**Academic course: 2020-2021**

**WORKSHOP**

**Arts Expressions in Environmental Justice**

**Room:** TBC (at ICTA-UAB)

**Facilitators**

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**Objectives**

In this course, we will introduce the role and potential of artistic expressions in research and action around Environmental Justice and share some practical tools, based on artistic expressions, to foster collective explorations and dialogues about Environmental Justice. Through an experiential, embodied approach based on participatory theatre and process work, we will explore the conceptual notions of environmental conflict, roles, strategies of resistance and power relations. What can the arts bring to the understanding and enactment of these concepts? What needs and challenges do we face when engaging with these art-based approaches?

By the end of the course, you should have gained some perspective on the potential and possible applications of participatory and arts-based methodologies when working with groups in educational, research and/or activist contexts related to Environmental Justice.

**Structure**

The course consists of an experiential workshop, divided in two sessions of four-hour each. The sessions will take place in two consecutive days to foster an intensive format.

During the workshop, we will follow a *reflection-in action* approach, through which you will be involved in practical activities, combined with group discussion and moments of individual reflection about the methodologies proposed. By applying this sequence, we expect to facilitate a learning process through which you can directly experience with the methodologies proposed and generate critical reflections from this experience and guided group discussion.

All articles and reading materials for the class are uploaded in The  Campus Virtual and will stay there up to three months after the end of the class, after which it will be deleted. The course does not require you to buy books, go to the library or download anything.

**Session 1, Feb 22th**

This session will provide a conceptual overview of the landscape of arts-based approaches and cultural expressions in environmental justice and will share and analyse examples taken from academic, educational and activist settings. Once a common ground is set, we will experience some practical exercises and proposals from body movement, process work and Image theatre to collectively reflect about and discuss issues of power and strategies within environmental conflicts.

**Session 2, Feb 23rd**

This session will engage students on hands-on creative work through the analysis of selected environmental conflicts applying body movement and improvisation as well as tools from Forum theatre.

**READING (for both sessions)**

(excerpts from) Serafini, P. (2018). *Performance action: The politics of art activism*. Routledge.

**Requirements**

Comfortable clothing is highly recommended

Come with the will to participate and build together

**Evaluation**

The Arts EJ module will be evaluated through two items: i) student’s involvement during the workshop (including individual and group work) and ii) a final project, shared with the other courses from the module. The table below summarises the evaluation items and their percentage of the grade (in grey, those related to the Arts EJ module):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Part of EJ module | Assignment | Percent of module grade | Total module grade |
| Global EJ | Session presentations and discussions | 50% | 20% |
| Group work | 50% |
| Urban EJ | Session presentation and discussion | 35% | 20% |
| Group work: collective presentation | 45% |
| Group work: collective text | 20% |
| Arts EJ | Active participation during the workshop (involvement, reflexive contributions, open attitude) | 50% | 20% |
| Group work: collective performative exercice (in class) | 50% |
| All | Final module project |  | 40% |

For the final project of the Environmental Justice (EJ) Module, students must choose one of the following three options to be developed as their final assignment. This will correspond to 40% of the Module grade:

**1) Upload a case in the EJAtlas.**

Description from Mariana

**2) Write a maximum 1500 word essay using Urban and Global  EJ and/or Global EJ and/or Art expressions in EJ  literatures.**

For this assignment option, we ask that you position yourself within one of the key debates of the readings from the whole EJ module (max 1,500 words) and reflect on it from the point of view of degrowth politics and practice. In this essay you can work solely with a chosen group of readings, or you can (also) bring in examples that you know from your life/work experience. You can use different formats to communicate your arguments complementary to text and scholarly analysis. This can be, for example, a photograph, a drawing, a poem, or a story of yours. You can (also/instead) use a piece of artistic expression that inspired you and which you can connect to Environmental Justice claims/activism/experiences (e.g. a photograph from a newspaper, a video of a song, a graffiti you saw, a book you read). The best three essays will be eligible for publication in the [Undisciplined Environments blog](https://undisciplinedenvironments.org/).

Examples or materials to draw from (more to be added):

- Previous essays by students in Political Ecology & EJ: <https://undisciplinedenvironments.org/category/series/world-press-photographies/>

- A cartoon on “The Life and Times of Red Mud Reservoir № VII”: [https://english.atlatszo.hu/2020/06/30/the-life-and-times-of-red-mud-reservoir-%e2%84%96-vii/](https://english.atlatszo.hu/2020/06/30/the-life-and-times-of-red-mud-reservoir-%E2%84%96-vii/)

Essay evaluation criteria:

* Strength and effective development of the arguments used to support your position
* Clear analytical connections to appropriate EJ and EJ related concepts
* Effective use of secondary information for both descriptive and analytical purposes
* Ability to synthesise and make skillful use of information from various sources
* Communication (clarity, concision)

If you bring more creative/artistic elements into your essay (drawing, creative writing etc.), it will be evaluated in coordination with the Arts-module tutors for: style, communication/translation of EJ issues and concepts, and connection with EJ via the accompanying text.

**3) Creation of a group performance (4 students per group maximum) using theatre or other art expressions to analyze and communicate a selected environmental conflict.**

The resulting performance will be video recorded and/or performed in front of a selected audience (depending on the global situation and the particular interest of the group).

Evaluation criteria:

* Creativity and originality of the proposal
* Capacity of the performative piece to:
	+ integrate different sources of knowledge and expression (beyond rational discourse)
	+ communicate the most relevant aspects of the case study (actors, roles, power relations and dynamics, strategies or resistance etc)
	+ embody a critical analysis of the selected case study
* Collaborative work: distribution of task and roles

**Examples of materials:**

* Summary of the educational project: Transnational expressions of the Environmental Justice Movement [‘Expresiones Transculturales del Movimiento de Justicia Ambiental’] [vide](http://docus-ecoeco.net/video-practicas/)o
* Audiovisual productions around issues of environmental justice (Filastine and Nova) <https://www.filastine.com/video>
* Artivism initiatives from art not oil collective: <https://artnotoil.org.uk>
* Yaku Canto: Indigenous collective songs related to nature defense <http://www.ballenitasi.org/2011/08/yaku-canto-canciones-de-resistencia-por.html>

**Additional online resources and literature**

We recommend you to watch this short [video](http://docus-ecoeco.net/video-practicas/) about our methodological approach, as applied in the project ‘*Expresiones Transculturales del Movimiento de Justicia Ambiental’*.

You can also access this [pedagogical guide](http://docus-ecoeco.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/FichasDidacticas.pdf) that was elaborated as part of the same project, which further describes some of the approaches that will be shared.

**Further additional readings:**

Boal, A., 2002. Juegos para Actores y no Actores. Barcelona, Alba Editorial.

Brossmann, J., Islar, M. 2020. Living degrowth? Investigating degrowth practices through performative methods. *Sustainability Science* 15, 917–930. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00756-y

Childs, J. 2020. Performing ‘blue degrowth’: critiquing seabed mining in Papua New Guinea through creative practice. *Sustainability Science* 15, 117–129. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00752-2

Galafassi, D., Kagan, S., Milkoreit, M., Heras, M.; Bilodeau, C., Juárez Bourke, S., Merrie, A., Guerrero, L., Pétursdóttir, G., Tàbara, J.D. (2018). ‘Raising the temperature’: the arts in a warming planet. Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability. 31, pp. 71 - 79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2017.12.010>

Galafassi, D., Tàbara, J.D. & Heras, M. (2018) Restoring our senses, restoring the Earth. Fostering imaginative capacities through the arts for envisioning climate transformations. Elementa Science Anthropology. 6 - 1, pp. 69. <http://doi.org/10.1525/elementa.330>

Heras, M. & Tàbara, JD. (2014). Let’s play transformations! Performative methods for sustainability. Sustainability Science. 9 - 3, pp. 379 - 398. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-014-0245-9>

Heras, M. & Tàbara, JD. (2014). Conservation Theatre: Mirroring Experiences and Performing Stories in Community Management of Natural Resources. Society and Natural Resources. pp. 948 - 964. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2015.1095375>

Leavy, P., (Ed.) 2017. Handbook of arts-based research. New York, Guilford Publications.