Environmental Justice and Milwaukee’s Built Environment

Spring 2020. Arch 790-002, Class Number: 55827
Instructor: Arijit Sen, senA@uwm.edu Wednesday 1:30PM

What is this class about? How is injustice reproduced in the everyday world around us, and how do we fight such pernicious forms of inequity? This class examines discrimination around housing and food in Milwaukee as important, but often overlooked, forms of prejudice and oppression in the city. We will read background writings — both scholarly and popular texts — around lack of access to housing and food as forms of injustice. Then we will turn to real-world examples around us in Milwaukee’s marginalized neighborhoods: We will hear and analyze extensive oral histories collected over the last 7 years, from residents of Washington Park and Sherman Park neighborhoods. We will examine quantitative and qualitative data from local, city, and state archives to explore how marginalization is historically produced by social, political, and economic forces. We will also explore how residents resist and fight back; how they become agents of change.

What will you produce? The final class project will be a small exhibit and accompanying research monograph on local case studies around food or housing injustice. The Spring 2020 student projects will be part of a local exhibit on environmental justice in Milwaukee. This exhibit will be displayed alongside a national touring display titled Climates of Inequality that will open in Milwaukee in Summer 2020 during the DNC convention. The Climates of Inequality project brings together over 500 students and issue organizations in 22 communities. The project launched in Newark, NJ, in October 2019. UWM students have contributed to this project with a story titled Urban Blight as Environmental Justice (https://tinyurl.com/y3mj7ju).

What will you learn? In addition to reading contemporary scholarship and case studies around environmental justice you will learn how to embark on research and analysis of cities, buildings, people, and urban social processes. You will experiment with visual storytelling and creating digital and physical exhibits.

Please contact Arijit Sen at senA@uwm.edu if you need further information.