

**CHID 480/ GWSS 490:
Grappling with Environmental Destruction: A Writing Course**

Instructor: **Lauren O’Laughlin**
Classroom: MGH 085
Meeting Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays
10:30 – 12:20

How can you reach me?
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Course Overview:

In the face of overwhelming environmental degradation and destruction, this course turns to environmental studies, feminist studies, and critical animal studies for theoretical tools. We will look at multiple sites of unsustainable practices including pollution, toxic waste dumping, resource extraction, water dams, and animal agriculture both through a critical theoretical lens as well as through grounded analysis of how these industries affect the Pacific Northwest landscape. In analyzing patterns of environmental destruction as well as environmental protection discourses, we will strategically apply an intersectional framework to assess how environmental risk is experienced. More specifically, we will analyze how racism, colonialism, sexism, transphobia and speciesism shape our environment and our discussions of protecting it. Course materials will include scholarly texts, activist works, and popular media and will be supplemented by guest speakers and optional field trips to the Ballard Locks, Duwamish River Superfund site, and to Pigs Peace Sanctuary.

I intend for this to be a collaborative classroom environment, where we will together hone our critical thinking and writing skills to explore how writing can be a useful means of resistance. As such, we will be reviewing each other’s in-class writing as well as collaborative writing projects. Throughout the course, we will be engaging with many different types of writing – academic texts, popular science, poetry, zines, spoken word, speculative fiction – to examine which might be most useful for you to adapt. Additionally, I will meet with each of you twice over the quarter to discuss your writing in detail, once in groups and once individually.

Students in this course have the option to participate in a service-learning project. Service learning projects allow students to get a hands-on understanding of environmental work, supplementing the theoretical engagement we do in this course. Ongoing service to an environmental organization should help you to reflect on how social norms shape our understandings of the environment in Seattle in particular. Moreover, service to an environmental protection organization requires that you think about your own embodied and theoretical connections to the environment, and could serve as inspiration if you elect to write a creative piece for your final. Please see me by the end of Week 1 if you are interested in conducting a service-learning project.

Course Goals and Objectives:

1. Gain a sense of the intersecting fields of feminist studies, queer studies, environmental studies, and critical animal studies and their theoretical contributions.
2. Assess how gender, sex, sexuality, and race shape our personal understandings of the environment.
3. Be able to conduct a close reading of scholarly texts and popular media.
4. Develop strong writing skills, including analytical, persuasive, and reflexive writing and combinations thereof.
5. Collaborate with peers through providing feedback on others' writing and working together on a collaborative writing project.

Texts and Materials:

All course readings are available for download from Canvas.

Field Trips:

All field trips are optional, but I encourage you to attend at least one as they are meaningful ways to ground your learning. Local field trips will be to (1) the Ballard Locks, (2) Duwamish River Superfund site, and (3) Pigs Peace Sanctuary. Sign-ups will be Week 2.

Grading:

Response papers will be graded out of 4 points (4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2 or 1 = needs work and/or incomplete, 0 = no submission). Longer papers will be graded according to the 4.0 scale (see below).

Grade Breakdown for Students Doing Service-Learning

5%	Participation
3%	Class Facilitation
12%	Response Paper
25%	Collaborative Zine
30%	Final Creative Writing Piece/Research Paper
12%	Follow-up Field Report (OR another Response Paper)
13%	Service Learning Project (including journal)

Grade Breakdown for Students NOT Doing Service-Learning

10%	Participation
3%	Class Facilitation
15%	Response Paper
25%	Collaborative Zine
32%	Final Project: Creative Writing Piece OR Research Paper
15%	Follow-up Field Report (OR another Response Paper)

Participation

You are expected to come to class having done the reading assigned for the given day and prepared to discuss the material with your peers. Though I do not require daily or even weekly Canvas response posts, I do expect you to make notes on the reading and come to class with

specific questions and responses in mind. Your participation grade will be based upon how present and engaged you are in class, how much effort you put into your work, and how seriously you take the reviews you will conduct of each other's written work. I will post grades for the first half of the quarter at the end of Week 5, and the grade for the second half of the quarter with your final grade for the course.

Class Facilitation

Prepare to lead the discussion for one class session with 1-2 other people. I suggest you begin with a brief summary of the readings and bring questions and activities to facilitate discussion. Good facilitations will also connect the readings to current events if the reading is dated. There will be a sign-up sheet on the second day of class for you to indicate when you want to lead discussion.

FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (4)

1) Response Paper

In lieu of weekly response papers, which are standard in 400-level courses, I am only asking for one response paper at the end of Week 2. You should craft an argument through engagement with previous readings in 2-3 double-spaced pages. *Due at the end of Week 3.*

2) Collaborative Zine

With two or three other people from this class, you will be responsible for creating one cohesive zine (at least 500 words per person in the group, which is ~2 pages double-spaced) that centrally engages theories and/or readings we discussed in this class. You may also incorporate outside sources. Though the zine will be collectively submitted, each student will be responsible for uploading a one-page summary of how the collaboration process went. *This project will be due in Week 5, and group proposals for the project will be due in Week 3.*

3) Final Creative Writing Piece OR Research Paper

Your written work over the quarter will culminate with a document of 10-12 pages that engages with work by an activist organization, popular media, or texts that we have addressed this quarter. This can be *either* in the form of a substantive research paper that responds to sources from this course and incorporates outside research OR in the form of a creative writing piece that makes reference to pieces from this course. (We will discuss an evaluation rubric in Week 5 to clarify the distinctions between these two.) *Due the last day of class.*

4) Follow-up Field Report OR Scholarly Response Paper

This 3-4 page paper asks you to critically reflect on one of your field trips using the readings. Though I do expect you will be describing your experience, remember to emphasize your argument. *Due at the end of finals week.*

Expectations Regarding Written Work:

- **Requirements:** All work submitted for this course should be double-spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman font with page numbers. Make sure that your margins are set to

1” all around and that you proofread your work for spelling, grammar and punctuation. These minor things are the first thing a reader notices, so little details go a long way.

- **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>

Email

- 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.
- Course-related emails will be sent to your UW email account. You are responsible for regularly checking this 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 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/>

Extra Writing Support

- **The Interdisciplinary Writing Studio (located in Smith Hall 113B)**

To sign up for an appointment, visit their website: <https://geography.washington.edu/interdisciplinary-writing-studio>

- **Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC)**
Make an appointment at <http://depts.washington.edu/owrc>
- **The CLUE Writing Center**
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**
 - Provides academic support for EOP students, and for *non-EOP students* by application: <http://depts.washington.edu/ic>.

COURSE CALENDAR (subject to change)

Note: Always bring a copy of readings to class, either in printed or digital form.

PART I: Theoretical Frameworks: Thinking Intersectionally

WEEK ONE: Introduction

January 3rd: Course overview, setting class norms

If you are not yet familiar with the concepts of social constructionism, intersectionality, or white privilege, please read the following as a primer. We will be using these concepts regularly and you need to be familiar with them:

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

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

McIntosh, P. (2001). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*. New York, NY: Worth Publishers. p. 163-168.

January 5th: Conceptualizing Nature

Williams, R. (1976). Nature. In *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. **Note: "Nature" is only p. 219-224.**

Cronon, W. (1995) Trouble with wilderness. In *Uncommon ground: Rethinking the human place in nature*. P. 69-90. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

Evans, M.M. (2002). 'Nature' and Environmental Justice. In *The environmental justice reader: Politics, poetics, and pedagogy*, ed. Adamson, Joni, Evans, Mei Mei, and Stein, Rachel. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.

Berger, J. (1980). Why Look at Animals? In *About Looking* (p. 1-26). New York, NY: Pantheon.

Recommended:

Osterhammel, J. (2005). *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener.

WEEK TWO: Bearing Witness

January 10: What Makes for Environmental Justice Writing?

hooks, b. (2009) Touching the earth. In *Belonging: A culture of place* (p. 363-368). New York, NY: Routledge.

Amor, B. (2016). "The Least Convenient Truth." *Bitch Magazine*.
<https://bitchmedia.org/article/least-convenient-truth/climate-change-and-white-supremacy>

Dave, N. (2014). Witness: Humans, animals, and the politics of becoming. *Cultural Anthropology* 29(3), 433–456.

January 12: Affect and Emotion:

Mortimer-Sandilands, C. (2010). Melancholy natures, queer ecologies. In *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, ed. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 331-357. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP.

Million, D. (2009). Felt theory: An Indigenous feminist approach. *Wicazo Sa Review* 24(2), 53-76.

Jamail, D. (2015) Mourning our planet: Climate scientists share their grieving process”
<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/28702-mourning-our-planet-climate-scientists-share-their-grieving-process>

WEEK THREE: “Feminine?” Writing and Ecofeminism

January 17: CLASS FACILITATION #1

Carson, Rachel. (2002). *Silent spring*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin. Excerpts: 1, 2, 3, 7, 8: Read Chapter 1 and two others of your choice.
http://library.uniteddiversity.coop/More_Books_and_Reports/Silent_Spring-Rachel_Carson-1962.pdf

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

“Rachel Carson.” *Environment and Society*

<http://www.environmentandsociety.org/exhibitions/silent-spring/personal-attacks-rachel-carson>

January 19:

Jess X. Chen and Demian DinéYazhi' (2016). Solastalgia: Queer eco-feminist poetry zine. Albuquerque, NM.

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

*****January 20th: Response Paper Due by 5PM*****

Recommended:

Mies, Maria and Shiva, Vandana. (2014). The impoverishment of the environment: Women and children last. In *Ecofeminism (Critique. Influence. Change.)* (p. 70-90). New York, NY: Zed Books.

WEEK FOUR: Troubling Eco[hetero]normativity

January 24th: *Bodies that Matter*: **CLASS FACILITATION #2**

Clare, E. (2014). Meditations on natural worlds, disabled bodies, and politics of cure. In *Material ecocriticism* (p. 204-218). Bloomington, IA: Indiana Univ. Press.

Alaimo, S. (2016) The naked word: Spelling, stripping, lusting as environmental protest. In *Exposed: Environmental politics and pleasures in posthuman times* (p. 65-90). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

January 26th: *Queerness and Temporality*

***** Group project collaboration agreement and zine topic due****

Seymour, Nicole. (2013). Introduction: Queer ecologies. In *Strange natures: Futurity, empathy, and the queer ecological imagination* (p. 1-34). Chicago, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press.

Nixon, Rob. (2011). *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor, Introduction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Recommended:

Seymour, N. (2013). It's just not turning up: AIDS, cinematic vision, and environmental justice in Todd Haynes's *Safe*. In *Strange Natures*.

Gaard, Greta. (2011). Green, pink, and lavender: Banishing ecophobia through queer ecologies. *Ethics & the Environment* 16(2), 115-126.

WEEK FIVE: Taxonomies of Species, Race, and Animacy

January 31: Guest Speaker from Out There Project in Seattle

Kim, C. (2015). "Animals, Nature, and the Races of Man" in *Dangerous crossings: Race, species, and nature in a multicultural age* (p. 24-60). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Kimmerer, R. W. (2011). "Learning the Grammar of Animacy" in *Colors of Nature*.

February 2: Class Facilitation #3

Kim, C. (2015). "Makah Whaling and the (Non)Ecological Indian" in *Dangerous crossings: Race, species, and nature in a multicultural age* (p. 205-252). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Thursday and Friday: Group meetings with Lauren!

Recommended:

Tsing, A. (2012). "Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species." *Environmental Humanities*, 1, 141-54.

Downey, L. 2015. *Inequality, Democracy and the Environment*. New York, NY: New York University Press, p. 1-60.

Gbadegesin, S. 2001. "Multi-national Corporations, Developed Nations, and Environmental Racism: Toxic Waste, Oil Exploration, and Eco-catastrophe." In *Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice*, 187-202. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

PART II: Cases of Environmental Injustice

WEEK SIX: Pollution and Hazardous Waste

*February 7 ** Table of contents due for final project by 5pm ****

Class Facilitation #4

Taylor, D. (2014). *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*. New York, NY: New York University Press, p. 33-47 and 69-97

“My Generation” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nX-1sVu9qj8>

“On the Trail of the Duwamish” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUw80_XyA-I

February 9: Class Facilitation #5

Moraga, C. (1994). *Heroes and Saints* [play] (40p.)

Ah-King, M. and Hayward, E. (2014). Toxic sexes: Perverting pollution and queering hormone disruption. *O-Zone 1*, 1-12.

*February 10: **TENTATIVE** Optional Field Trip to Duwamish River Superfund Cleanup site*

Recommended:

Bullard, Robert. (1990). *Dumping in Dixie*.

WEEK SEVEN: Pollution Cont'd and Resource Extraction

February 14: NO CLASS: Finish Zines

February 16: Queerness, Narrative, and Deforestation

Class Facilitation #6

Clare, E. (2015). clearcut: explaining the distance. In *Exile and pride* (p. 1-30). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Recommended

WEEK EIGHT: Water Dams

February 21: Class Facilitation #7

*****Collaborative Zines due in class*****

Woelfle-Erskine, C. and Cole, J. (2007). Up shit creek and how we got here [Excerpts]. In *Dam nation: Dispatches from the water underground*. Brooklyn, NY: Soft Skull Press.

Johnson, J. (2002). Saving the salmon, saving the people: Environmental justice and Columbia river tribal literatures. In *The environmental justice reader* p. 265-283.

Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission. (2016). Climate change. <http://www.critfc.org/fish-and-watersheds/climate/>

February 23:

**** One-page Reflections & Reports of Collaboration due by 5PM****

Hogan, L. (1994). *Solar storms*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster. [Excerpt]

Thrush, C. (2006). City of the changers: Indigenous people and the transformation of Seattle's watersheds p. 89-117 (Note: Focus primarily on last 20 pages).

Dunagen, C. (2016). Salmon live in a topsy-turvy world upstream of the Ballard locks”
<https://www.eopugetsound.org/magazine/ballard-salmon>

Friday: Optional Field Trip to Ballard Locks (Please read Thursday's reading prior to trip!)

Recommended:

Lewis, D. (2016). “In Seattle's Past a Harbinger of Standing Rock” *Seattle Weekly*.
<http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/how-the-army-corps-of-engineers-has-trampled-on-indigenous-land-from-standing-rock-to-salmon-bay/>

WEEK NINE: Animal Agriculture

*February 28: *** Rough Draft of Final Project due uploaded to Canvas by 5PM ****

Class Facilitation #8

Kirby, D. (2010). *Animal factory: The looming threat of industrial pig, dairy and poultry farms to humans and the environment*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, Introduction & Prologue

Weis, T. (2013). *The ecological hoofprint: The global burden of industrial livestock*. New York, NY: Zed Books, excerpt.

March 2: Short Peer-Review Session In Class

Gillespie, K. (forthcoming). *Cow with Ear Tag #1389* [excerpt]

Binion, D., Cox, M., and Johnson, R. (2015). Spoken word: Protect our mother earth: Stop factory farms! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEZERvstIwU>

*March 3: *TENTATIVE* Optional Field Trip to Pigs Peace Animal Sanctuary*

*March 5: *** Peer review feedback due uploaded by 5PM ****

Recommended:

Andersen, K. and Kuhn, K. (2014). *Cowspiracy: The sustainability secret* [film]

Gaard, G. (2013). Towards a postcolonial feminist milk studies. *American Quarterly: Special Issue on Race, Gender Species* 65(3), 595-618.

WEEK TEN: Ways Forward

March 7: Critiquing Conservation

Peer Review Follow-up In Class

Beinart, W. & Hughes, L. (2007). Resistance to colonial conservation and resource management. In *Environment and Empire* (p. 269-288). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, D. (2016). Nation building, racial exclusion, and the social construction of wetlands. In *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement* (p. 328-349).

March 9: Hope?

hooks, b. (2011). Earthbound. In *Colors of Nature*. P. 184-187.

Solnit, R. (2003) Acts of Hope.

http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/677/rebecca_solnit_on_hope_in_dark_times

Duggan, L. and Muñoz, J.E. (2010). Hope and hopelessness: A dialogue. *Women & Performance*, p. 275-283.

March 11: Revised Final Project Due by 5 PM

March 17: Follow-Up Field Report (or 2nd Response Paper) due by 5 PM