

## **Feminist Environmentalisms and Queer Ecologies (CHID 250 and GWSS 290)**

**Instructor: Lauren O’Laughlin**

Classroom: THO 235

Meeting Times: Tuesday & Thursdays  
10:30 – 12:20

**How can you reach me?**

Office: Padelford B111

Office Hours: Thursdays 1-2PM  
and by appointment

Email: [lnolaugh@uw.edu](mailto:lnolaugh@uw.edu)

### **Course Overview**

This course simultaneously incorporates lenses of environmental studies, feminist theory, and queer theory to ask several central questions: How is nature conceptualized in contemporary societies? How do the subjugation and commodification of nature coincide with systems of oppression on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, and species? How and why do environmental protection discourses conceptualize reproduction as central to human livelihood? What might queer understandings of reproduction, population, and sovereignty look like?

This course is primarily a theory course, examining the way that environmental protection theory has been articulated since Rachel Carson rang the environmental alarm in 1962 with *Silent Spring*. In order to better understand this scholarship, we will also examine recent popular discourses of feminist environmentalism, queer ecologies, and environmental justice through popular culture representations of both nature and environmental protection. In so doing, we will seek to understand how racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia inform environmentalism. We will primarily discuss the way that ecofeminists, queer ecologists, and environmental justice activists have articulated reproduction in the face of environmental destruction. In this class, we will discuss environmental issues such as toxic waste dumping, water pollution, and animal agriculture, but I will encourage you to bring in outside examples over the course of the quarter.

### **Course Goals and Objectives:**

*Students will be expected to accomplish two sets of learning goals. The first is a general set of goals expected of students who take GWSS courses:*

- Learn how to link the politics of knowledge production with critical analyses of different modes of inquiry and related standards of accountability
- Critically reflect on relationships between students’ lives and skills, arguments and ideas
- Develop skills and knowledge for effective political engagement based on feminist critiques of the interlocking dimensions of sexism, racism, ableism, nationalism, capitalism, globalization and heterosexism.
- Synthesize, critique and extend current scholarship through effective written and spoken work

*The second set of learning goals addresses skills students are expected to sharpen in this course:*

- Gain a familiarity with key theories in feminist and queer environmental studies, such as intersectionality, essentialism, social constructionism, normativity, and reproductive

futurism.

- Gain a grasp of different environmental studies approaches, including ecofeminism, queer ecologies, and environmental justice.
- Assess how gender, sex, race, and species shape understandings of the environment.
- Be able to conduct a close reading of scholarly texts and popular media to not only understand them but also engage critically with them.
- Collaborate with peers through discussion on Canvas and in class as well as giving feedback on each others' writing and research.

### **Texts and Materials:**

All course readings are available for download from Canvas.

### **Grading:**

Grade Breakdown:

- 20% Participation (10% in-class engagement and 10% online discussion posts)
- 5% Class Facilitation
- 20 % Paper #1: Representations of nature
- 20 % Paper #2: (Topic of your choice)
- 35% Final Paper (including annotated bibliography and presentation)

### **Participation (20%)**

- Your active participation is vital to the success of this class. In order to generate fruitful discussion, I expect you to have completed the readings listed (under Course Calendar) prior to class.
- **Beginning in Week 2**, you are required to prepare a single paragraph response to the texts and **post them to Canvas by Monday 6PM and Wednesday 6PM** (i.e. the evening before class). Canvas posts must briefly summarize the main argument(s) of the text(s) and substantively engage with the reading(s), rather than simply "I liked this" or "I didn't like this." In other words, respond critically. Good responses will conclude with a question for further reflection or a question that students would like to clarify.
- Short homework, including weekly Canvas posts, will be graded out of 4 points (4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2 or 1 = needs work and/or incomplete, 0 = no submission).

### **Class Facilitation (5%)**

**Prepare to lead the discussion for one class session with one of your peers.** Begin with a brief summary of the readings and bring prepared questions to facilitate discussion. Facilitators should read the other students' Canvas posts prior to class and prepare discussion questions based off of students' responses. To make your facilitation engaging, I suggest connecting the readings to current events and/or bring class activities related to the materials, though these are optional. There will be a sign-up sheet on the first day for you to indicate when you want to lead discussion.

### **Formal Writing Assignments**

- **Paper #1 (20%):** In a paper of 3-4 pages, answer the following question:  
How is nature socially constructed through gender, race, nation, and/or sexuality?

You may analyze a specific film or book if it helps you to ground your argument, but keep summary of the text minimal and prioritize readings from this course. As always, remember to think intersectionally. **Due October 18th by 5PM.**

- **Paper #2 (20%):** For this 3-4 page paper, you may choose your topic, but it must incorporate readings from the course discussed so far, and ideally does not overlap closely with Paper #1. Potential topics might be critical examination of ecofeminist theories, environmental justice theories, tensions between and/or within the two, but you are not limited to these. You also have the option to write this as a collaborative paper with one other person. If you choose to write it collaboratively it should be 5-6 pages in length. **Due November 8th by 5PM.**

- **Final Research Project (35% inc. annotated bibliography & presentation):**

To complete this 6-8 page paper, I ask you to first choose one example of environmental protection efforts which you believe is informed by theories of environmental feminism, queer ecologies and/or environmental justice. Be as specific as you can about the scope of the campaign and/or project. In addition to conducting research on the history of the campaign/movement, you should use readings and concepts from the course to assess what theories underpin the group's actions. For instance, how do politics of reproduction, population, and/or sovereignty inform their actions? How are these informed by race, gender, sex, and/or sexuality? How do nonhuman animals fit in? Be specific as to the industry being addressed or, if the campaign addresses multiple industries, discuss why this is significant.

Example: You might choose to study the recent Dakota Access Pipeline protests. In preparing your paper, you could conduct research on the history of the protests, how the Dakota peoples (as well as those in alliance with them) articulate their relationship to natural resources, and what threats the pipeline presents to them. You would then craft a clear argument which you support with your outside research as well as texts from the course that analyzes the theories and motivations of the protests. *Please note that you may still choose this topic despite my using it as an example.*

- **Submit your paper topic (1-2 sentences) by November 1st at 5PM for approval.**
- **Upload annotated bibliography by on November 15th by 5PM with a minimum of three outside sources.**
- **During the last week of class, give an 8-to-10-minute presentation of your paper.**
- **Final Paper will be due December 15th by 5PM.**

**Grade Scale for Written Assignments:**

Percentage Earned	Grade-Point Equivalent	Letter-Grade Equivalent
100-98	4.0	A+
97-96	3.9	A
95-94	3.8	A

93-92	3.7	A-
91	3.6	A-
90-89	3.5	B+
88-87	3.4	B / B+
86	3.3	B
85	3.2	B
84	3.1	B
83	3.0	B / B-
82	2.9	B-
81	2.8	B-
80	2.7	C / C+
79	2.6	C
78	2.5	C
77	2.4	C
76	2.3	C
75	2.2	C
74	2.1	C-
73	2.0	C-
72	1.9	C- / D+
71	1.8	<i>et cetera</i>
70	1.7	
69	1.6	
68	1.5	
67	1.4	
65	1.2	
64	1.1	
63	1.0	
62	0.9	
61	0.8	
60	0.7	
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**Expectations Regarding Written Work:**

- **Requirements:** All work submitted for this course should be typed, double-spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Make sure that your margins are set to 1” and that you proofread your work for spelling, grammar and punctuation. Citations should be completed in APA Style.
- **Submitting Assignments:** All assignments should be uploaded via Canvas. *Assignments will not be accepted via email unless otherwise specified.*

- **Late Assignments:** Papers uploaded late will be penalized. Formal writing essays may be turned in late with 0.5 point deduction per day late. Papers received on the same day of the assignment due date but after the start of class will receive a 0.3 point deduction.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the act of putting your name to someone else's ideas and work. In developing strong analytical and persuasive writing, we will be regularly referring to other people's thoughts and writing— but it is necessary to cite them! When you draw on other texts for your papers, you must carefully distinguish your work and thoughts from the work and thoughts you are referencing by properly quoting and citing sources. Plagiarism is a *serious* offense for which the University has strict policies. If you are unclear as to whether you may be violating these policies, consult the university guidelines at <https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>

### **Laptop Use Policy**

Laptops can be very useful. If, however, it becomes clear to me that you are using your laptop for purposes unrelated to class, you will have your laptop privileges withdrawn.

### **Email**

- Due to the volume of email that I receive, please allow at least 24 hours for a response and be sure to be specific about your question(s). Be aware that I will not respond as quickly on evenings and weekends. Please plan your questions accordingly.
- Course-related emails will be sent to your UW email account. You are responsible for regularly checking this account.
- **I respond only to student emails from .edu addresses.** If you have emailed me and have not heard back, please double-check that you have sent it from your academic email account.
- **Please communicate with me.** I will rely upon you to tell me if there is a family crisis or other extenuating circumstance that you are struggling with this quarter. I am here as a resource, so please come talk to me! Likewise, if you are struggling with the course material for any reason, please reach out to me.

### **Illness**

If possible, please email me in advance if you are going to miss a class section due to illness. If you miss a class section you are responsible for getting the missed information from another person in the class or from myself. Extensions on papers due to illness will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

The University of Washington is committed to providing access, equal opportunity, and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, education and employment for individuals with disabilities. Please let me know if you have specific needs registered through the office of Disability Resources for Students (DRS) or if you are currently seeking resources through DRS. I will do everything in my power to accommodate your needs.

The DRS Office can be contacted at [drs@uw.edu](mailto:drs@uw.edu) or by phone at 206-543-8924 (voice) and 206-543-8925 (TTY). More information on support at UW may be found on the DRS website at: <http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/>

## **Writing Centers and Writing Support Resources**

- ▶ **Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC)**
  - Free center that offers workshops and one-on-one feedback on writing.
  - Make an appointment at <http://depts.washington.edu/owrc>
- ▶ **The CLUE Writing Center**
  - CLUE is a free late-night, multidisciplinary study center open to all UW students that offers drop-in tutoring and workshops.
  - Open Sun-Thurs from 6:30PM to midnight and Mon-Thurs from 11AM-2PM in HUB. <http://depts.washington.edu/clue/index.php>
- ▶ **Disciplinary Writing Centers**
  - in Anthropology, Communication, Education, History, Philosophy, Political Science/Jackson School/Law Societies & Justice, Psychology and Sociology. Information about writing centers can be found <http://guides.lib.washington.edu/content.php?pid=529582&sid=4411788>
- ▶ **Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity Educational Opportunity Program Instructional Center**
  - The Instructional Center, 1307 N.E. 40<sup>th</sup> St, Room 240; 206.542.4240, provides academic support for EOP students, and for *non-EOP students by application*. Provides drop-in tutoring in writing and other disciplines as well as study skills classes and test and exam preparation. <http://depts.washington.edu/ic>.

## **COURSE CALENDAR (subject to change)**

*Always bring a copy of readings to class, either in printed or digital form. Readings should be completed before the class period on the day they are listed on the course calendar.*

### **Week ONE: Introduction**

*September 29<sup>th</sup>*: Setting class norms and initial reflections on nature

### **Week TWO: Nature, Popular Culture, and Foundational Concepts**

*October 4<sup>th</sup>*:

Lorber, J. (1994). The social construction of gender. In S.M. Shaw and J. Lee (Eds.) *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions* (pp. 141-144). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Schrepfer, S. R. (2005). *Nature's Altars: Mountains, Gender, and American Environmentalism*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas. Excerpt: pp. 1-13

*October 6<sup>th</sup>*: Facilitation #1

Sturgeon, N. (2009). The power is yours, planetees! Race, gender, and sexuality in children's environmentalist popular culture. In *Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

May, V.M. (2012). Intersectionality. In S.M. Shaw and J. Lee (Eds.) *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions* (pp. 79-82). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Optional:

Kleiner, C. (2003). Nature's lovers: The erotics of lesbian land communities in Oregon, 1974-1984. In V.J. Scharff (Ed.) *Seeing Nature through Gender* (pp. 242-262). Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.

### WEEK THREE: Nature and Colonialism

October 11<sup>th</sup>: Facilitation #2

Sturgeon, N. (2009). Frontiers of nature: The ecological Indian in U.S Film. In *Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural* (pp. 53-79). Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

October 13<sup>th</sup>:

Taylor, D. (2016). Key concepts informing conservation thought. In *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection* (pp. 9-31). Durham, NC: Duke UP.

Optional:

Cronon, W. (1995). The trouble with wilderness; or getting back to the wrong nature. In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (pp. 69-90). New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Film: *Yellowfever*

### WEEK FOUR: Women and the Environment

October 18<sup>th</sup>:

\*\*\*PAPER ONE DUE by 5PM\*\*\*

Nhanenge, J. (2011). Ecofeminism: What is it and why is it important. In *Ecofeminism: Towards Integrating the Concerns of Women, Poor People, and Nature into Development*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

- o **Note:** Read only pp. 98-100.

LaDuke, W. (1993). A society based on conquest cannot be sustained: Native peoples and the environmental crisis. In R. Hofrichter (Ed.) *Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice* (pp. 98-106). Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.

Deerinwater, J. (2016, September 13). Meet the Native women at the heart of the Dakota access pipeline protests. *Wear Your Voice*.

<http://wearyourvoicemag.com/identities/feminism/meet-women-heart-dakota-access-pipeline-protests>

October 20<sup>th</sup>: Facilitation #3

Carson, R. (1962). *Silent Spring*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

- Two excerpts: pp. 1-3 and 103-127

Optional:

Magee, R. M. (2012). Reintegrating human and nature: Modern sentimental ecology in Rachel Carson and Barbara Kingsolver. In D. Vukob (Ed.) *Ecocriticism: Environment, Women, Literature* (pp. 65-75). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Shiva, V. (1993). Women's Indigenous knowledge and biodiversity conservation. In M. Mies. and V. Shiva (Eds.) *Ecofeminism: Critique, Influence, Change*. New York, NY: Zed Books.

## WEEK FIVE: Ecofeminist Tensions

October 25<sup>th</sup>: Facilitation #4

Sturgeon, N. (1997). The nature of race: Discourses of racial difference in ecofeminism. In *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature* (pp. 260-278). Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana UP.

October 27<sup>th</sup>:

Taylor, D. (1997). Women of Color, environmental justice, and ecofeminism. In K.J. Warren (Ed.) *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana UP.

- **Note:** Read only pp. 58-70.

Optional:

Gaard, G. (2011). Ecofeminism revisited: Rejecting essentialism and re-placing species in a material feminist environmentalism." *Feminist Formations* 23(2), 26-53.

## WEEK SIX: Environmental Justice: Racism and Politics of Population

November 1<sup>st</sup>:

\*\*\* **Research Paper Topic due by 5PM**\*\*\*

Roberts, D. (1998). *Killing the Black body: Race, reproduction, and the meaning of liberty*. New York, NY: Random House. (Introduction)

November 3<sup>rd</sup>: Facilitation #5

Cook, K. (2007). Environmental justice: Woman is the first environment. In Sistersong Reproductive Health Collective (Ed.) *Reproductive Justice Briefing Book: A Primer on Reproductive Justice and Social Change* (pp. 32-33).

Ehrlich, P.R. (1968). *The population bomb*. Cutchogue, NY: Buccaneer Books. pp. 1-3.

Angus, I. and Butler, S. (2011). *Too Many People? Population, Immigration, and the Environmental Crisis*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Press. pp. 7-22

Optional:

Zimmerman, K. and Miao, V. (2009) *Fertile ground: Women organizing at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice*. Retrieved from <http://funderservices.movementstrategy.org/a/wp-content/uploads/FertileGround.pdf>

## WEEK SEVEN: Queer Ecologies

November 8<sup>th</sup>:

\*\*\***PAPER #2 DUE by 5PM**\*\*\*

Gaard, G. (2004). Toward a queer ecofeminism. In R. Stein (Ed.) *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism* (pp. 21-42). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

November 10<sup>th</sup>: Facilitation #6

Di Chiro, G. (2010). Polluted politics? Confronting toxic discourse, sex panic, and econormativity. In C. Mortimer-Sandilands and B. Erickson (Eds.) *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (pp. 199-230). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Hayes, T. and Chaffer, P.J. (2010). The toxic baby? TEDTalk. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9NFPZGyDPg>

Optional:

Langston, N. (2003). Gender transformed: Endocrine disruptors in the environment. In V. Scharff (Ed.) *Seeing Nature through Gender* (pp. 129-166). Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

## WEEKS EIGHT & NINE: Queer Fears, Demasculinization, and ‘Crimes Against Nature’

November 15<sup>th</sup>: Facilitation #7

Gosine, A. (2010). Non-white reproduction and same-sex eroticism: Queer acts against nature. In C. Mortimer-Sandilands & B. Erickson (Eds.) *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (pp. 149–172). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

November 17<sup>th</sup>: **NO CLASS (ASA Conference)**

*Note: Despite class being cancelled for today, I expect you to complete the following short reading. We will discuss it alongside Edelman and Roughgarden on Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

Colborn, T., Dumanoski, D., and Myers, J.P. (1997). *Our stolen future: Are we threatening our fertility, intelligence, and survival? A scientific detective story*. New York, NY: Dutton. Excerpts: pp. 1-10 and 231-238

**[November 18<sup>th</sup>:] \*\*\*ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE by 5PM \*\*\***

November 22<sup>nd</sup>: Facilitation #8

Edelman, L. (2004). *No future: queer theory and the death drive*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Excerpt: pp. 1-5

Roughgarden, J. (2013). *Evolution’s rainbow: Diversity, gender, and sexuality in nature and people*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Excerpt pp. 13-21.

November 24<sup>th</sup>: **NO CLASS (Federal Holiday)**

Optional: *The Disappearing Male* (documentary). Available at <https://vimeo.com/15346778>

## WEEK TEN: Que(e)rying Animal Reproduction

November 29<sup>th</sup>: Facilitation #9

Sturgeon, N. (2010). Penguin family values: the nature of planetary environmental reproductive justice. In C. Mortimer-Sandilands & B. Erickson (Eds.). *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (pp. 102-133). Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP.

*December 1<sup>st</sup>: Facilitation #10*

Food and Agriculture Organization (UN). (2006). Livestock's long shadow: environmental issues and options. Retrieved from <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a0701e/a0701e.pdf>

**Note:** *Read only the Executive Summary.*

Gillespie, K. (2014). Sexualized violence and gendered commodification of the animal body in Pacific Northwest dairy production. *Gender, Place, & Culture* 21(10), 1321-1337.

**Note:** *Read only vignette on first page and p. 1326 – 1334.*

## **WEEK ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS**

*December 6<sup>th</sup>: Presentations*

*December 8<sup>th</sup>: Presentations Continued, Evaluations, Conclusions*

**\*\*\*FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 15<sup>th</sup> by 5 PM\*\*\***