

CY PLAN 290

Planning for Social Justice: The Human Right to Water

Department of City & Regional Planning, UC Berkeley
Fall 2017, 3 units, Tu & Th 2:00–3:30 pm, Wurster Hall Room 106

Instructor: Professor Charisma Acey, 510-643-9658, charisma.acey@berkeley.edu

Office hours: Wed 11:00am – 2:00pm, Wurster Hall Room 312A (Schedule via <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/jitate>)

Course web site: <https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1465732>

In 2010, the United Nations passed resolution 64/292 recognizing the human right to water and sanitation (UNGA 2010). The explicit international recognition of the right to water and sanitation is significant in that it obligates nations to recognize safe water for human consumption primarily as a social good, a significant point of contention after decades of global water politics. However, there remains a large gap between the international human right to water and on-the-ground determinants of water access and reliability. How can the right to water turn from being an abstract legal principle into policies and interventions that can be implemented and measured?



The course is intended for graduate students with an interest in water planning and management who would like to explore this issue in a human rights framework. It is also open to graduate students with an interest in social justice and human rights who would like to explore how social and economic rights are implemented or how the human rights framework applies to “collective” goods such as water. The seminar will consider developments in the United States (e.g. California and Detroit) and countries that formally recognize the human right to water (which includes South Africa, Bolivia, Cambodia, Colombia, Panama, and Tunisia and India [through a Right to Life), among others) with a particular focus on the practical meaning of, and challenges of implementing, the human right to water. Topics for discussion will include obstacles to the justiciability of the human right to water, whether the human rights approach to water managements leads to a more equitable distribution of water, especially with respect to gender, whether it facilitates political support for infrastructure investments in poor regions of a country, and the compatibility of human rights and market-based mechanisms for water management such as trading water rights.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the normative dimensions of the human right to water and challenges in its implementation
- Identify how different societies around the globe grapple with the ethical, policy, and practical challenges presented by achieving the human right to water.
- Know ways in which planners and planning practice have succeeded in dismantling the policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose the needs of the disadvantaged.