

Spatial Justice

GGS 590_001

Professor

Dr. Christine Rosenfeld
(she/her)

Email

crosenfe@gmu.edu

Office Hours

Email to arrange.
2216 Exploratory Hall
or by [zoom](#)

Teaching Assistant

TBA

Student Expectations

- Come to class, interact, display respect
- Read email daily
- Reach out if you're stuck
- Communicate accommodations or concerns
- Obtain reliable access to a computer and internet
- Course materials are [private to this class](#)
- Use your GMU email account; include full name and course # in email

Required Texts

Readings are free and accessible at canvas.gmu.edu.

Course Delivery

Hybrid in-person and asynchronous (canvas.gmu.edu)

Meeting Time & Location

Tuesdays 10:30-11:45 am
2312 Exploratory Hall

Course Description

This 3-credit course activates or flexes your already-existing social justice mindset with a spatial perspective. The course is anchored around theories of spatial justice, which teach us how to critically interrogate the unequal distribution of various beneficial and detrimental environmental and social resources (examples: public transportation, hazardous waste sites, school funding, etc) which result in social inequities. Furthermore, we consider what can be done by various stakeholders including yourself to disrupt processes and discourses that have led to spatial injustices in the first place. This course is largely grounded in qualitative methods.

Learning Outcomes

- Define and identify spatial justice and injustice
- Identify stakeholders affected by spatial injustices which impact the public and specific communities
- Analyze sets of conditions that lead to injustices
- Evaluate impact of various ways to minimize or reverse spatial injustices
- Design a plan of action to minimize or reverse an existing injustice
- Define key terms related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as related to this course's field/discipline and use those terms to engage meaningfully with peers about course issues
- Articulate obstacles to justice and equity, and strategies for addressing them, in response to local, national, and/or global issues in the field/discipline.
- Assess failures in policy to address injustice
- Practice qualitative analysis

Grade Point Cutoffs

A	930-1000	B-	800-829
A-	900-929	C	700-799
B+	880-899	F	0-699
B	830-879		

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Grading/Requirements

Submit all on Canvas.

200 pts, 20%

Participation

As a small social science graduate seminar, your consistent presence and contributions in class are essential and expected. You need to be attentive and substantively participate during each class and you need to show up for your peers' presentations. If you need to miss class, email the professor to make alternative arrangements. Failure to regularly attend class and participate may result in a failing course grade.

150 pts, 15%

Written Brief Assignment

You will write a brief for an agency or organization responsible for some kind of work related to a spatial injustice. A template will be provided.

150 pts, 15%

Policy Critique Assignment

You will find a policy related to an aspect of spatial injustice and write a critique of it. A template will be provided.

150 pts, 15%

Qualitative Analysis Assignment

You will be provided a qualitative data set and complete analysis. A template will be provided.

350 pts, 35%

Grant Proposal Project

You will identify a spatial injustice and write a mock grant proposal that describes the injustice and proposes concrete actions that could disrupt or intervene into the injustice. A template will be provided. You will submit a pitch (75 pts), a proposal (200 pts), and complete an in-class presentation related to the proposal (75 pts).

Late Work Policy



Email me prior to assignment due dates to request extensions. Failure to request extensions in writing prior to due dates may result in a failing grade and/or penalty for the assignment.

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Academic Standards

George Mason University has academic standards with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity and all students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code. Cheating and/or plagiarism—passing off work as your own that is not—will result in an F for your final grade in this class. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and familiarize yourself with the Honor Code. The official GMU policies are available from the Office of Academic Integrity: <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>. Please consult with me about questions ***prior*** to turning in assignments.

Artificial Intelligence

The use of generative AI tools is permitted in this class as long as it aligns with the learning outcomes or goals associated with assessments as determined by the professor. You are fully responsible for the information you submit based on a generative AI query (such that it does not violate academic standards, intellectual property laws, or standards of non-public research you are conducting through coursework). Your use of

generative AI tools must be properly documented and cited for any work submitted in this course. [Here is how to cite AI.](#)

For any submitted work, no more than 20% of sources may be AI and no more than 20% of your written work may be directly quoted from any source, AI or not. Assignments may ask you to triangulate AI-sourced information; if so, assignment directions will explain.

Diversity Statement & Accommodations

GMU promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study, and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion (see [religious holiday calendar](#)), age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard, and respected. *Share your name and gender pronouns and how best to address you in class and via email and update your PatriotWeb profile.*

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 disabilities. 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 me. Students who are pregnant or experiencing pregnancy-related circumstances are welcome to reach out to the professor to discuss adjustments. The university directs you to the [Pregnant and Parenting Adjustment Form](#).

Additional Policies

See [Common Policies Addendum](#) linked here and on Canvas for a review of items including **Title IX; Diversity and Accommodations; FERPA;** and detailed **Academic Standards.**

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Course Schedule

Weeks	Tues 10:30- 11:45 am	Case Studies & Topics	UNDERGRADUATE	GRADUATE
			Graded Work Due By Sunday 11:59 pm	Graded Work Due By Sunday 11:59 pm
Week 1	1/20	Welcome & Foundations		
Week 2	1/27	Prison Gerrymandering		
Week 3	2/3	School District Funding	Creative Communication	Written Brief
Week 4	2/10	Native American Sovereignty Matters		
Week 5	2/17	Transportation Inequities Guest Speaker: Fatemeh Janatabadi		
Week 6	2/24	Redlining	Written Brief	Policy Critique
Week 7	3/3	Enclave Tourism		Grant Proposal Pitch
Week 8	3/10	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week 9	3/17	E-waste & Clothing Waste	Field Note	
Week 10	3/24	Cancer Alley & Mining Operations		Qualitative Analysis
Week 11	3/31	Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations Guest Speaker: Brendan Blackburn		
Week 12	4/7	Urban Heat Islands & Housing	Creative Communication OR Brief OR Field Note	
Week 13	4/14	Data Centers		
Week 14	4/21	Presentations & Wrap Up		Presentation
Week 15	4/28	Presentations & Wrap Up	Grant Proposal	Grant Proposal & Presentation