

Syllabus for EVPP 490-DL4/505-DL2

Ecological Justice: Environmental Science and Policy for All

Jan 25, 2021 - May 10, 2021

4:30-6:20pm Tuesdays via “go.gmu” zoom + 9:30-4:30 Saturday, March 27 option
for [Virginia Environmental Justice Summit](#) ([register here](#))

ZOOM WEBINAR INFORMATION

<https://go.gmu.edu/ej21zoom>

Meeting ID: 990 2942 3058; Passcode: 821574

Phone audio: 267-831-0333 US (Philadelphia) OR 301-715-8592 US (Germantown)

This interactive seminar course aims to explore contemporary issues at the intersection of ecology -- the interaction among living beings and our shared physical environment -- and social justice (as defined in class). Examining fields of environmental justice (EJ), ecological justice (EcoJ), wild justice (WJ), environmental science and policy (ESP), we'll aim to articulate and evaluate academic and practical responses to questions like --

How can we equitably distribute environmental benefits and risks?

Does nature have rights? If so, what are our stewardship obligations?

What can wildlife teach us about justice?

How can environmental scientists and policy-makers learn from and benefit everyone?

Depending on students' interest, related topics or questions may also be explored, such as “biases shared by animals and people” or “what historical -isms exist in the scholarship and practice of ESP?”

Each student will lead a 50 minute session addressing one or more of the questions we raise. Each topic or question may be addressed by more than one student-led session. Leadership will entail either leading discussion of 1 (490 students) or 2 (505 students) pertinent scholarly articles -- posted to our [references folder](#) at least 1 week in advance -- or facilitating discussion with an external guest speaker you recruit. Popular media, videos, interactive activities and case studies are all options you may integrate into the session you lead -- just as long as they contribute to answering the question (Q) you address.

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Course Logistics and Scoring

Instructor

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| | "Dr. Dann" Sklarew, Ph.D. Professor, Environmental Science & Policy |
| Office hours | Tuesdays, 4:00 (in course Zoom) or Tu/Th 10:30-12:30 via Zoom, by appointment |
| Phone number | (703) 993-2012 |
| Email | dsklarew@gmu.edu |

Schedule

See <https://go.gmu.edu/ej21schedule>

Course Website

See our course inside **Mason's blackboard "Bb" (references and scores) at <http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>**, with extemporaneous interactive content shared via **Google Drive (GD) at <http://go.gmu.edu/ej21>**. Most up-to-date syllabus, background documents, presentations and notes will be posted to GD then linked from Bb.

References & Resources

References, lecture files, readings and other materials can be shared inside [the "references" folder](#) on our course Website. All documents should be uploaded or linked from there, thus available for free on-line download.

Performance Assessment, Scores & Grading

| Assignment and Rubric | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1. Participation | Partially and passively attend | Fully attend, but passive | Attend and participate | A leader in contributing substantively and actively |
| 2. In-Class Leadership | Delivered but irrelevant | Marginally on topic and informative, including references but not scholarly references | Informative and professional, including 1 scholarly reference or expert guest | Exemplary! (I.e., highly pertinent, poignant to course goals, and professionally delivered), including 1+ (EVPP 490) or 2+ (EVPP 505) scholarly |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | | | reference(s) and/or or expert guest(s) |
|--|--|--|--|---|

Participation: Students are expected to participate actively in every session they attend. If you need to miss a session, please inform your professor in advance whenever feasible. Each student may earn a score of 1-4 points per session for participation, according to row 1 in the rubric above. Row 2 presents the corresponding 1-4 rubric for in-class leadership. Note higher expectations for EVPP 505 students and that absence or not leading will result in 0/4 except as clarified here:

Absence: If you are unable to attend a session in real-time, please inform your professor at least 1 day in advance to make alternative arrangements to view the webinar as an archive, then provide written insights and perspectives (via email before next scheduled session). If not, please discuss and reference any peer reviewed articles in your communicate.

Participation the full [Virginia Environmental Justice Summit](#) will be assessed as 2 class sessions, and at least 3 hours as 1 class session, for purposes of scoring.

Leadership: After posting (to our references folder) and sharing any pertinent scholarly references at least 7 days in advance, students should plan to present and/or facilitate a ~50 min discussion of their priority question or topic for that day, examining concerns and means for addressing them. Multiple students leading same topic may (optionally) collaborate on their leadership, for which time should then be additive (i.e., 2 students = 100 min.). You are most welcome to recruit and facilitate discussion with an outside expert as well. Creative formats -- such as debates or substantively appropriate role-playing simulations and debriefs -- are warmly welcome!

Final Scores

EVPP 490 students' final scores will be calculated as follows:

$$((\text{Sum of participation scores for top 9 sessions}) + (\text{leadership score})) / 10$$

EVPP 490 students' final scores will be calculated as follows:

$$((\text{Sum of participation scores for top 10 sessions}) + (\text{leadership score})) / 11$$

Grading Procedure

The final grade is based on your final score:

| Grade | Total Score (out of 4) |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| A - Exceptional/Passing | 3.67+ |
| B - Satisfactory/Passing | 2.67 - 3.66 |
| C - Unsatisfactory/Passing | 1.67 - 2.66 |

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| D - Passing (EVPP 490) | 1.00 - 1.66 |
| F - Unsatisfactory/Failing | <1.00 (EVPP 490); <1.67 (EVPP 505) |

The professor is not required, but reserves the right to provide + or - to grades to provide further clarification regarding the quality of students' work.

Honor Code

Adherence to the [GMU Honor Code](#) is expected of all students, specifically:

Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

In all assignments and communications, plagiarism* will not be tolerated. This applies equally to oral and written communications in the context of any evaluated (graded) course assignments. In presenting quotes, paraphrasing statements or logical arguments from others in any medium (on-line, oral or written), students should properly cite their sources. Results of team work should only be attributed to those who directly contribute to the final product (even if more than those people were designated as being part of the team). Any or all members of a student team may be held accountable for any Honor Code violations in their shared work. Any public usage of original material from this course (e.g., presentations, images, etc.) without explicit permission of its creator shall be construed as stealing. As stated in the Honor Code, infractions may result in invalidated credit for dishonorable work and lowered grade, including failure from the class, suspension or dismissal.

The professor reserves the right to use plagiarism detection software to identify and deter acts of academic plagiarism.

Inquiries for clarification are welcome, as we do not look kindly on having to submit another student for Honor Code violations. Thank you in advance for your conscious attention to these serious issues.

Technology Requirements

This course will use the Blackboard learning system for grading, Zoom for course meeting sessions, and Google Docs for document collection, sharing, and editing. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (Windows 10, or Mac OSX 10.13, or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection. Students are also encouraged to have a functional camera and microphone. Students can connect to "live" course sessions via a telephone call, but video connection is the expected norm.

Course Materials and Student Privacy

Video recordings of class meetings that are shared only with the instructors and students officially enrolled in a class do not violate FERPA or any other privacy expectation. Video recordings that only include the instructor (no student names, images, voices, or identifiable texts) may be shared without violating FERPA (see University Policies: Privacy, for some qualifications and recommendations)

- All course materials posted to Blackboard or other course site are private to this class; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.
- Video recordings — whether made by instructors or students — of class meetings that include audio, visual, or textual information from other students are private and must not be shared outside the class.
- Live video conference meetings (e.g. Collaborate or Zoom) that include audio, textual, or visual information from other students must be viewed privately and not shared with others in your household or recorded and shared outside the class

Spring 2021: Safe Return to Campus

Although this course will be conducted online, in Zoom, we offer the following reminder for students using the physical campus at any location, for any reason:

- Students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to take Safe Return to Campus Training prior to visiting campus. Training is available in Blackboard (<https://mymason.gmu.edu>).
- Students are required to follow the university's public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-plan).
- **Anyone visiting any of the Mason campuses or locations** must also complete the [Mason COVID Health Check](#) every day they plan a visit to a Mason facility. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and students will receive either a Green, Yellow, or Red email response.
 - Only people who receive a “green” notification are permitted to visit Mason sites, or attend courses with a face-to-face component.
 - If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing.
 - Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

Campus Closure

If a campus closes, or class is canceled due to weather or other concern, students should check Blackboard or email for updates on continuing instruction, and information about any changes to events or assignments.

Diversity and Inclusion¹

We seek to celebrate diversity and create a learning environment that fosters respect for people of all identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including (but not limited to) gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, national origin, citizenship-status, first language, religion, age, ability, or political or

¹ Any diversity and inclusion aspects YOU would like to change within our syllabus to help create a more sustainable, socially just, and inclusive learning experience? If so, please let us know.

ideological perspective. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own. Demeaning, intolerant, and/or disruptive behavior or responses at any time are inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Use points of disagreement/conflict to learn more about yourself, others, and the course material. We expect you to communicate diverse and opposing ideas and perspectives with professionalism and civility.

Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge that the land we live on and work from and around George Mason University is the unceded territory and [traditional homelands of the Manahoacc and Powhatan Indigenous Peoples](#). We invite you to visit <https://native-land.ca> to identify which Indigenous territory you may be occupying.

Student Name, Gender Identity and Pronoun Use

We respect your right to be called by the name and pronouns you expect. If the name you go by is different from what is reflected in Blackboard, please let your professor know. Additionally, students may change their names in the following platforms related to the course:

- Update [your name and pronouns](#) on [Patriotweb](#) and [Blackboard](#).
- Input your name in Zoom preference settings to reflect the name you go by (including removing last name if you prefer to keep this private).

If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with us and how best to address you in class and via email. As for your instructors:

1. Greg Farley: I use he/him for myself and you may address me as “Greg” in email and verbally.
2. Dann Sklarew: I use he/him or they/them for myself and you may address me as “Dr. Dann” in email and verbally.

Commitment to Anti-Racist Action

We, the teaching team, condemn the systemic racism that is responsible for violence and harms perpetrated against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). We commit ourselves to anti-racist action. We will listen, educate ourselves, examine our biases, actively support groups working against racism, and strive to make anti-racism a focus of our work.

A sustainable society has clean air, clean water, a safe climate, resilient and biologically diverse natural systems, strong communities, healthy people, economic opportunity, and living wages. A sustainable society is also, necessarily, just, equitable, inclusive, without violence, and without racism. To be successful, the sustainability movement must be anti-racist. To be effective agents of change within the movement, we must engage in anti-racist work.

We invite your thoughts on how to evolve our work to be reliable allies in ending racism. (This statement was adapted from [Dickinson College’s Center for Sustainability Education](#))

Accommodation for Students With Disabilities

Your instructional team includes person(s) with disabilities; we support your right to equitable support for any disability our students have. Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with varied abilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with your professor. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Dependents in Class

It is our belief that if we want parents in academia, that we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is a reflection of our own beliefs and commitments.

1. You and your nursing baby are welcome in our class anytime, and you do not need permission to leave class to pump.
2. In all cases where dependents need to come to class, we ask that you make sure they are not a disruption to the learning environment.
3. We ask that all students work with us to create a welcoming environment that is inclusive of all forms of diversity, including diversity in caregiving status.

Whole-Person Support for Students

Need Help? *We're here for you!*

Librarian Liaison for Environmental Science and Policy (EVPP) Courses

She may be able to assist you in your research for any aspect of this course. Her contact information is:

Kim Hoffman
khoffma@gmu.edu
703-993-8344

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is staffed by both undergraduate and graduate tutors, who can help improve your writing skills through direct support on specific assignments or in general, face to face or on-line. <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

Learning Services

Learning Services -- <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/> -- provides a variety of experience based learning opportunities through which students explore a wide range of academic concerns. [Study skills workshops](#) and individual study skills counseling provide learning experiences to improve academic skills. Information about tutors available through many Mason academic departments can be found on our [Tutoring](#) page. <http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/>

Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) and Resources for Crises

SSAC -- <https://ssac.gmu.edu> -- provides comprehensive (and confidential) services for your safety and well-being. helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through one on one support, and interactive programs and resources.

Some students struggling to make ends meet may be trading off studies for shelter, food, healthcare or other human needs. Others are in crisis in other ways. If you or a friend are facing any of these sorts of challenges, please help others to help you! We hope these resources may help you to achieve lasted personal security, sustainability and well-being!

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS -- <http://caps.gmu.edu/> -- provides a wide range of services to students by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. CAPS individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs are designed to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance.

College students often experience issues that may interfere with academic success, such as academic stress, health and sleep problems, juggling responsibilities, life events (e.g., loss of job or loved one), relationship concerns, homelessness, hunger, or feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or depression. If you or a friend is struggling, we strongly encourage you to seek support, from the course teaching team or others on campus or in the community. Helpful, effective resources are available on campus, and most are at no-charge.

Your instructional team is living with their own physical and/or psychological ability challenges and we're happy to be resourses as you work to maintain your own physical and mental wellbeing.

Gender-based/Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment free from discrimination and a campus free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe they have been sexually harassed, assaulted, stalked or subjected to sexual misconduct, sexual exploitation, or domestic violence to [seek assistance and support](#). [University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](#) speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students. Sources of assistance are available on- and off-campus, including confidential ones.

As faculty members and designated "Responsible Employees," we are required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's [Title IX Coordinator](#) per [university policy 1412](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (703-380-1434) or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from [Mason's Title IX Coordinator](#) (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Questions?

If you have any questions at any point, please contact your professor via email or a voicemail on his phone. Thank you -- and have a great semester!