



INTL 2320

Environmental Justice in the Global Caribbean & Latin America

Prof. William San Martín

C TERM 2023
M-R | 11 - 12:50 PM

New Course

*Interested in **GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL** issues
+ **SUSTAINABILITY** + *social* **JUSTICE** +
INTERNATIONAL & GLOBAL affairs?*

*Especially appropriate for students working on the
MINOR in LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN STUDIES,
and who expect to complete their **HUA, IQP, and/or MQP**
at Project Centers in Latin America or the Caribbean.*

**GLOBAL JUSTICE
WITHIN & FROM
THE CARIBBEAN
& LATIN AMERICA**

What are the specific challenges Latin America and the Caribbean face regarding environmental protection and sustainability? What is the role of this region in global environmental change?

This course offers a two-fold approach. It examines historical and contemporary processes producing—and contesting—environmental injustices in Latin America and the Caribbean.

And it analyzes the role of this region in the politics and policy of global environmental inequalities, including the region's relationship with the United States, China, and other major international polluters in issues such as climate change and sustainable development.

Chuao, Venezuela, 2014
Photo by William San Martín

Course Description:

Latin America and the Caribbean are center stage in discussions about the inequalities and injustices of our current global ecological crisis. What are the specific challenges Latin America and the Caribbean face regarding environmental protection and sustainability? What is the role of this region in global environmental change? How have cultural, economic, political, and social trajectories in this region shaped current debates on global ecological inequalities? This course offers a two-fold approach. 1) It examines historical and contemporary processes producing—and contesting—environmental injustices in Latin America and the Caribbean Basin. 2) It analyzes the role of this region in the politics and policy of global environmental inequalities, including the region's relationship with the United States, China, and other major international polluters in issues such as climate change and sustainable development. The course integrates a range of topics including: environmental justice movements, gender, race and class inequalities, climate-related migrations, resource extraction, indigenous activism, colonialism, neoliberalism, (under)development, the rise of nature rights, and current debates on degrowth, sustainable development, and green technologies. This course is especially appropriate for students interested in environment and sustainability issues and international/global affairs, and for students who expect to complete their HUA, IQP, and/or MQP at WPI Project centers in Latin America or the Caribbean.

Teaching Methodology:

- This course is hands-on and application-oriented. By its design, you will have the opportunity to explore, clarify, and strengthen your analysis and problem-solving skills. Please be aware that it is expected that you will experience a certain level of ambiguity and perhaps even a feeling of being overwhelmed at times.
- You will be reading experts in their fields and materials published in peer-reviewed journals and academic publishers. That means the assigned readings might often be difficult to understand and might require re-reading, taking notes, working with peers, or asking for assistance.
- We will explore historical and present-day problems that will be unclear and uncharted. You will be expected to deal with the ambiguity and have the courage to explore different ideas without knowing the answers.
- This course will be presented through a combination of reading materials, structured group discussions and activities, individual assignments, and group presentations/projects.
- You will need to work in groups so you must make yourself available to your group members outside of the scheduled classroom time. To be successful in this course, you must use effective time management and project planning tools.

Expectations & Policies:

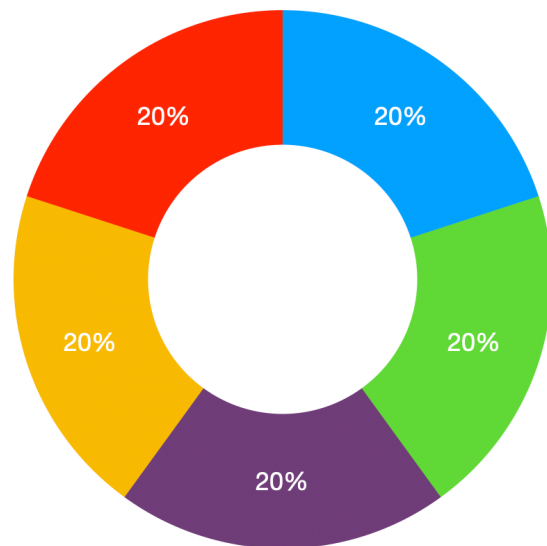
- **Critical thinking is central to facing our socio-environmental crisis and finding new ways of being and doing:** Students are expected to think critically, communicate their thoughts, and actively participate in a collaborative learning community. Our only way to think "outside the box" and develop new solutions is to look at the evidence and our assumptions with a critical eye. That means engaging with options different from ours and finding common ground between our divergent realities and the principles we want to follow collectively.

- **Attendance and participation are mandatory:** All students are expected to read/watch the assigned materials, which will form the basis for course discussions and assignments. Life happens; if you can't attend a session, be responsible and proactive, reach out and find ways to avoid missing important information/content.
- **Deadlines are sometimes flexible:** I want you to take this class and its assignments seriously. I expect you to plan accordingly and save time to engage with the assigned materials and prepare the assignments meaningfully. If you anticipate that you won't be able to provide the time/mental effort that an assignment requires, reach out to me as soon as possible to check if an extension is possible. Sometimes an extension will affect the following assignment so that an extension won't be possible. Sometimes an extension is completely fine.
- **Questions are a prerequisite to learning:** You will learn from experts and established scholars. This is a challenging class and injustices are often complex and invisible, and therefore, it is expected that you might feel disoriented. You might feel confused about the arguments or where this course is going. Reach out before it's too late, ask questions in class, or reach out to me after class. I want to make sure you understand where we are going and why. Send me an email or stop by my office: Prof. William San Martín wsanmartin@wpi.edu Office: Global Project Center 106C - Office Hours: Walk-in or by appointment

Grades & Assignments

Grading Summary

Assignments	
Student-Led Discussions	20%
Expert Advice	20%
Readings and Perusall Discussions	20%
Class Participation	20%
Policy Brief	20%
	100%



- Student-Led Discussions
- Readings and Perusall Discussions
- Class Participation
- Expert Advice
- Policy Brief

Student-led Discussions

Throughout the term, student teams will be in charge of leading our class discussion (50 minutes). Check on People for "Student-led Discussions" Teams to find out what team number you are, and look in our weekly modules (some of them still in progress) to learn what assigned material your team will lead.

Teams should:

- Get in touch and organize their session in advance.
- Read and discuss the assigned material.
- Find links and relations with previous materials/class discussions and other materials assigned for that day.
- Integrate discussions and annotations from their peers on Perusall (team members must also annotate and discuss the assigned material on Perusall).

Guidelines for Student-led Discussions

- Discussions should include a combination of a very short presentation/summary (we all read the materials), and, more importantly, active dialogue with the class. The main goal is to advance in our understanding of the arguments and implications of the assigned material in relation to the goals of this class.
- Discussion should build on the main points from the assigned material and actively integrate previous materials and analysis from Perusall discussions.
- The discussion should problematize the findings in the readings (find the underlying arguments and question them in a meaningful way) and advance on prior knowledge.
- Groups should include short complementary written or audiovisual materials for in situ analysis in their segment. You will need to do additional research, so plan accordingly.
- Teams need to submit the [attached self-assessment rubric](#) Download attached self-assessment rubric within a week after their session. In this rubric, you will assess (as a team) what areas were well executed and what areas needed additional work. Based on this rubric, you will provide a suggested grade. The instructor will consider your self-assessment and the recommended grade, and either approve it as the official grade for this assignment or give a different one with an additional explanation if needed.
- Revise the rubric as a team as you prepare for your session.

Class Participation Expectations & Grading

Attendance and participation in this class are mandatory. In-class discussions and analyses of assigned materials will be the core of our sessions and, therefore, a central component of your learning process. In-class participation includes asking questions, working on in-class activities, making connections with previous or complementary materials and generally contributing to advancing our discussions in a constructive and collegial way.

I understand not everyone feels comfortable or wants to speak in public. If you are interested in developing these skills and practicing some tips to improve how you actively participate in academic/professional discussions (all critical skills for future graduate programs or in professional

settings) reach out to me. I was a timid student in college, and I'd be happy to share experiences and maybe offer some tips. If you feel comfortable talking in public, make sure you help those who feel less comfortable by leaving room for them to speak or meaningfully engaging others' thoughts and ideas.

Since I do want you to feel comfortable and try different ways to participate in our in-class discussions, you will be able to pick how you would like to earn your participation grade.

You will be able to pick from the following options:

- *In-class participation* (50%) + 30 minutes discussion with Prof. San Martín about a recommended material in this class (50%).*

For this discussion, you will have to make an appointment a week in advance and come prepared to lead a conversation with me about any of the recommended materials in this class or others that you suggest, and I pre-approve.

- *In-class participation* (50%) + analysis of Dr. Wood's Talk (January 13th -see information on our schedule) (50%).*

Attend and take notes of the talk and discussion and write a report of the main themes/arguments/positions and lessons that you take. Make sure you provide a good summary and make creative connections with previous discussions/materials, including the main lessons from the session. The report should have around 600-1500 words.

- *In-class participation* (50%) + letter for future students (50%).*

In the last week of class, write a letter for future students explaining the main lessons from this course. Provide details about the key assigned materials and their importance to understand the main arguments of this class. Provide tips and tricks to navigate the course and my teaching/grading style.

- *In-class participation* (50%) + email to an author you read in this class (50%).*

Write an email to an author you read/watched as part of this class. You can cc me in the email or submit a digital copy. In the email, thank them for their work and explain how their work helped you understand a problem/issue by first time or in a different way. Make sure you demonstrate a good understanding of the piece of work you read/watched and that you are specific on how their research can help you in your professional or personal development. Remember to be respectful and be prepared for a kind response or no response at all. If you need tips on what to say or the right tone, reach out to me.

** includes in-class participation, discussions, and in-class activities*

Open Annotations and Discussions in Perusall

In this course, we will use Perusall to access, read, and annotate all assigned materials (readings, videos, etc.) for each class session. Students **have to launch each** Perusall assignment from the link in the weekly modules. We will review this in a live demonstration on our first day of class.

If you need more assistance, reach out to me, or access the Perusall help page for students at:

<https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/articles/360033995074-Getting-started> (Links to an external site.)

We are using Perusall this term to change the solitary act of reading into a collaborative and thought-provoking exercise.

Here are some guides to help you annotate texts and videos:

- Identify key ideas, assumptions, gaps in knowledge, and conclusions
- Trace the development of ideas/arguments throughout the source
- Expand on ideas and provide additional data and examples
- Connect ideas, assumptions, etc., to other information (knowledge from other readings, discussions, and materials)
- Clarify passages (terms, concepts, etc.) for yourself and others
- Explain or reword difficult-to-read text or concepts
- Ask questions that can build the conversation and deepen learning
- Share answers, perspectives, and external knowledge in threads
- Annotate text, images, equations, and videos

Keys to high engagement with the sources:

- Begin reading/viewing the sources several days before the class session
- Break the reading/viewing into several times – this allows you to answer questions and pose new insights based on what others are writing
- Distribute your thoughtful comments and questions throughout the source
- Read/view the entire source
- Answer questions
- Upvote thoughtful questions and helpful answers

Perusall provides a score based on the above metrics. That should give you an idea of how you are engaging with the materials and how to improve. This is only a tool to improve reading and analysis skills and to facilitate collaborative learning. This score will not be part of your final grade. However, active engagement with the assigned materials (reading and annotating all assigned materials on time), meaningful analysis throughout the materials, and engaging discussion with your peers will be considered for your Readings & Perusall Discussions grade.

Also, Perusall allows you to save private notes from readings. Good and consistent note-taking makes the writing and thinking process easier, so ensure you take good notes that you can use later when writing your Policy Brief and assignments.

Schedule

Week 1. Understanding Justice

Session 1 (1/10) Introduction + Roadmap

Session 2 (1/12) Understanding Justice -What? and more importantly, Why?
Environmental (in)justice (Schlosberg)
Critical climate justice (Sultana)
Why Indigenous Environmental Justice Matters - Full video

Recommended: Interview - Dr. Farhana Sultana

Week 2. Multispecies, Intersectional & Decolonial

Session 3 (1/19) Concepts & Research Agendas

Multispecies justice: Climate-just futures with, for and beyond humans (Tschakert et al.)

Climate change through the lens of intersectionality (Kaijser and Kronsell)

Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World (Ferdinand -Prologue and Chapter 1)

Week 3. Disaster, Climate, and Resilience in the Caribbean

Session 4 (1/23)

Mi María: Surviving the Storm: Voices from Puerto Rico (Intro + Chapter 1 + Context of Disaster + Ten things you can do)

Session 5 (1/26)

Island Futures. Caribbean Survival in the Anthropocene (Sheller - Intro + Chapter 1)

Midterm: Providing Expert Advice -Towards a Just Energy Transition for the Sucre Region, Bolivia, 2051

Week 4. Mining, Power, and (Anti)Extractivismo

Session 6 (1/30)

Empire, Labor, and Environment: Coal Mining and Anticapitalist Environmentalism in the Americas (Chomsky and Stuffer)

People Behind Colombian Coal: Mining, Multinationals, and Human Rights (Intro + Chapter 1)

Session 7 (2/2)

Resources Radicals. From Petro-Nationalism to Post-extractivism in Ecuador (Riofrancos - Intro + Chapter 1)

Week 5. Indigenous Peoples and Rights of Nature

Session 8 (2/6)

Understanding the Rights of Nature (Tanasescu -Intro + Chapter 1 & 2)

Session 9 (2/9)

Global Governance of the Environment, Indigenous Peoples and the Rights of Nature
(Chapter 3 & 4)

Recommended: Rights of Nature – Timeline; The Rights of Nature: A Global Movement

Week 6. Policy Briefs

Session 10 (2/13): Diversifying Knowledge In Action-Oriented Research

Session 11 (2/16) Thinking Global Justice from the Caribbean & Latin America: Workshop

Week 7. Policy Briefs Drafts

Session 12 (1/20) Peer-reviewing Session

Week 8. Policy Briefs Presentations

Session 13 (2/27)

Session 14 (3/2)

Participation Grade Submission

Policy Brief Submission