

*Human Ecology Brown Bag
Series Presents*



**“Equity and the Sustainable
City: ‘Just Green’ or
‘Just and Green?’”**

Dr. Melanie McDermott

Assistant Research Professor, Department of Human Ecology and
Senior Researcher, Sustainability Institute, The College of NJ

In New Jersey, whereas ‘sustainability’ is often presumed to be the concern of affluent, primarily suburban, whites, ‘environmental justice’ powers the environmentalism of the urban, poor and brown. The most highly urbanized state in the nation, New Jersey is also highly socio-spatially segregated. Poverty, populations of color, and environmental burdens are concentrated in cities surrounded by green and leafy suburbs. This context provokes the question: does suburban ‘sustainability’ rest on urban environmental injustice?

Making racial equity integral to the concept and practice of sustainability requires these divergent movements and constituencies be brought together. This paper examines the case of Sustainable Jersey, a state-wide municipal sustainability certification program that has embarked upon such an effort. The first stage involves coming to shared conceptual clarity on what ‘sustainability’ and ‘equity’ mean and how they interrelate as social goals at different scales. You are invited to help think through how to operationalize this connection in our towns and cities in order to realize a future Garden State that is both just and green.

Melanie McDermott is Senior Researcher at the Sustainability Institute of The College of New Jersey. Her responsibilities include defining state and local sustainability goals and indicators and designing standards for the municipal certification program ‘Sustainable Jersey.’

At Rutgers, she is a Visiting Assistant Research Professor in the Department and an Associate member graduate faculty, Geography Department of Human Ecology. With graduate degrees in interdisciplinary social science (PhD., UC Berkeley) and forestry (MSc., Oxford), she draws on decades of experience in the U.S., Southeast Asia, southern Africa, and the Caribbean conducting and applying research on social equity and the environment in various contexts.

Location: Blake Hall, Rm. 131,
Cook Campus

Date: Wed., April 25th, 2018

Time: 12:30 to 2:00 PM