
Professional Certificate in Environmental Journalism

Environmental Justice Reporting

Air Quality Index (AQI): A numerical scale used to report air quality to the public. The AQI translates air pollutant measurements into categories that help people understand the health risks associated with current air quality levels.

Biodiversity: The variety of different plants, animals, and microorganisms that make up our planet's many ecosystems. Biodiversity includes genetic diversity within species, diversity between species, and diversity of ecosystems.

Cap-and-Trade: A market-based approach to controlling pollution by setting a limit (cap) on the amount of pollutants that can be emitted and allowing companies to trade emissions allowances within that limit.

Carbon Footprint: The total amount of greenhouse gases produced to directly and indirectly support human activities, usually expressed in equivalent tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Circular Economy: An economic system that is restorative and regenerative by design, aiming to keep products and materials in use for as long as possible, eliminate waste through the superior design of materials, loops, and systems, and regenerate natural systems.

Climate Change: Long-term changes in temperatures and weather patterns, largely caused by human activities that increase the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Climate Justice: The recognition that the impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed and that those most affected by climate change are often those who have contributed the least to the problem. Climate justice seeks to address the social and environmental injustices that arise from climate change.

Degrowth: A political, economic, and social movement that advocates for a deliberate downscaling of production and consumption with the aim of maintaining a high quality of life for all, while reducing environmental degradation and social inequalities.

Eco-system Services: The benefits that humans derive from nature, such as clean water, food, timber, fiber, medicinal resources, and climate regulation.

Eco-tourism: A form of tourism that focuses on responsible travel to natural areas, conserving the environment, and improving the well-being of local people.

Electric Vehicle (EV): A vehicle that is powered by electricity, rather than gasoline or diesel. EVs are typically recharged from an external source of electricity.

Embodied Energy: The total amount of energy required to produce a product or service, including the energy required to extract, process, transport, and manufacture the product, as well as the energy required to dispose of it at the end of its life.

Emissions Trading: A market-based approach to controlling pollution that allows companies to trade emissions allowances within a set limit.

Endangered Species: A species that is at risk of becoming extinct due to habitat loss, hunting, or other factors.

Energy Efficiency: Using less energy to perform the same task, thereby reducing energy costs and environmental impacts.

Energy Poverty: The inability of individuals, households, or communities to access or afford the energy services they need to meet their basic human needs.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): A process of evaluating the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.

Environmental Justice: The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Environmental Racism: The disproportionate exposure of communities of color to environmental hazards, such as toxic waste facilities, polluting industries, and contaminated water.

Fossil Fuels: Fuels derived from the ancient remains of plants and animals, such as coal, oil, and natural gas.

Fracking: A process of drilling and injecting fluid into the ground to fracture shale rocks and release natural gas.

Green Economy: An economy that aims for sustainable development without degrading the environment, and that aims for social equity.

Greenhouse Effect: The warming of Earth's surface caused by the trapping of heat by greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs): Gases in the atmosphere that trap heat from the sun, leading to a warming of Earth's surface. The main greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O).

Green Jobs: Jobs that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment, in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in emerging green sectors like renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Hydropower: Electricity generated from the movement of water, typically through the use of dams.

Indigenous Knowledge: The knowledge, practices, and beliefs of indigenous peoples, often developed over centuries of living in specific environments.

Just Transition: A framework for transitioning to a sustainable economy that prioritizes social justice, workers' rights, and community involvement.

Landfills: Sites for the disposal of waste, typically in the form of garbage or other non-organic materials.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA): An analysis of the environmental impacts of a product or service over its entire life cycle, from raw material extraction to disposal.

Natural Capital: The stock of natural resources, such as forests, water, and minerals, that provide benefits to society and the economy.

Natural Gas: A fossil fuel consisting primarily of methane, often used for heating, cooking, and electricity generation.

Nuclear Energy: Electricity generated from the fission of atomic nuclei, typically in specially designed power plants.

Ocean Acidification: The decrease in the pH of the ocean due to the absorption of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere.

Organic Agriculture: A production system that avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms, and instead relies on natural processes and ecological principles.

Photovoltaics (PV): The conversion of light into electricity using solar cells.

Renewable Energy: Energy derived from resources that are naturally replenished, such as sunlight, wind, and water.

Recycling: The process of converting waste materials into new products, reducing the need for raw materials and the amount of waste sent to landfills.

Renewable Energy Certificate (REC): A tradable commodity that represents proof that one megawatt-hour (MWh) of renewable energy has been generated and fed into the electricity grid.

Resilience: The ability of a system, community, or society to withstand, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses, such as those caused by climate change.

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, taking into account social, economic, and environmental factors.

Urban Heat Island: A phenomenon where urban areas experience higher temperatures than surrounding rural areas, due to the concentration of buildings, pavement, and other heat-absorbing materials.

Veganism: A lifestyle that avoids the use of animal products, including food, clothing, and other consumer goods.

Waste-to-Energy: The conversion of waste materials into energy, typically through incineration or anaerobic digestion.

Water Footprint: The total amount of freshwater used to produce a product or service, including the water used to grow the raw materials and the water used in manufacturing and processing.

Zero Waste: A philosophy that aims to reduce waste to the absolute minimum, by avoiding, reducing, reusing, and recycling materials, and by designing products and systems to minimize waste.