

Environmental & Climate Justice

Fall 2021

From Puerto Rico, the U.S./Mexico border and other localities to Chicago neighborhoods

LALS 495, CRNs: 36513/3hrs & 36514/4hrs

ANTH 494, CRNs: 40330/3hrs & 40331/4hrs

MUSE 400, CRNs: 45352/3hrs & 45353/4hrs

Wednesdays, 3pm-5:30pm

Class meets in-person in the Latino Cultural Center- LCB2

There will be **four online class sessions via Zoom** on the days that we are hosting Climates of Inequality presentations. These are Sept 29, Oct 13, Nov 3, and Nov 10. The four dates are also indicated in the Course Calendar. Zoom information will be provided prior to the dates. The Zoom class sessions follow the same hours 3pm – 5:30pm

Rosa M. Cabrera, PhD

Director, UIC Latino Cultural Center (LCC)

cabrerar@uic.edu

All class-related emails must indicate in the subject line ECJ Course. Otherwise, I might miss your email.

Check-In Hours: by appointment.

Course Description

This course examines the environmental justice movement and its connection to climate change. It scrutinizes larger systems of power and privilege that produce unjust environmental and climate conditions putting communities of color, immigrants, indigenous, and low-income earners at greater risk. This course will use transnational case studies from Chicago's Latinx community, Puerto Rico, the U.S./Mexico border and other localities to examine the intersection of environmental hazards and climate change with migration, displacement, surveillance, identity, and COVID-19. This is a highly collaborative course that requires full participation in the reading discussions so that students in working groups can draw upon learned frameworks to complete a public memory project developed in collaboration with partner organizations Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) and Alianza Americas.

The course will explore critical questions such as:

- How is it that certain groups of people are systematically burdened with environmental hazards and the aftermath of climate disasters to a greater extent than other groups?
- What can be done to correct these inequalities fostered by long-standing processes of colonialism, capitalism, and institutionalized racism?
- How can culturally informed and place-based interventions help us build a just transition and reject disaster capitalism?

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand connections between environmental/climate and social in/justice and larger systems of power and privilege that put historically marginalized communities at greater risks.
- Apply the theories and methods of environmental and climate justice to their own fields of study.
- Improve critical reading, communication, and group leadership skills.
- Expand ethnographic skills and collaborative approaches to work with community partners.

Syllabus Consider this syllabus to be a living document and a contract. I may make changes to the syllabus and the Course Calendar if needed and will announce any changes in class and through Blackboard, where the syllabus will remain updated. We will be referring to the syllabus throughout the semester. Thus, you should have it available at all class sessions.

Cabrera's Statement

The past few years have presented us with extraordinary challenges but similarly, opportunities to be in solidarity, demanding and creating change to improve the lives of the most vulnerable: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Immigrant, Queer, Trans, Young and Elders, Low income, and Disabled communities. As a cultural worker and instructor of this course, my main task is to guide a collaborative learning process where we can all grow our skills and knowledge together to expand our role in doing the above. I support the individual identities and diverse cultural values of students in our class and see these as a strength that will generate creative solutions to our common problems.

Student Responsibilities

I need your support and commitment to complete all assignments, be present, participate in the reading discussions, and work collaboratively in your Working Group. Thus, by enrolling in this course and reviewing this syllabus, you are agreeing to follow the policies and procedures listed here and are acknowledging your responsibility for completing the readings and all other assignments on time.

If you are experiencing a grave situation at home and need some adjustments for this class, please email me to set up a meeting. If you have or suspect that you have a disability that is preventing you from fully participating in this class, I encourage you to contact the Disability Resource Center or Disability Cultural Center – see page 5 for details in addition to a list of UIC support services.

Mutual Respect: Students must respect their own and their fellow students' investment in the course and must honor the best practices for engagement that we shared at the beginning of the course.

Attendance and Tardiness: Students are expected to participate in all class sessions starting at 3pm and stay for the entire time, ending at 5:30pm. I will take attendance at every class session including the community visits and public presentations. Each student has two "free passes" or excused absences for the semester. Once you use the two "free passes", I will deduct 2 points for each absence, and this will be reflected in your final score. I will consider excusing absences beyond the two "free passes" due to illness and a family emergency with proper documentation. An absence due to observance of a religious holiday can be excused with the time notification as outlined below. You will still be responsible for completing your individual and/or group assignments according to the Course Calendar.

Religious Holidays: Students must notify me within the first ten days of the semester of the specific dates on which they are requesting an absence for religious observances.

Required Readings

- Books to purchase

- *The Battle for Paradise: Puerto Rico Takes on the Disaster Capitalists* by N. Klein (2018).
- *Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration, and Homeland Security* by T. Miller (2017).
- *Building Bridges, Not Walls: A Journey to a World Without Borders* by T. Miller (2021).

- Book provided by Cabrera

- *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis*. Edited by Johnson & Wilkinson (2021).

- Chapters and articles available on Blackboard (listed in order of readings in the Course Calendar)

- Purdy (2015). *Environmentalism's Racist History*.
- Bullard (1990). *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*.
- Skelton & Miller (2016). *The Environmental Justice Movement*.
- Pulido & Peña (1998). *Environmentalism and Positionality*.
- Cho (2020). *Why Climate Change is an Environmental Justice Issue*.
- *Principles of Environmental Justice* (1991).
- Holt-Giménez (2017). *Agrarian Questions and the Struggle for Land Justice in the United States*.
- Mares (2012). *Tracing immigrant identity through the plate and palate*.
- Hallet (2019). *How climate change is driving emigration from Central America*.
- Bagley (2020). *Connecting the Dots Between Environmental Justice and the Coronavirus*.
- Aronoff, Battistoni, Cohen, and Riofrancos (2019). *Foreword, Introduction, and Recharging Internationalism*.
- Henry (2020). *A Worker's Green New Deal*.
- *Just Transition Factsheet*.
- LaDuke (2021). *Water Protectors Hold Their Ground in Wild Rice Country*.
- Moore (2021). *Chicago activists end hunger strike against recycling plant but vow to continue fight*.
- Deaton & Flin (2021). *Running out of water: how climate change fuels a crisis in the US West*.
- Plumer & Fountain (2021). *A Hotter Future Is Certain, Climate Panel Warns. But How Hot Is Up to Us*.
- Lloréns (2019). *US Media Depictions of Climate Migrants: The Recent Case of the Puerto Rican "Exodus."*

Student Roles, Class Set Up, and Assignments

Students will be collaborating in Working Groups to discuss the assigned readings, facilitate the dialogues with presenters in the virtual *Climates of Inequality* public programs, and complete a community project.

Working Groups will be self-assigned during the second class session. There will be four Working

Groups, each with a balance of undergraduate and graduate students and a mix of academic focus and student assets to help you develop your community project. Graduate students will be expected to co-chair the groups and ensure that all in their groups are doing their part. Graduate students will have additional tasks such as selecting and facilitating readings from *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis* during weeks 12 and 13 – See Course Calendar for dates.

The first half of the class will be devoted to reading discussions where each Working Group will discuss the readings and then I will facilitate a broader discussion. Students are expected to complete the Readings' Observations and Questions (ROQ) sheet for each Reading Set using the template provided on Blackboard. ROQs are due to me on Tuesdays by email. You should have your ROQ available during your Working Group discussion.

Each ROQ Sheet is worth 3 points for a total of 24 points. I will not accept late submissions. If you don't submit the ROQ sheet at the beginning of class I will assume that you did not complete the readings. The second half of the class will be used to participate in the *Climates of Inequality* presentation, collect community narratives, and complete the Community Project.

Completing the Community Project: Students in Working Groups will be working with community partners Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) and Alianza Americas in a project called ***Latinx Foodways: Stories and Recipes Linking Social and Environmental Justice*** that is part of the Humanities Action Lab's *Climates of Inequality*. **The goal of the project is to collect stories and recipes from community members to tease out the relationship between environmental/climate justice with food traditions & cultural identity, land & food justice, im/migration, labor, health & COVID-19.** Students will collect narratives through story circles and food demonstrations facilitated by LVEJO and Alianza Americas. Students are expected to take field notes during the story circles, toxic tour, and food demonstration. Each Working Group will then draw upon the narratives collected (their field notes) to shape a story they want to tell using a communication tool such as a podcast, video, infographic(s), etc. There are 3 milestones indicated in the Course Calendar with the last being dedicated for the four Working Groups to present their group story through the communication tool they selected.

NOTE: Working groups will need to work in and outside class to complete their community project.

Participating in Class Discussions

All students are expected to contribute to class discussions by sharing their thoughts and perspectives on the readings and any other class activities. I am in favor of students participating voluntarily but I will also call on students if needed.

Facilitating a Public Presentation Dialogue

Students in their respective Working Groups will facilitate the dialogues with the presenters in the *Climates of Inequalities* public presentations. You will see in the Course Calendar that each Working Group has been assigned to one presentation. In this role, your Working Group will be responsible to engage with the presenter by asking questions and making relevant comments after the presentation. I will share more details on the presentations and Zoom logistics.

Writing 3 “Letters to your Professor”

Each student will be expected to submit these letters using a set of prompts provided. The Humanities Action Lab will use these letters to evaluate how the course is progressing. See the Course Calendar for dates when each letter is due.

Grade Components

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1- Submitting <u>eight</u> Readings’ Observations & Questions (ROQ) 8 x 3 points | 24 points |
| 2- Participating in reading discussions | 15 points |
| 3- Facilitating <u>one</u> dialogue with presenters | 10 points |
| 4- Writing <u>three</u> “Letters to your Professor” | 6 points |
| 5- Participating in all phases & completing the community project | 45 points |

Total 100 points

Grade Calculation

A= 100-90	B= 89-80	C= 79-70	D= 69-60	F= 59 and below
-----------	----------	----------	----------	-----------------

You can follow your point accumulation on Blackboard.

University Protocols and Resources

Face Masks: Masks covering both the mouth and nose must be worn at all times by all students, faculty, and staff while on campus and inside any building regardless of vaccination status. If you do not wear a mask, you will be asked to leave the classroom and will not be allowed back in class unless or until you wear a mask. Students who do not comply with the mask wearing policy will be reported to the Dean of Students. Eating and drinking is not allowed in classrooms.

Academic Integrity: Students are responsible for knowing and observing UIC’s academic policies and procedures. Any violation of these policies will result in a failing grade for the assignment. The guidelines for academic integrity are upheld in this course: <https://dos.uic.edu/community-standards/academic-integrity/>

Students with Disabilities: In accordance to UIC’s procedures, students with a documented disability are entitled to accommodations to obtain equal access in their courses. Students must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and provide me with a Letter of Accommodations (LOA) to verify their eligibility. Students can access the DRC’s registration form at <https://drc.uic.edu/students-2/new-to-drc/>. Students can also seek additional support and get involved with the campus disability community at the Disability Cultural Center. For more information visit their website at dcc.uic.edu.

Grievance Procedures: UIC is committed to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity involving students and employees. Freedom from discrimination is a foundation for all decision making at UIC. Students are encouraged to study the University’s [Nondiscrimination Statement](#) and [Public Formal Grievance Procedures](#).

UIC Resources: Check out the [many resources that UIC has available](#) to support students.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1- Aug 25	Homework due Sept 1
<p>- Welcome</p> <p>- Watch <i>Coal Wars</i> with America Ferrera</p> <p>- Introductions and Assets Activity</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Break</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-Review course syllabus</p>	<p>Review</p> <p><i>Climates of Inequality</i> Exhibition https://climatesofinequality.org/</p> <p>Chicago story http://climatesofinequality.org/story/resisting-cycles-of-environmental-injustice-in-la-villita/</p> <p>Watch one (out of seven) <i>Climates</i> presentations.</p>

Week 2- Sept 1	Homework due Sept 8
<p>-Review <i>Climates of Inequality</i> project</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Break</p> <p>-----</p> <p>4pm LCC staff to discuss communication tools</p> <p>5pm Form Working Groups</p>	<p>Read Set 1 (47 pages)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Environmentalism's Racist History</i> by Purdy. 2) <i>Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality</i> by Bullard. 3) <i>The Environmental Justice Movement</i> by Skelton & Miller. 4) <i>Environmentalism and Positionality</i> by Pulido & Peña. 5) <i>Why Climate Change is an Environmental Justice Issue</i> by Cho. 6) <i>Principles of Environmental Justice</i>. <p>Complete Readings' Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p> <p>Submit Letter 1 to your Instructor- See Prompts Sheet</p>

Week 3- Sept 8	Homework due Sept 15
<p>Reading discussion Set 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Environmentalism's Racist History</i> by Purdy. 2) <i>Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality</i> by Bullard. 3) <i>A History of the Environmental Justice Movement</i> by Cole & Foster. 4) <i>Environmentalism and Positionality</i> by Pulido & Peña. 5) <i>Why Climate Change is an Environmental Justice Issue</i> by Cho. 6) <i>Principles of Environmental Justice</i>. <p>-----</p> <p>Break</p> <p>-----</p> <p>4:30 ECJ Dialogue with LCC staff</p>	<p>Read Set 2 (42 pages)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Agrarian Questions and the Struggle for Land Justice in the United States</i> by Holt-Giménez. 2) <i>Tracing immigrant identity through the plate and the palate</i> by Mares. 3) <i>How climate change is driving emigration from Central America</i> by Cady Hallett. 4) <i>Connecting the Dots Between Environmental Justice and the Coronavirus</i> by Bagley. <p>Complete Readings' Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p>

Week 4- Sept 15	Homework due Sept 22 but will discuss on the 29th
<p>Reading discussion Set 2</p> <p>1) <i>Agrarian Questions and the Struggle for Land Justice in the United States</i> by Holt-Giménez.</p> <p>2) <i>Tracing immigrant identity through the plate and the palate</i> by Mares.</p> <p>3) <i>How climate change is driving emigration from Central America</i> by Cady Hallett.</p> <p>4) <i>Connecting the Dots Between Environmental Justice and the Coronavirus</i> by Bagley.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Break</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Working Groups develop questions for Story Circle One</p>	<p>Read Set 3 (90 pages)</p> <p>1) <i>Storming the Wall</i> by Todd Miller. Read pages 15-105.</p> <p>Complete Readings' Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p>

Week 5- Sept 22	Homework due Sept 29
<p>Story Circle One</p> <p>Travel to community location TBD</p> <p>UIC bus will take us and bring us back to campus. More info to come.</p>	<p>Read Set 3 (58 pages)</p> <p>1) <i>Building Bridges, Not Walls: A Journey to a World Without Borders</i> by Todd Miller. Read pages 3-61.</p> <p>Complete Readings' Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p>

<p>Saturday, Sept 25 in the afternoon. This session replaces Wed Nov 24.</p>
<p>LVEJO Toxic Tour & Garden/Food Demonstration.</p> <p>UIC bus will leave at 12:15 and bring us back by 4:30. More info to come.</p>

Week 6- Sept 29 via Zoom	Homework due Oct 6
<p>Reading discussion Set 3</p> <p>-<i>Storming the Wall</i> by Todd Miller. Read pages 15-105.</p> <p>-<i>Building Bridges, Not Walls: A Journey to a World Without Borders</i> by Todd Miller. Read pages 3-61.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Break</p> <p>-----</p> <p>4:00 – 5:30 Climates of Inequality Presentation by Todd Miller, journalist and author</p> <p>Facilitators: Working Group 4</p>	<p>To do</p> <p>-Organize your field notes and/or images from the first Story Circle, the LVEJO Toxic Tour and Garden/Food Demonstration.</p> <p>-Then highlight what accounts/narratives and images connect environmental/climate justice with food traditions & cultural identity, land & justice, in/migration, labor, health & COVID-19.</p>

Week 7- Oct 6	Homework due Oct 13
<p>Field Notes and Images Discussion Get ready questions for the Story Circle session. ----- Break ----- 4:00 – 5:30</p> <p>Story Circle Two at the LCC</p>	<p>Read Set 4 (78 pages) 1) <i>Foreword, Introduction, and Recharging Internationalism</i> by Aronoff, Battistoni, Cohen, and Riofrancos. 2) <i>A Worker’s Green New Deal</i> by Henry. 3) <i>Just Transition Factsheet</i>.</p> <p>Complete Readings’ Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p>

Week 8- Oct 13 via Zoom	Homework due Oct 20
<p>Reading discussion Set 4 1) <i>Foreword, Introduction, and Recharging Internationalism</i> by Aronoff, Battistoni, Cohen, and Riofrancos. 2) <i>A Worker’s Green New Deal</i> by Henry. 3) <i>Just Transition Factsheet</i>.</p> <p>----- 4:15 Break ----- 4:30 – 5:30 Climates of Inequality Presentation by Jose Bravo from Just Transition Alliance</p> <p>Facilitators: Working Group 3</p>	<p>To do: -Organize your field notes and/or images from the second Story Circle.</p> <p>-Then highlight what accounts/narratives, and images connect food traditions & cultural identity with food & land justice, in/migration, labor, health & COVID-19, and environmental/climate justice.</p> <p>Submit Letter 2 to your Instructor- See Prompts Sheet</p> <p>Complete First Peer Evaluation.</p>

Week 9- Oct 20	Homework due Oct 27
<p>Field Notes and Images Discussion ----- Break ----- Drawing on the community stories collected (from your field notes), start shaping what your group wants to communicate using the tool your group selected. Develop outline.</p>	<p>Read Set 5 (15 pages) 1) <i>Water Protectors Hold Their Ground In Wild Rice Country</i> by LaDuke. 2) <i>Chicago activists end hunger strike against recycling plant...</i> by Moore. 3) <i>Running out of water: how climate change fuels a crisis in the US west</i> by Deaton and Flin. 4) <i>A Hotter Future is Certain, Climate Panel Warns. But How Hot It is Up to Us</i> by Plumer and Fountain.</p> <p>Complete Readings’ Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p> <p>Finalize your group story outline to present in class.</p>

Week 10- Oct 27	Homework due Nov 3
<p>Reading discussion Set 5</p> <p>1) <i>Water Protectors Hold Their Ground In Wild Rice Country</i> by LaDuke.</p> <p>2) <i>Chicago activists end hunger strike against recycling plant...</i> by Moore.</p> <p>3) <i>Running out of water: how climate change fuels a crisis in the US west</i> by Deaton and Flin.</p> <p>4) <i>A Hotter Future is Certain, Climate Panel Warns. But How Hot It is Up to Us</i> by Plumer and Fountain.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Break</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Milestone #1- Each group presents their story outline.</p>	<p>Read Set 6 (87 short pages)</p> <p>1) <i>The Battle for Paradise</i> by Naomi Klein.</p> <p>2) <i>US Media Depictions of Climate Migrants: The Recent Case of the Puerto Rican “Exodus”</i> by Lloréns.</p> <p>Complete Readings’ Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p> <p>Review</p> <p>Mayagüez, Puerto Rico story https://climatesofinequality.org/story/aftermaths-community-responses-to-climate-disaster/</p>

Week 11- Nov 3 via Zoom	Homework due Nov 10
<p>Reading discussion Set 6</p> <p>1) <i>The Battle for Paradise</i> by Naomi Klein.</p> <p>2) <i>US Media Depictions of Climate Migrants: The Recent Case of the Puerto Rican “Exodus”</i> by Lloréns.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>4:15 Break</p> <p>-----</p> <p>4:30 – 5:30 Climates of Inequality Presentation by Prof. Ricia Chansky and students from University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez “Mi María: Puerto Rico after the Hurricane” Project.</p> <p>Facilitators: Group 2</p>	<p>Read Set 7</p> <p>1) Selected readings from <i>All We Can Do</i>. TBD</p> <p>Complete Readings’ Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p> <p>Review</p> <p>Newark, NJ story https://climatesofinequality.org/story/building-resistance-in-a-burdened-community/</p>

Week 12- Nov 10 Via Zoom	Homework due Nov 17
<p>Reading discussion Set 7</p> <p>1) Selected readings from <i>All We Can Do</i>.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>4:15 Break</p> <p>-----</p> <p>4:30 – 5:30 Climates of Inequality Presentation by Maria Lopez Nuñez from Iron Bound</p> <p>Facilitators: Group 1</p>	<p>Read Set 8</p> <p>1) Selected readings from <i>All We Can Do</i>. TBD</p> <p>Complete Readings’ Observations/Questions for Discussion. USE ROQ TEMPLATE</p> <p>Work on your group story/communications tool.</p>

Week 13- Nov 17	Homework due Dec 1
Reading discussion Set 8 1) Selected readings from <i>All We Can Do</i> . ----- Break ----- Milestone #2- Each group gives an update on their story.	Work on your group story/communications tool. Submit Letter 3 to your Instructor- See Prompts Sheet

Week 14- Nov 24 NO CLASS – Replaced by the Saturday Sept. 25th session.

Week 15- Dec 1	Homework due week of Finals
Work on your group story/communication tool.	Finalize your group story/communication tool. Complete second Peer Evaluation.

Week 16- Finals Date TBD
Milestone #3- Each group presents their story using the communication tool they selected. Second Peer Evaluation is due.

Working Groups

Group #1- Communication Tool: Infographics(s)

Susan Monge (grad), Pam Jones (grad), Ashley Maldonado (undergrad), Maciel Roa (undergrad)

Group #2- Communication Tool: Video(s)- Will have a mentor from HAL

Emma Acosta (grad), Alejandro Morales (grad), Carla Luna (undergrad), Leslie Vizuet (undergrad)

Group #3- Communication Tool: Podcast(s)- Will have a mentor from the LCC (Wilmarie Medina-Cortes)

Benjamin McManamon (grad), Erica Schoppe (grad), Charlotte Glasser (undergrad), Rosalinda Almanza (undergrad)

Group #4- Communication Tool: Zine, Comic Book, or Newsletter

Jordan Alcantar (grad), Cristal Ramirez (undergrad), Britanni Howard (undergrad), Isabel Tamas (undergrad)