper assignments: 1) Highland Park Walk #1; 2) Urban Environmental Systems; and 3) Highland Park Walk #2. We will pass out paper prompts in class.

**Midterm Exam (20%)**: You will have a mid-term take home paper exam that you will have 24 hours to complete. The midterm will be discussed in more detail in class.

**Final (30%)**: Final papers are due Friday, December 9th by 5pm. You must submit two hard copies to the UEP department, as well as an electronic version to whomever is leading your section. Papers should be between 8-10 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism consists of any form of passing off, or attempting to pass off, the knowledge or work of others as your own. It is a form of cheating. Examples of plagiarism include: unattributed quotations from a book, magazine or article; copying from the notes or essays of others; the submission of work actually written or dictated by others; and unattributed use of other people’s ideas. Remember, plagiarism includes information from books, newspapers, journals and the Internet. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course and possible expulsion from the college. Students should consult Occidental’s student handbook for information on academic misconduct policy at the college: [http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-misconduct](http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-misconduct).

**Classroom Community**

This course is intended to provoke discussion and new understandings of the urban environment we live in. Toward this end, the course will grapple with discussions about inequity, power, race, class, and gender. We expect our classroom to be a productive space for open, honest, and thoughtful discussion that recognizes and respects differences and acknowledges the broad range of knowledge we bring to the classroom and discussion. Please remember that our focus in this course is the issues, texts, course materials and presentations themselves, and not the personalities, identities, or opinions of other participants in the discussion.
**Laptops and Cellphones**
Electronic devices in the classroom limit full participation in class. In order for you to pay attention and engage in learning and minimize distractions to others, laptops are not allowed unless they are necessary for note-taking, which must receive prior approval from your professor. Cell phones and all other electronic devices are to be turned off or put on silent. Students who are not paying attention in class will be marked as absent.

**Course Readings** will be posted on Moodle. Please complete readings for the day they are assigned. Readings will largely follow the syllabus but are subject to some changes. Please pay attention to the Moodle site for any changes to the schedule and/or the readings.

**Support Services**
The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The [Writing Center](http://www.oxy.edu/writing-center) provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers.

Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who experiences significant physical or mental impairments may contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support. More information is available at [http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services](http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services).

The Emmons Wellness Center also provides important support services and can help you address issues of stress, medical and mental health, and overall well-being. For more information, see their website at [http://www.oxy.edu/emmons-wellness-center](http://www.oxy.edu/emmons-wellness-center).

**Class Readings and Assignments**

**Thursday, September 1—Introduction to the Course**

**Tuesday, September 6— Environment and You**

William Cronan, *“The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature”* (pages 1-15 only)

Thursday, September 8: Environmental Understandings


Tuesday, September 13: Introduction to the Urban Environment


Davis, Mike; “Slum Ecology”; Orion Magazine; https://orionmagazine.org/article/slum-ecology/

Harvey, David; “The Right to the City” New Left Review; September/October 2008

Thursday, September 15: The Oxy Environment

Joint class on sustainability at Oxy:

- Bianca Barragan. Here’s How Highland Park Turned a Gas Station Into a Park. LA Curbed. February 23, 2015

Assignment Reflection Paper #1: Due Monday, September 19 by Noon.

Paper prompt and instructions will be handed out in class.

Tuesday, September 20: Inequality and the Environment

Also read (based on the same data as well as other studies): Susan Holmberg. “Inequality isn’t just bad for the economy—it’s toxic for the environment” Grist. July 5, 2015; http://grist.org/politics/inequality-isnt-just-bad-for-the-economy-its-toxic-for-the-environment/

Michele Morrone and Geoffrey Buckley. 2011. Chapter 1 in Mountains of Injustice. Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press. pgs. 3-31

LA Regional Environmental Justice Collaborative. Special Pullout Section (4 pages) from Building a Regional Voice for Environmental Justice. 2004

Thursday, September 22: Race and the Environment


Tuesday, September 27th: Gender and the Environment


Julie Sze. “Gender, Asthma Politics, and Environmental Justice” in New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism. Rachel Stein, ed. pp. 177-190. 2004


Thursday, September 29: Workers and the Environment


The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. ILR Cornell University. http://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/story/introduction.html (read through the whole section all the way through to Investigation and trial)

Jason Burke and Saad Hammoudi. “Bangladesh textile factory fire leaves more than 100 dead” The Guardian. November 25, 2012: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/25/bangladesh-textile-factory-fire


Richard Wolff. “Yes, there is an alternative to capitalism: Mondragon shows the way” The Guardian. June 24, 2012: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jun/24/alternative-capitalism-mondragon

Tuesday, October 4: Contemporary Challenges in the Urban Environment

Guest Speaker: Brentin Mock, Journalist, CityLab; formerly at Grist


Terrence McCoy, Freddie Gray’s Life a Study in the Sad Effects of Lead Paint on Poor Blacks, Washington Post, Apr 29, 2015: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/freddie-grays-life-a-study-in-the-sad-effects-of-
Thursday, October 6: Midterm Check in

Tuesday, October 11: Fall Break - No Class

Thursday, October 13: Urban Systems and the Environment

Readings TBD.

Tuesday, October 18: Consumption: Food Systems

Joint class- Guest Speaker


Thursday, October 20: Consumption of Energy

Joint class


The Story of Energy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Z6P-PoZVKQ

Crude LA: California’s Urban Oil Fields: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Snbg4cOyAzY

Tuesday, October 25: Industrial Pollution and Occupational Health


Thursday, October 27: Global Trade and the Environment

Joint class: Guest Speaker


Weekend Exercise: From Thursday Oct 27 to Tuesday Nov 1 keep track of your waste. More details will be presented in class.
Saturday, October 29th. Possible Tour of the Ports of LA/Long Beach.

Tuesday, November 1: Waste and the Environment


Assignment #2: Reflection Paper on Urban Systems and the Environment Due Nov. 3 at the beginning of class.

Thursday, November 3: Politics and Power

Background: Anthony Fowler, “Elections Have Big Consequences that Last for Decades,” LSE Blogs, 2015: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/63551/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Elections%20have%20big%20consequences%20that%20last%20for%20decades.pdf

Climate/Environmental Plans for each candidate. Read each candidate’s platform and come prepared to debate the pros and cons of each.


Jill Stein: http://www.jill2016.com/platform

Gary Johnson: http://www.ontheissues.org/Gary_Johnson.htm#Environment
Tuesday, November 8: Get Out The Vote (GOTV): Democracy in Action

No class. Work with an organization doing GOTV. We will provide a prompt for the assignment.

Thursday, November 10: Highland Park neighborhood observations

Readings TBD and detailed prompt for reflection paper to be given in class.

Assignment Reflection Paper #3: Due Monday, November 15 by Noon.

Tuesday, November 15.

Readings TBD.

Thursday, November 17: Overview on Climate


EPA, “Understanding the Link Between Climate Change and Extreme Weather: https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/science/extreme-weather.html (read through all of the extreme weather issues)


Tuesday, November 29: Introduction to Climate Solutions


Thursday, December 1—Class Exercise: Healthy and Just Cities Agenda

Tuesday, December 6 – Course wrap up

Climate Briefing Paper due December 9, 5pm.

Summary of Assignments and Due Dates

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>24 hour Midterm</td>
<td>Pass out in class on 10/6; due by 12:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>on Friday. Post to Moodle</td>
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<td>Reflection Paper #2: Urban Systems and the</td>
<td>Due in class Thursday, 11/3; turn in hard copy</td>
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<td>Environment</td>
<td>and post to Moodle</td>
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<td>Reflection #3: Highland Park Walk #2</td>
<td>Due Monday, 11/14 by 12:00 p.m. Post to</td>
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<td>Final Paper: Climate Briefing Paper</td>
<td>12/9 by 5:00. Turn in a hard copy to the UEP</td>
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