

GES2360 Environmental Justice in Action
2nd Term, 2025-26
Shaw College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Venue: UCC_114
Time: Friday 2:30pm-5:15pm

1. Course Description

This course adopts a service-learning approach to examine how environmental sustainability can be achieved in a fair, just, and equitable manner through impactful community service. By applying the environmental justice framework, students will examine how social inequalities influence the processes and outcomes of sustainable development. The focus of student service will be on making an impact in one of the four dimensions of environmental justice: identifying distributional issues related to environmental impact, recognizing the environmental needs and voices of communities, fostering community participation in sustainability-promoting activities, and developing community capabilities for environmental resilience and sustainable growth. Course content will reference several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Expected Learning Goals

Learning Goals:	
1.	Understand the connection between social inequalities and environmental issues
2.	Experience-based learning of community environmental needs
3.	Promote community participation in sustainability activities
4.	Critical reflection on personal potential for sustainable development

3. Expected Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes:	Matching of Learning Goals:								
At the completion of the course, we expect students to be able to:	Each learning outcome matches with the following learning goals:								
<table><tr><td>(1) Recognize the intersection of social inequalities and environmental issues.</td></tr><tr><td>(2) Describe the environmental needs and voices of communities through service experience.</td></tr><tr><td>(3) Formulate collaborative plan to foster community participation in sustainability-promoting service activities.</td></tr><tr><td>(4) Reflect critically on their own potential and ability to achieve sustainable development goals.</td></tr></table>	(1) Recognize the intersection of social inequalities and environmental issues.	(2) Describe the environmental needs and voices of communities through service experience.	(3) Formulate collaborative plan to foster community participation in sustainability-promoting service activities.	(4) Reflect critically on their own potential and ability to achieve sustainable development goals.	<table><tr><td>Learning Outcome 1: √ LG 1</td></tr><tr><td>Learning Outcome 2: √ LG 2</td></tr><tr><td>Learning Outcome 3: √ LG 3</td></tr><tr><td>Learning Outcome 4: √ LG 4</td></tr></table>	Learning Outcome 1: √ LG 1	Learning Outcome 2: √ LG 2	Learning Outcome 3: √ LG 3	Learning Outcome 4: √ LG 4
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Learning Outcome 4: √ LG 4									

4. Course Schedule

Teaching Week	Date	Activity	Topic
1	Jan 9	Lecture	Introduction (Venue: Classroom)
2	Jan 16	Lecture	Acting through the lens of “environmental justice” (Venue: Classroom)
3	Jan 23	Lecture	Can we save our environment through incremental reform? (Venue: Classroom)
4	Jan 30	Guided community study	Human library @ Branches of Hope Migrant Voices & Environmental Vulnerabilities (Venue: 29 Burrows Street, Wan Chai)
5	Feb 6	Interactive tutorial	Planning the student-initiated service learning (Venue: Classroom)
6	Feb 13 (Tentative 14:00 – 17:30)	Guided community study	T-PARK Visit: Waste-to-Energy and Technological Solutions. Discussion: Who Benefits? Who Pays? (Venue: Tuen Mun)
7	Feb 20	N/A	Lunar New Year Vacation
8	Feb 27	Lecture	Why do we have non-stop production and insatiable needs? (Venue: Classroom)
9	Mar 6	N/A	Reading week
10	Mar 13	Service learning (3 hours in the afternoon)	Service learning at Feeding HK – Day 1 (Venue: Yau Tong Industrial City, Kowloon)
11	Mar 20	Interactive tutorial (Follow-up guidance on student-initiated)	Preparation and Materials Needed (Venue: Classroom)
12	Mar 23 – Mar 31	Service learning (3 hours)	Student-initiated service-learning project * (Format: Students will carry out their service-learning project independently at a site of their choice)
13	Apr 3	N/A	Good Friday
14	Apr 10	Lecture	Towards a Post-Growth and Just Society (Venue: Classroom)

15	Apr 17	Interactive tutorial	Group Presentation (Venue: Classroom)
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* Most activities, including lectures, guided community study, interactive tutorials, and service learning at Feeding HK, will be led or facilitated by the lecturer. In mid-to-late March, your group will independently carry out a 3-hour, student-initiated service-learning project at a site of your choice. The lecturer will provide guidance during interactive tutorials before this activity.

5. Learning Activities

	Lecture		Community Guided Study		Service Learning and Interactive tutorial	
	in-class	out-class	in-class	out-class	in-class	out-class
Time	18 hours in total	0 hours in total	0 hours in total	6 hours in total	0 hours in total	12 hours in total
Attendance	Mandatory			Mandatory		Mandatory
Matching with Learning Outcomes (LO)	✓ LO1 ✓ LO2 ✓ LO3 ✓ LO4			✓ LO1 ✓ LO2 ✓ LO4		✓ LO1 ✓ LO2 ✓ LO3 ✓ LO4

I. Lecture and Interactive Tutorial

Lectures and interactive tutorials will be held in the classroom on campus. The goal of these activities is to equip students with essential tools to understand issues in environmental sustainability and justice. The interactive tutorials will also help students plan and implement service learning.

II. Community Guided Study

The course instructor will lead students into the community to explore various local environmental issues, putting classroom learning into a real-life context.

III. Service Learning

Service learning is an important part of this course. In early February, the lecturer will help students plan their service-learning projects in class. Groups of five students will then submit their service-learning project proposals in mid-February. The student-initiated service-learning projects will be implemented between mid-March and late March and are expected to last approximately 3 hours. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in a local environmental NGO and learn through service. The service at the NGO will take place in mid-March, lasting about 3 hours.

6. Assessment Scheme

Assessment Component & Weight	Description and Purpose	Learning Outcomes
Service-learning written proposal (10%) #	Students will form groups of five and implement a student-initiated service-learning project in March. The group will have to submit a proposal after the first interactive tutorial. The due date is on February 15 (Sunday). The written proposal should outline the proposed project. Students are encouraged to reference one or more SDGs in their project. The service should aim to impact or change a designated community, such as our campus, with reference to the stated SDG(s). Marks will be given on a group basis. Length: 600 words in English. The reference list is excluded from the word count.	1. √ LO1 2. √ LO2 3. √ LO3
Service-learning performance (20%)	The overall performance of each student during service learning, including both service at the NGO and the student-initiated service-learning project, will be evaluated. Collaborative skills with groupmates will also be assessed. Marks will be given on an individual basis.	1. √ LO1 2. √ LO2 3. √ LO3
Service-learning final presentation (15%)	Students will give a 30-minute presentation at the end of the term to share the results and experiences of the student-initiated service-learning project. The content of the presentation will be evaluated as a group (10%). Presentation skills will be evaluated individually (5%).	1. √ LO1 2. √ LO2 3. √ LO3
Service-learning final report (35%) #	After the presentation, students will summarize the student-initiated service-learning project in a written report. Students are encouraged to include visual records of the project with appropriate descriptions and explanations. The due date is on April 30 (Thursday). Marks will be given on a group basis. Length: The report should not exceed 10 pages, including images and references. The written portion should be 1200 words in English. The reference list is excluded from the word count.	1. √ LO1 2. √ LO2 3. √ LO3

Assessment Component & Weight	Description and Purpose	Learning Outcomes
Reflective journal (20%) #	Each student should submit a reflective journal in early-May. Based on what they have learned from this course, students will reflect on their potential and difficulties in achieving the SDG(s) they set in the service-learning project. The due date is on May 4 (Monday). Marks will be given on an individual basis. Length: 1200 words in English. The reference list is excluded from the word count.	1. √ LO2 2. √ LO4

All written assignments should use **APA style** with **Times New Roman font (12 point)** and **1.5 line spacing**. A soft copy of the paper and signed VeriGuide declaration form should be submitted to **Blackboard before 23:59** on the due date. (Without prior approval, 5% from the paper total will be deducted for each 24-hour delay after the deadline. No submission will be accepted 7 days beyond the due date.) For easy management of your submission files, please name the file in this format: “your full name-assignment type”; for example: “Chan Tai Man-Reflective Journal” and “Chan Tai Man-Reflective Journal VeriGuide form.”

Grade Descriptors

Grade descriptors for this course are as follows:

Grade A :	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
Grade A- :	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
Grade B :	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, or high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
Grade C :	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
Grade D :	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
Grade F :	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirement.

7. Required readings and other recommended readings/ learning resources:

Introduction

Reading(s):

Liu, John Chung-En. 2021. "Saving the Environment" in Chapter 15 in *Sociology in Action* (2nd Ed). Sage.

Supplementary Reading(s):

Dietz, Thomas, Rachael L. Shwom, and Cameron T. Whitley. 2020. "Climate change and society." *Annual Review of Sociology* 46: 135-158.

Naomi Klein. 2014. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate*. Simon & Schuster, New York.

Acting through the lens of "environmental justice"

Reading(s):

Schlosberg, D. 2007. "Distribution and Beyond: Conceptions of Justice in Contemporary Theory and Practice." Chapter 2 in *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements and Nature*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Supplementary Reading(s):

Malin, Stephanie. 2015. *The Price of Nuclear Power: Uranium Communities and Environmental Justice*. Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Givens, Jennifer E., Xiaorui Huang, and Andrew K. Jorgenson. 2019. "Ecologically unequal exchange: A theory of global environmental injustice." *Sociology Compass*.

Anguelovski, I., Connolly, J. and Brand, A.L. 2018. "From landscapes of utopia to the margins of the green urban life: For whom is the new green city?" *City* 22(3): 417-436.

Can we save our environment through incremental reform?

Reading(s):

Sutton, Philip. 2007. "A Global Environment." Chapter 9 in *The Environment: A Sociological Introduction*. Polity Press: Cambridge.

Supplementary Reading(s):

York, Richard and Eugene A. Rosa. 2003. "Key challenges to ecological modernization theory." *Organization & Environment* 16: 273-288.

Jorgenson, Andrew K., and Brett Clark. 2012. "Are the economy and the environment decoupling? A comparative international study, 1960–2005." *American Journal of Sociology* 188(1): 1-44.

Why do we have non-stop production and insatiable needs?

Reading(s):

Carolan, Michael. 2017. "Political Economy: Making Markets Fair and Sustainable." Chapter 10 in *Society and the Environment: Pragmatic Solutions to Ecological Issues* (2nd Ed). Boulder: Westview Press.

Supplementary Reading(s):

Obach, Brian K. 2007. "Theoretical Interpretations of the Growth in Organic Agriculture: Agricultural Modernization or an Organic Treadmill?" *Society & Natural Resources* 20(3): 229-244.

Towards a Post-Growth and Just Society**Reading(s):**

Carolan, Michael. 2017. "Inequality and Growth: Prosperity for All." Chapter 12 in *Society and the Environment: Pragmatic Solutions to Ecological Issues* (2nd Ed). Boulder: Westview Press.

Supplementary Reading(s):

Jackson, Tim. 2009. "The Dilemma of Growth." Chapter 4 in *Prosperity Without Growth*. UK Sustainable Development Commission.

8. Feedback for Evaluation

- a. Course and teaching evaluation survey will be conducted in the second last week of the course. Students are reminded of their responsibility and right to give feedback to facilitate enhancement of the course.
- b. Students are welcome to give feedbacks to the course teacher at any time in person or through emails.

9. Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.
- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.

Assignments without the properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

Guideline about plagiarism

Any assignment (i.e., project, essay, or paper) that shows evidence of plagiarism will be marked down severely. In simple terms, plagiarism is copying passages and/or ideas from other sources without referencing those sources. Moreover, when you report someone else's ideas/findings you must put it in your own words and not merely copy full sentences or parts of sentences from the source article. It is your responsibility as a scholar-in-training to cite the ideas and work of others correctly.

In all cases of plagiarism, the student's name will be recorded in a central database maintained by the general office. If a student is referred for plagiarism in more than one course, or more than one instance in the same course, the student's case will be forwarded to the university administration for follow-up action. If the charge is established, the penalty guidelines are as follows:

Plagiarism	Minimum Penalties
First offence	i) One demerit; ii) A mark of zero for that component of the course; and iii) Completion of relevant training in academic honesty
Second of further offence (and a first offence that is serious as decided by the disciplinary committee concerned / the FTP Committee)	i) Two demerit (of which one will remain in the University's record permanently and one is reviewable) and; ii) A failure grade for the course concerned

Detecting plagiarism

The Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning requires that all student assignments in undergraduate programmes should be submitted via VeriGuide. This policy will only apply to assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based (i.e., excluding calculations in science, brief laboratory reports, drawings in fine arts and architecture, etc.).

- Each student must upload a soft copy of the completed assignment to the plagiarism detection engine VeriGuide, at <https://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/>
- The system will issue a receipt which also contains a declaration of honesty, which is the same as that in [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_hm_files_\(2013-14\)/p10.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_hm_files_(2013-14)/p10.htm)
- The declaration should be signed, and the receipt stapled to a hard copy of the assignment upon submission.
- Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers.

10. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Use of some AI tools is allowed

Students may use some AI tools in some in-class activities and assignments on the following conditions:

1. The AI tools to be used are restricted to the following tools: ChatGPT;
2. The specified AI tools will only be allowed for the following types of class activities and assignments: written assignments;
3. Collaboration of AI tools is only allowed for the following purposes / tasks: ask for examples and suggestions of literature;
4. The input contributed by the AI tools are properly acknowledged and cited ; and
5. The input together with the prompts used to elicit the AI responses should be highlighted or included as appendices wherever appropriate.

Acknowledging support from AI tools

Students are required to acknowledge all functional uses of a generative AI tool and cite it when they paraphrase, quote, or incorporate into their own work any content (whether it is text, image, data, or other format) that was created by it.

- i. An example of acknowledgement

'I acknowledge the use of (name of AI tool – e.g. ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>) to (specify the support, e.g. plan my essay, generate some ideas for the content, ask for examples of data collection

instruments, get the dates of historical events, etc.).

ii. An example of citation
OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT* (Mar 20 version). <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

(Students are reminded that due to the rapid developments of generative AI tools, some citation formats may be updated regularly.)

iii. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool in their work

"The following text was generated by an AI tool / language model (ChatGPT):"

[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT here.]

iv. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool and the prompts that were used to elicit the text from the AI tool

"[The prompt], as generated by an AI language model (ChatGPT):"

[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT in response to the prompt.]

Students are reminded to learn and use the AI tools responsibly and ethically and be aware of the limitations.

Students are reminded to clarify with the course teacher and obtain permission if necessary when in doubt.