

Summer 2026
SOWK 588
Week 06

Social Work, Policy Practice, & Environmental Justice

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at Heritage University

Week Six Plan

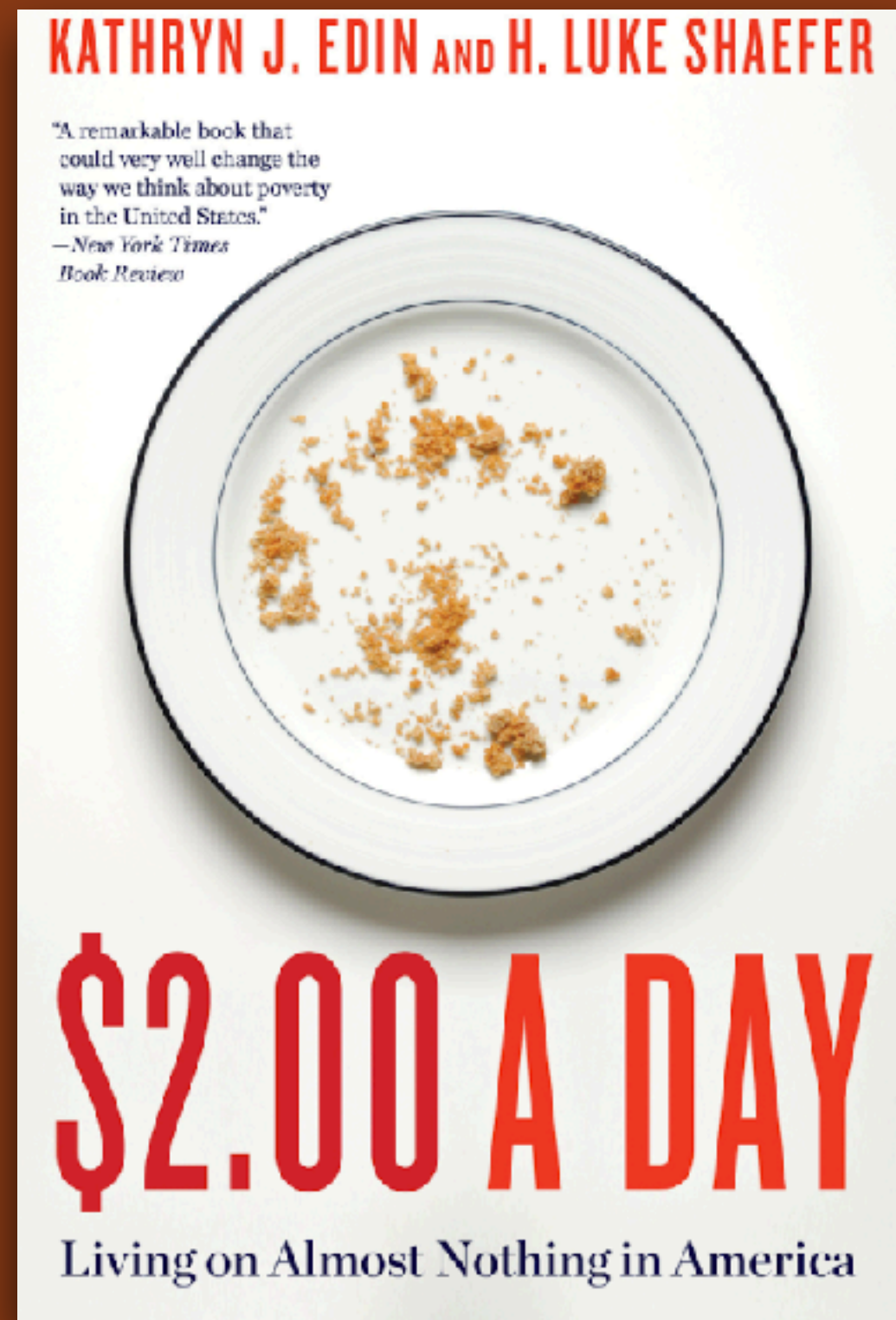
Agenda

- Tasks this week
- Landscape of environmental justice

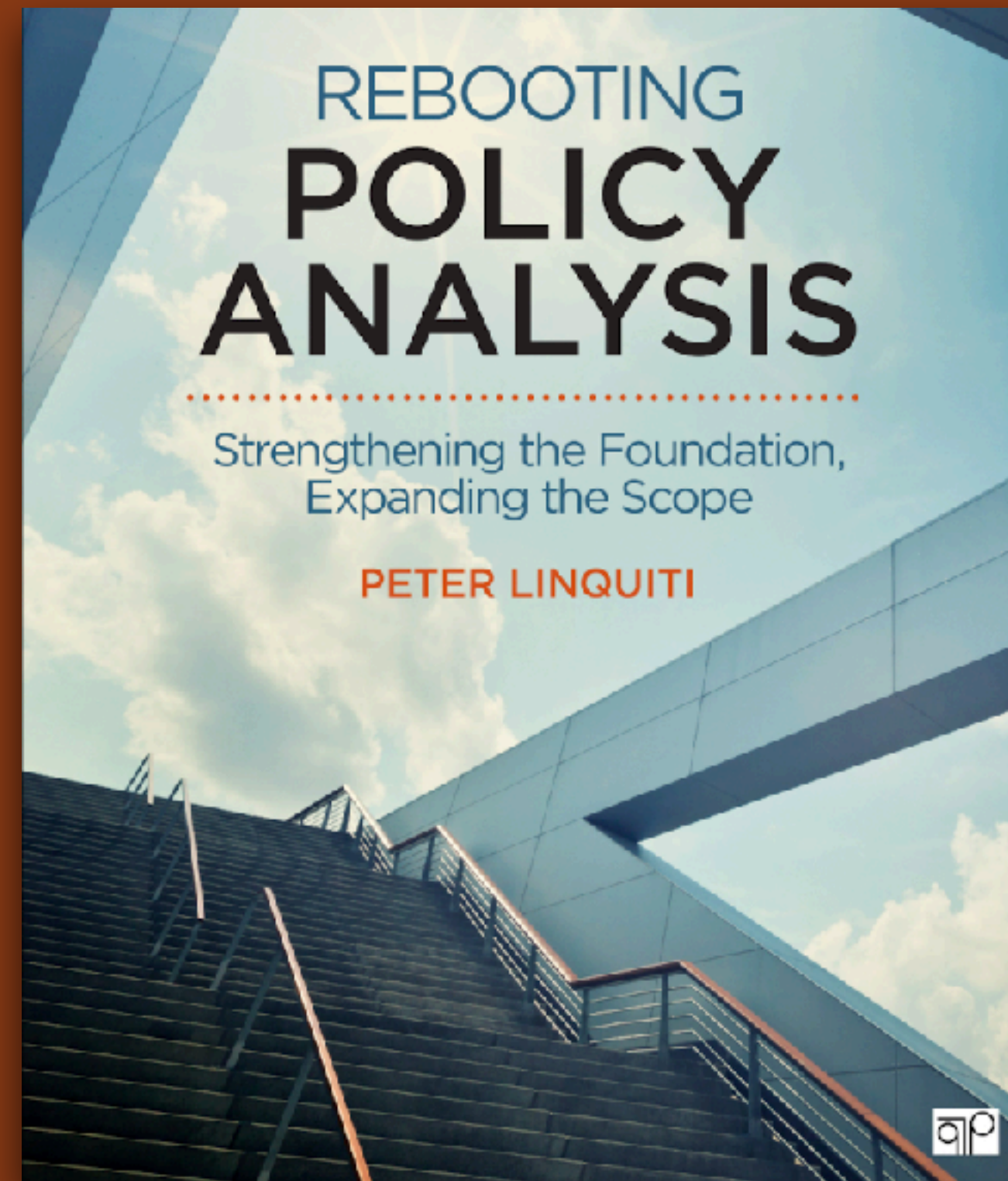
Learning Objective

Define environmental justice.

Week 6 Tasks



Edin and Shafer (2016)
Chapter 5: A World Apart



Linquiti (2022) Chapters 8 and 9:
The Equity Lens and The Economic
Lens

4 Replies

Glimpses of a World Apart
Chapter Eight and Nine Discussion Questions
Lens of Equity and Reflecting on the Universal
Declaration of Human Rights
Economic Lens and Policy Analysis

Submit Assignment
03a Policy Analysis
Paper

Worlds Apart

The fields that Martha gazes out on are those where her father spent his lifetime as a farmhand. Martha's front porch is so close to these fields, in fact, that on days when the fluorescent-yellow-and-black planes come at dawn to dust the crops with pesticides, they shower her building, too. On those mornings, the sky remains dark long after sunrise. On some early summer days like today, she can sometimes see dirty plumes of smoke rising from red flames all across the horizon as planters burn their fields in preparation for crop rotation. **All through the growing season, Martha, her two daughters, and their neighbors complain of a unique local ailment—an upper-respiratory condition folks refer to as 'Delta crud,' which many believe is brought on by these farming practices. The symptoms are wheezing and nausea, sometimes followed by chronic congestion.**

(Emphises added, Edin & Shaefer, 2016, pp. 129-130)

Crop Duster in Action



Huff-Daland Duster 1925-ca.1948

Note, photograph from Delta Flight Museum (n.d.).
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Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

(U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2020, para. 1)

Note that in 2025, the EPA dismantled its Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights, laid off roughly 280 staff, and took down its front-facing environmental justice content (Bogardus, 2025)

A Landscape of Environmental Justice Problems

Pesticide Drift

Williams (2018) frames it as agro-environmental racism in Mississippi.

Food Desserts/Apartheid

Limited access to nutritious food, often in urban and often in communities of color, where access to affordable, nutritious food is limited (Washington as cited in Brones, 2018)

AI Data Centers

Repeating historical patterns of environmental racism (Pam, 2025)

Water Crises in Flint

Bullard (2026) described What happened in Flint is a blatant example of environmental injustice. The more information comes out, the clearer it is that this community was not treated according to the usual protocols. It was almost as if regulators didn't believe them and thought their health wasn't important.

Puerto Rico Beaches

Tax incentives have drawn wealthy outside investors who privatize beachfront access and displace local communities (Atiles, 2025).

"Cancer Alley," Louisiana

An 85-mile stretch of the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, home to over 200 petrochemical plants with some of the highest cancer risk in the country. Many of these plants sit directly on former plantation land and even retain the plantation names (Human Rights Watch, 2024)



Further Resources

- NASW page resources on Environmental Justice and Climate Change
- InSocialWork Ep. 189 (Environmental Justice) and Ep. 325 (Green Social Work and Environmental Justice)
- Data Tools and things like the EJScreen
- Climate Justice Alliance

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