

Global Climate Justice

HU3900 C22

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Overview

Welcome everyone to Global Climate Justice

I'm Prof. William San Martín. I'm a historian and scholar of science and technology studies passionate about global environmental issues at the interaction of knowledge, policy, and inequalities.

This is the first time I'll be leading this seminar, and I'm very excited.

What to do before our first day of class?

There are no readings assigned for our first day. However, make sure you read our overview module and important information about expectations and grades. Ask questions if you have them.

My availability

I'll hold office hours after class on **Mondays (12-1 pm) or by appointment**. If you want to meet during office hours, **let me know in advance if you'd prefer to meet online or in person**. If online, please use this [link \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to join. I am also available for outdoor meetings on Campus by appointment. I'm a big fan of walking meetings so we can also do that if the weather allows.

Welcome again and reach out if you have any questions!

Prof. San Martín

Seminar Description, Outcomes, and Expectations



Photo: Humedal la Vega de Pupuya, Chile. Photo by William San Martin

Seminar Description:

Inequalities and (in)justices have taken center stage in discussions about the global ecological crisis. The effects of vector-borne diseases increasing health inequalities, the rise of social movements fighting for social and racial equity, and the uneven realities of human-induced environmental change have renewed questions about long-lasting power disparities in Earth-human interactions.

Today, many agree that ecological change disproportionately impacts communities across class, race, gender, species, and ecosystems. However, the complex mechanisms by which these inequalities arise, the power relations that enable these disparities, and their long-lasting effects across species are still under-studied. This seminar will examine issues of injustice and inequity in the recent history of anthropogenic climate and Earth

system change with particular attention to issues of (anti)development, colonialism, resource extraction, and (de)growth in the Global South.

The seminar welcomes discussions and projects that incorporate underrepresented agents (e.g., indigenous peoples, future generations, sexual and gender minorities, grassroots organizations) and non-humans (e.g., chemical forms, technologies, animals, and ecosystems) into a broader understanding of (in)justice and (in)equalities in the governance of Earth-human interactions.

Seminar Outcome:

This inquiry seminar serves as the culmination of the Humanities and Arts Requirement. All Inquiry Seminars have two primary goals: 1) to foster **independence of thought through self-directed research and writing**, and 2) to encourage a **cooperative approach** to learning through open exchanges with peers in a small seminar setting. Students will learn how to frame questions and to research and write about a self-chosen topic related to the theme of this seminar.

The main outcome of this seminar is to produce a piece of original research between 3000 and 5000 words (excluding references). **The title and abstract of this work will appear on your transcript.** They should provide a professional summary of your work that you will be proud to see on your transcript.

Learning Outcomes:

Each student who completes this inquiry seminar will:

- Frame and investigate a significant research question in a thematic area
- Identify appropriate scholarship using the library and other resources
- Evaluate which sources are the most reliable and authoritative
- Develop their own argument about the research question using relevant evidence
- Discuss the work of other students in the seminar in a spirit of openness, cooperation, and dialogue

Expectations & Policies:

- **Critical thinking and more critical thinking:** Students are expected to think critically and independently about an area that requires research and

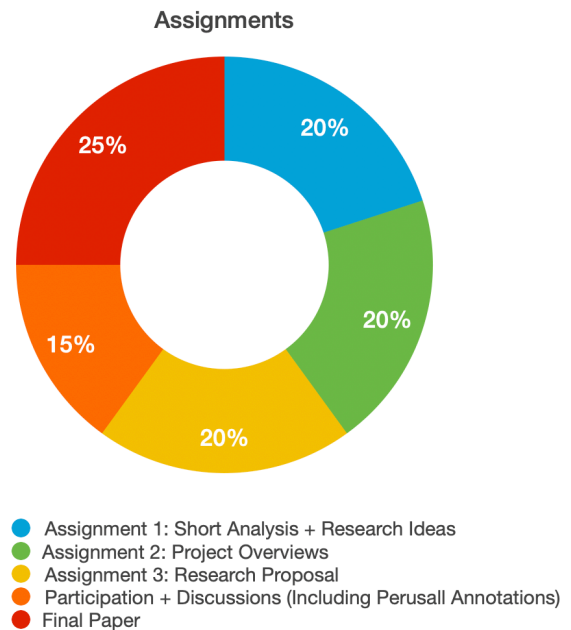
investigation, communicate their thoughts effectively, and participate in a collaborative community of learning.

- **Researching, reading, writing, re-writing, editing, and more editing:** Independent research begins with the ability to define a topic, survey work relevant to your subject, and develop a bibliography. But diligent research is merely the first step towards writing a good paper in a scholarly manner. You should also demonstrate the ability to organize, analyze, and integrate the material into a novel argument. Even experienced scholars find this a challenge. Developing an innovative argument and good writing require several sessions of researching, rewriting, peer-reviewing, and revising. Plan accordingly and ask for assistance.
- **Weekly reading:** All students are expected to do the required weekly reading which will form the basis for seminar discussion.
- **All assignments, attendance, and participation are mandatory.** If an emergency happens, reach out as soon as you can.
- **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 you can 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 therefore, it is expected that you might feel disoriented. 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.

Grades & Assignments

Grading Summary

ASSIGNMENTS	
Assignment 1: Short Analysis + Research Ideas	20%
Assignment 2: Project Overviews	20%
Assignment 3: Research Proposal	20%
Participation + Discussions (Including Perusal Annotations)	15%
Final Paper	25%
TOTAL	100%



Assignment 1: Short Analysis + Research Ideas

This first assignment includes two parts:

1. Based on the readings assigned for today and the additional material(s) you picked, write a short analysis (500-800 words) including the main arguments, evidence, and connections among them. Make sure you cover the basics and point out the importance of their findings. Include quotes or in-text citations. You will use this analysis as a guide for you during our discussion.
2. In addition, revise some of the reference lists in these readings or the recommended readings. Check for titles and topics you might be interested in as potential themes to develop as a research project. Please select one or two references, take a quick read to understand their argument/methods/conclusions, and write a short paragraph (100-200 words) on how you envision a potential research project emerging from that work. Include potential research questions, primary sources, and proper references to the additional materials you used for this section.

All citations and references should follow APA, MLA, or Chicago Standards.

Assignment 2: Project Overviews

After reading the assigned paper for this week, spent some quality time exploring the Global Atlas of Environmental Justice Platform linked in this weeks' module. Search for topics you are interested in or check their "newly published featured maps" or their "recently uploaded conflicts." If you can read in a language other than English, use the language feature on the left or search for keywords in other languages (many conflicts have information in other languages and are not translated into English)

After familiarizing yourself with this tool, select at least two conflicts that you think could become part of your research project (or become two potentially different projects). Use their link materials to think about potential research questions, methods, sources, and the contributions of these potential projects to the study of climate justice.

For each potential research project, write a paragraph (no more than half page single-spaced) describing:

- 1) the research questions
- 2) a statement of methods to be employed
- 3) primary sources that could become the core of your analysis, and
- 4) the importance of this project to advance our understanding of climate justice issues.

In-text citations are required for any ideas that are not your own.

Add a reference list and a list of potential primary sources (3-5 is ok) at the end.

Please post your overviews here by Sunday at midnight and comment on at least two posts by our meeting on Monday

Assignment 3: Research Proposal

Each seminar member will submit a Project Proposal Summary (maximum 1 page, single-spaced). The Project Summary consists of 1) an overview, 2) a statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed research, 3) a statement on its broader impacts, and 4) a list of at least 10 secondary sources and at least 5 primary (historical) sources.

- The overview should include a description of the project, including the spatial and temporal scope, research questions, a statement of methods to be employed, sources, and the importance of this project to advance our understanding of climate justice issues.
- The statement on intellectual merit should describe the potential of the proposed research project to advance knowledge across disciplinary fields. Make explicit how distinct research methods will provide a unique set of data and their contribution to specific academic fields (e.g., environmental history, ecological economic, public policy, environmental governance).
- The statement on broader impacts should describe the potential of the proposed research to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired socio-environmental outcomes. We all expect our research to change the world, but more often than what we would like, the impacts of our research are narrow and only useful in specific realms. That's ok, thinking about impacts as building blocks that need to be in place so more significant changes can happen. That means, be concrete, specific, and realistic about the expected outcomes of your research. An apple tree will never provide pears; your outcomes will be defined by your research questions and methods.

The Project Summary should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader.

Take a look at [these](#) examples. Please consider that these examples (one from a former student and two awarded NFS projects) are just real-world examples of how others have responded to a similar task. Pay attention to how they are populating each section and providing critical information (consider that they are not adding a list of sources, which you should do). Take anything that would help you address this assignment and the challenge of your project, but keep in mind this is a unique assignment and your proposal will be a unique response to your research problem.

When crafting your research questions and methods, pay close attention to what you have learned in this class, including:

- How would you balance social, economic, political, cultural, and ecological dimensions?
- How would you balance local, regional, transregional, global, or planetary scales?
- What kinds of disciplinary expertise will your research be building upon and contributing to?
- How will your sources allow you (or not) to answer these questions?

Please submit your project proposal as a Word Doc here before Midnight on April 3. Read and comment on at least two projects from this class before our session on Monday April 4.

Resources & Support

[Need Accommodations? Course Adaptations or Accommodations](#)

I fully support the use of accommodations.

If you have not already done so, students who believe that they may need accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. The OAS is located in Daniels Hall. Their phone number is 508.831.4908 and email is accessibilityservices@wpi.edu. Furthermore, please reach out to me to allow me to advocate with you and implement accommodations.

[Need Help with your Research? Research and Instructional Support](#)

This class requires students to find information sources for research papers and projects. Appropriate sources include scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and well-respected news magazines and newspapers.

Please check the following instructional videos on research tools available via our library.

- WPI Library Search Box: <https://youtu.be/mqsqDeCOBN8> ([Links to an external site.](#))
- Locating Relevant Databases at WPI: <https://youtu.be/WGe9Qa9H86c> ([Links to an external site.](#))

- Searching a Database and Retrieving Full-Text Articles at WPI: <https://youtu.be/aBW5OdTy94Y> (Links to an external site.)
- Google Scholar: [Google Scholar](#) (Links to an external site.)
- Evaluating Sources for Credibility: <https://youtu.be/oeGMT30xnP4> (Links to an external site.)
- You can always reach out to our WPI's Research and Instruction Librarians throughout the term at any time

Perusall Annotations & Discussions

In this course, we will use Perusall to access, read, and annotate assigned materials (readings, videos, etc.) for our first sessions. Students **have to launch each** Perusall assignment from the link in the weekly modules. We will go over this on 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, 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, meaningful analysis throughout the materials, and engaged discussion with your peers will be considered for your Participation grade.

[Need Help with your Writing?](#)

The Writing Center offers one-on-one consultations to help you improve as a writer. Writing Center tutors will read your written work, give you feedback about your document's strengths and weaknesses, and help you chart a path forward as you revise. For this term, all consultations will take place via online connection and document sharing instead of a face to face, but you'll still get real-time feedback through conversation with a peer tutor. Consultations are free and open to all WPI students for all classes and projects, and tutors will happily work with you at any stage of the writing process (early brainstorming, revising a draft, polishing sentences in a final draft). To learn more about their online tutoring and how to schedule a one-hour appointment, go to the Writing Center homepage: wpi.edu/+writing

Schedule

Week 1 (3/14) Introduction

Week 2 (3/21) Four Pillars of Climate Justice

Required Readings

- Beyond the Anthropocene | Johan Rockström - Full video
- Climate change through the lens of intersectionality (Kaijser and Kronsell)
- Multispecies justice: Climate-just futures with, for and beyond humans (Tschakert et al.)
- Chapter 2: From Political Economy to Political Ecology (Guha and Martinez-Alier, Varieties of Environmentalism)

Recommended:

- [What is Intersectionality?](#)
- Ferdinand. Subnational climate justice for the French Outre-mer: postcolonial politics and geography of an epistemic shift

- Chomsky and Striffler (2014). Labor Environmentalism in Colombia and Latin America
- Biermann. 2006. Whose experts
- Addendum to 'Assessing ExxonMobil's climate change communications (1977–2014)'
- Kauffman and Martin. 2021. The Politics of Rights of Nature Strategies for Building a More Sustainable Future
- Kauffman. 2021. Rights of Nature: Institutions, Law, and Policy for Sustainable Development
- Global Warming in an Unequal World. A Case of Environmental Colonialism

Assignment 1: Short Analysis + Research Ideas

Week 3 (3/28) Identifying Case Studies

Required Readings

- A global environmental justice movement: mapping ecological distribution conflicts (Martinez-Alier)
- [EJAtlas - Global Atlas of Environmental Justice](#) Links to an external site.

Assignment 2: Project Overviews

Week 4 (4/4) Project Proposals

Assignment 3: Research Proposal

Week 5 (4/11) Research Updates Roundtable

Week 6 (4/25) Research Preliminary Results Presentation

Week 7 (5/2) Final Presentation and Seminar Assessment

Final Paper Due