

Christina L. Davis
Report on CHARTingII for Fall 2017
December 27, 2017

Courses Taught

The Survey of the African American Experience, AFRS 1501 (sections 11 and 12); and
Introduction to Africana Studies, AFRS 3102

Modules Used

Natural Hazards and Risks: Hurricanes, Unit 6
Introduction to Environmental Justice, Unit 1

Participating in the CHARTing II Project proved incredibly rewarding to the Africana Studies Program in general, and specially to students in two sections of the Survey of the African American Experience course and Introduction to Africana Studies. For the former course, students completed a modified version of Unit 6 of the Natural Hazards and Risks: Hurricanes module. The three-part assignment related to the CHARTing II initiative included a service learning opportunity—a marsh clean-up after Hurricane Irma. Secondly, a lecture from PI Dr. S. Ebanks related to the hurricane module required students to contemplate connections between race, region, and class in individuals' reasons to stay put despite evacuation warnings. Students then completed a three-page assignment on the film *When the Levees Broke*.

Each activity proved useful in getting students to be more mindful about their surroundings. After visiting and collecting trash on Savannah State's campus, numerous students expressed surprise about the amount of trash collected and vowed to start recycling. During our discussion of the Unit 6 module, students inserted their personal experiences since many followed evacuation orders for Hurricane Irma only to encounter worse weather condition than those in Savannah. Finally, students submitted three pages in response to questions that addressed Dr. Ebanks' lecture and issues raised in the film *When the Levees Broke*. In the class discussion and in the essays, students connected descriptions of individuals who did not evacuate as "refugees" to a key theme of the course, the lingering consequences of scientific racism.

The Introduction to Africana Studies course used Unit 1 of the Introduction to Environmental Justice module. The module forced students to think about the meaning of environmental justice and consider what hazards they may encounter. Students wrote response papers that required them to discuss environmental justice in the context of residential segregation in the aftermath of World War II. It directly tied to a segment of a film excerpt viewed in class, *Race: The Power of an Illusion, Part II*, that explores the ways governmental policies mapped environmental injustice and a glaring wealth gap based on race through residential covenants and redlining.

I plan to include geoscience assignments in my online and lecture AFRS 1501 courses in the Spring of 2018 and beyond. The nature of the modules will transition smoothly with other assignments in the online course. Now that I have completed Unit 6 of the Hurricanes module under Dr. Ebanks' direction, I am excited to implement it to my students. For a more impactful influence, I am working to edit one of the Africana Studies program service learning outcomes to reflect an increased attention to connections between race and spatial surroundings, residential

segregation, for example. This way the push to encourage students to think more about the environment will be a mainstay of the course.

To improve, I want to spend more time with the wealth of material on the InTeGrate website so that I can better connect environmental issues with topics covered in the Africana Studies Program, particularly the Survey of the African American Experience and Introduction to Africana Studies courses. As someone who once consider myself an avid advocate for the environment, I quickly learned just how little I understood about of waste I consume. In my personal life, I have initiated subtle changes to lessen the waste I produce that will grow over time. I strongly believe that participating in the CHARTingII Project positively impacted the habits of several students, just as it did mine. It is the type of initiative that can change the tide of global warming and protect countless elements of the natural environment and all its inhabitants, one incremental change at a time.

Students provided mixed reviews, as per the comments below. Some considered it an eye opener in terms of their everyday lives, while others described the benefit of new information. I have taken their most useful, and valid, critique for me to better connect the geoscience lessons to African American history by conducting additional research on ways environmental factors have shaped black history.

STUDENT COMMENTS:

Write at least 100 words to address the following prompts. Reflect on the inclusion of the geoscience element in the course. Do you think it will having lasting effects on your behaviors?

I would try to be a bit more detailed in how the geoscience aspect of the course directly reflects on us as African Americans. To do this, I would suggest you find some clues or reflections on how the Africans in the past had dealt with natural disasters and compare it to how we would handle it today or something like that.

The geoscience element of the course was very informative, I learned how a lot of the things that are going on in the atmosphere and on earth are caused by humans. What I learned will have a lasting effect on my behavior, the biggest thing that opened my eyes was the trash pick up by the marsh. I was surprised to find all of the debris that I did, knowing that it came from the carelessness of another person and learning the effects it had on marine life really made me look at littering differently.

Yes. I believe that the geoscience project would have a lasting effect on our behaviors because it taught us about how the things we do effect our planet.

I think it was a good attempt in involving it in the course, however, I felt as though it was out of place when it came to learning about the history of African Americans. I do think it will change some of my behaviors in dealing with keeping the pollution and waste to a minimum, but I do not foresee it changing all of them.

The geoscience element in the course probably will not affect any further actions in my life, because I would revert to my original ways of already caring for the earth. I also occasionally

pick up after others which was a frequent habit of mine. Although it did offer extensive knowledge to me of the effects after natural disasters and how it not only affects our atmosphere. The project also allowed myself and my peers why it is important to be involved in natural disaster cleanups as well as invest time and money to those affected. The project has not given my information i already was not aware of, but it did remind me of why it is such an important act.

The geoscience activity reiterated a lot of information I have previously been exposed too. However, it also introduced new concepts such as risk. I learned about risk which is the likelihood and cost of a hazard happening. We discussed the factors or risk; cost and probability. Cost refers to human life and damage to property/infrastructure. Probability is associated location and the scale of the event

The Geoscience experiment will continually have an impact on my behaviors. the trash could make not only me sick but it could affect all my love ones. I now make a habit of disposing my garbage I the correct places. littering only shows how lazy a person can be. I refuse to pollute the world i live on. not pick up trash can cause you to breath in those substances that can potentially be lethal.

Reflecting on the inclusion of the Geo-science element in this course will have a lasting effect on my behaviors. It will have a lasting effect because I saw the damage of things. I saw the damage of things after we came back from the hurricane evacuation. I saw lots of trash floating in the water on shore at school. Trash from as different as plastic bottles, glass bottles, Styrofoam cups, a basketball, things from boats, and many more. Seeing those things really influenced me, it made my eyes open more about what's happen in our water. So, yes it will have a lasting effect on my behavior.