

ENVS 6101 CLIMATE JUSTICE FIELD COURSE

An exploration of climate justice definitions, theory, case studies, and policy implications, organized around field visits and interviews with practitioners involved in various aspects of fossil fuel finance/processing/transport, migrant resettlement, and climate justice activism.

Course Director: Ellie Perkins (esperk@yorku.ca). Office Hours: Thursdays, 10:30 – noon.
Office: HNES 246

Objectives:

- To examine the meanings of “climate justice” and its implications in North America.
- To consider various theoretical and policy perspectives on the unjust effects of climate change (e.g. from the standpoints of ecological economics, ethics, law/governance, finance, ecology, systems theory, indigenous worldviews, perspectives from the Global South) and compare resulting mitigation approaches.
- To provide students with hands-on experiences linking climate justice theory and practice.
- To create opportunities for in-depth exploration of specific aspects of climate justice through focused research

Outline:

The course will run from May 30 through June 9, 2017 and will be organized as a full-time workshop/seminar which will include discussion of course readings, skills training modules, field trips, group and/or individual research, and seminar presentations. Classes will mainly be based in downtown Toronto. Topics that will be covered in the course include:

- Definitions of climate justice; equity perspectives on climate change and its effects; distributional and procedural justice in relation to climate change and climate risk
- Indigenous activism and leadership on land issues, fossil fuel extraction and transport, tarsands, climate policy, links between extraction and social inequities/violence
- Toronto as a global centre for extraction finance
- Fossil/extraction divestment: practicalities, effectiveness, equity implications
- Canada’s recent experiences with migrant resettlement
- Fossil fuel consumption and climate policy in Canada and the U.S.
- Equity considerations related to the energy transition
- Diasporas, global communication, activism and political agency in relation to climate justice
- Climate justice organizing, theories and movements.

Requirements:

The course is intended for students who have an interest in climate justice issues and activism. Enrolment is normally for three credits.

Students are expected to read widely, participate fully in workshop discussions and complete all formal class assignments. The assignments include:

- Class participation, which involves reading the course materials and taking an active part in the discussions, skills modules, seminars, and field trips. The detailed schedule, reading list, and sample essay topics will be sent by April 18 to those enrolled. Students

should be available full-time from May 30 through June 9. There will be no formal class activities on June 3 and 4; some field trips may extend into weekday evenings.

- Several short “thought question” assignments on material covered in the course readings.
- One 8-10 page double-spaced essay (2,000-2,500 words), bringing together climate justice theoretical perspectives and practical or policy approaches in reference to a particular case study. Student essays are to be written as chapter submissions for an edited book prepared by the group. Essay drafts will be due June 5 for peer review during the course; the final version is due by June 23.
- Participation in an individual or group presentation to the whole class on June 9, based on the case study discussed in the essay.
- A one-page reflection paper about the field course and its relation to the student’s own academic focus.

Academic Honesty

All York students are subject to policies regarding academic honesty as set out by the Senate of York University and by the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES). Students are strongly encouraged to read the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty, a copy of which can be found on the York University web-site (<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm>). FES is committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity. Please be advised that conduct that violates the ethical or legal standards of the University community may result in serious consequences. For more information, please contact the Director, Student and Academic Services and/or the FES Writing Program Coordinator.

Research Ethics

Students who conduct a research study using human participants must submit the following for approval prior to the conduct of research:

three copies of a proposal outlining the purpose of the research and the methodology to be used
three copies of the Faculty of Environmental Studies Human Participants Research Protocol Form, and

three copies of the Written Informed Consent form or a script of Verbal Informed Consent (Verbal Informed consent is permissible only in extenuating circumstances, where written communication is not feasible).

This material will be reviewed by a Sub-committee of the Research and Awards Committee.

Reviews will take up to 2 weeks from the date of submission. If the research is not approved prior to the conduct of the research, then the research will not have received research ethics clearance and will be deemed unacceptable for submission as a component of this course.

Information regarding the use of human participants in research studies may be found on the Faculty of Graduate Studies webpage <http://www.yorku.ca/grads/polc/ethics.htm>.

Students are advised that all human participants in the research must have either signed a written consent form or have provided oral consent for their participation in the research. Students also are advised that the consent forms must be retained by the Principal Investigator for two years following the completion of the research.

PLEASE NOTE: Students who feel that there are extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of the course requirements are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Course Director as soon as possible. Students with physical, learning or psychiatric disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in teaching style or evaluation methods should discuss this with the Course Director early in the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made.