

ECOFEMINISM

Justice, Ecology, and Gender

Dickinson College  Fall 2010  WGST 300

Facilitators

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Biology, Bodies, and Binaries

Ecofeminism analyzes how the same paradigms and historical inequalities devalue and oppress both 'women' and 'nature,' leading to the oppression and denigration of both. This course is meant to open theoretical, historical, and scientific avenues into your ability to analyze and understand the ways that, in Western society, women are treated as inferior to men, 'nature' is treated as inferior to 'culture', and humans/men are understood as being separate from, and often superior to, the natural environment/women.

Through a lens which acknowledges the connections between sexism, racism, class exploitation, and environmental destruction, the class will explore and undermine many of the common conceptions which balance technology, culture, progress, innovation, and might, against the traditionally feminine circularity, connectivity, tradition, sustainability, and community innovation. As we learn to understand the misguided, anthropocentric, and engendered frameworks which have led to both personal injustice and global disasters from dangerous climate change to dangerous eye makeup, we can begin to see how solutions to environmental problems require a feminist perspective, and feminist theory and practice require an environmental perspective – in other words, how we can be warriors for the many environment(s) such as forests, waterways, communities, and our own bodies, that we care for, and do so in radically more ecological way than patriarchal norms ever have documented or allowed.

Course Objectives

1. Understand and apply ecofeminism as a framework, practice, and philosophy.
2. Embrace systems thinking, non-binary thinking, and critical thinking skills.
3. Identify and demonstrate competency in understanding how language encodes cultural relationships and moral codes which shape our understanding and behaviors towards our communities and the larger ecological world.
4. Demonstrate competence in understanding local and global women's issues and bioregions; and relate land use practices, current natural resource utilization patterns and environmental health concerns to contemporary cultural and political systems.
5. Unravel and critically examine deep-seated binaries, bodily prejudices, & unjust frameworks regarding the validity of observation and intuition, biological and scientific theories, historical and contemporary injustices, and the value of Earth systems.

In Other Words...

1. Be able to sum up ecofeminism in 30 seconds or less when your friend/mother/supervisor inquires "you are studying *what exactly?*"
2. Love your body, protect your body, but not be defined by it.
3. Read and interpret the world in a new empowering light.
4. Be able to sum up ecofeminism in 30 seconds or less, *and* if they give you 30 more seconds, name 3 relevant contemporary issues that demonstrate what you just said.
5. Radically challenge everything.

Course Responsibilities

Engagement is both our classroom policy and a key component of the course goals. Your responsibilities include participating actively in class discussions, completing assigned work by their due dates, helping to create a climate of learning and collaboration, showing respect for your peers, performing your fair share of work on group projects, and adhering to a high standard of academic honesty.

Students will be held accountable to the academic code of conduct as described in Dickinson's 2008-2009 Community Standards. Suspected violation of these standards will be resolved through the formal disciplinary procedures of the college. The following are excerpted from the 2008-2009 Community Standards (<http://www.dickinson.edu/student/files/commstand0809.pdf>):

Plagiarism

To plagiarize is to use without proper citation or acknowledgment the words, ideas, or work of another. Plagiarism is a form of cheating that refers to several types of unacknowledged borrowing."

"Students can avoid plagiarism by following some very simple advice. Always provide clear and accurate citations for the sources that inform your work. This is an admonition that goes to the heart of your academic responsibility. Remember that almost all quotations and statistics require citations. Specific facts and ideas borrowed from others, even if expressed in your own words, also require citations. Summaries of an author's argument require citations. It is true that matters of general knowledge do not usually require citations, but when in doubt, students should provide footnotes for them. It is also true that students who rely on parents, friends or others for specific contributions to their work should acknowledge this indebtedness in a citation. And finally, please understand that paraphrasing means to summarize in your own words. The surest way to avoid plagiarism when summarizing is to write with sources and notes closed. If you cannot explain what an author argued from memory, then you probably do not understand it well enough to paraphrase."

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with the Dickinson College policy, we are available to discuss requests made by students with disabilities for academic accommodations. Such requests must be verified in advance by the Coordinator of Disability Services who will provide a signed copy of an accommodation letter. Requests for academic accommodations should be made during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that timely and appropriate arrangements can be made. Students are required to register with Disability Services (first floor of Biddle House (ext. 1080 or jonesmar@dickinson.edu).

In compliance with the Dickinson College policy and equal access laws, we are available to discuss requests made by students with disabilities for academic accommodations. Such requests must be verified in advance this semester by Marni Jones, Coordinator of Disability Services, who will provide a signed copy of an accommodation letter. This must be presented in a scheduled meeting with me prior to any accommodations being offered. Requests for academic accommodations should be made during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that timely and appropriate arrangements can be made. Students requesting accommodations are required to register with Disability Services, located in Academic Advising, first floor of Biddle House (contact ext. 1080 or jonesmar@dickinson.edu) to verify their eligibility for reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

Religious Conflicts

If the observance of a religious holiday will conflict with a class meeting, please let us know in advance. No student will be penalized for such absences, but we must be informed of these anticipated absences within the first 2 weeks of the semester.

Attendance Policy: You may miss one week of class (that's two classes) with no penalty; any additional missed classes will reduce the engagement portion of your grade by one letter grade per missed class. If you miss more than six classes, you will automatically fail the course.

Grading

	Attendance	Discussion/ Participation (Completion of Course Readings)	Blog Assignments	Gendered, Dualistic Bodies Paper	Ecofeminist Mapping Project (Midterm)	Cosmetics Paper	Contemporary Issues Paper (Final Paper)	Ecofeminism Podcast (Final)
Points	100	150	100	100	150	100	150	150
Weight	10%	15%	10%	10%	15%	10%	15%	15%
A	95-100	95-100	95-100	95-100	95-100	95-100	95-100	95-100
A-	90-94	90-94	90-94	90-94	90-94	90-94	90-94	90-94
B+	87-89	87-89	87-89	87-89	87-89	87-89	87-89	87-89
B	84-86	84-86	84-86	84-86	84-86	84-86	84-86	84-86
B-	80-83	80-83	80-83	80-83	80-83	80-83	80-83	80-83
C+	77-79	77-79	77-79	77-79	77-79	77-79	77-79	77-79
C	74-76	74-76	74-76	74-76	74-76	74-76	74-76	74-76
C-	70-73	70-73	70-73	70-73	70-73	70-73	70-73	70-73
D	60-69	60-69	60-69	60-69	60-69	60-69	60-69	60-69
F	<60	<60	<60	<60	<60	<60	<60	<60

Ecofeminism Blog

You will be required to blog throughout the course using a Dickinson Blog on Wordpress.

<http://blogs.dickinson.edu/ecofeminism>

You must create a unique account to login and use the course blog. You will be invited to join the blog during the first week of school – you must respond to this email and create your account by the end of the first week of classes.

Blogging is an excellent form of social, viral, and experiential-based knowledge sharing. Blogging is NOT journalism, academic writing, “copy and paste sharing,” your personal journal, or news. Blogging is a hybrid of many forms of written communication meant to bridge information sharing and social connectivity – it is a unique outlet with its own expectations, rules, and procedures. Expectations and an overview of blogging will be provided in class.

Submitting Assignments & Receiving Feedback

In an effort to conserve resources, blog posts will only be submitted online by posting on the blogs.dickinson.edu/ecofeminism site, papers must be submitted via Moodle, and your final podcast will be submitted on both Moodle AND the blog via an embedded video or sound byte (a process we will go over in class). The only hard copy assignment you will submit is the Midterm Mapping Project.

Assignments & Activities

Blogging

Ecofeminism Unpacked (Blog) – Due Tuesday September 7th

What prejudices/presumptions have guided your perceptions of your body, nature, and gender?

Bioregional Quiz (Blog) – Due Tuesday September 28th

Handout will be provided the second week of class. In teams you will be assigned half of the questions from “The Bioregional Quiz,” to be turned in via a blog post. Answers should be in narrative form with sources cited. Single sentence or word answers are not acceptable.

This Land is MY Land? (Blog) – Due Tuesday October 12th

How have your thoughts about land and your connection to place changed since the beginning of the course? What things do you value about the land?

Writing of Choice (2) – 1 by Midterm, 1 by End of Semester

You will complete two additional blog posts in addition to those required for specific assignments at any point throughout the course of the semester. These posts follow the same guidelines. You must notify Sarah and Susannah within one class period when you have posted your assignment so grading can be returned in a timely manner.

Papers

Gendered, Dualistic Bodies (3-5 Page Paper) – Due Tuesday September 21st

Reflect on your relationship to your body. How is your body both gendered and not gendered? How do you relate to your body? Is your body gendered? What are the other dualisms which dictate your fundamental associations to your body? Is your body separate from the environments/systems/people around it? Why and why not?

Cosmetics Toxicity Report – Due Tuesday November 30th

Final- Contemporary Issues Paper – Due Friday December 10th

Possible topic areas:

- Toxicology in the body / nail salons/ The beauty industry
- Ecofeminism and environmental justice/agrojustice issues
- Land use/articulating alternative paradigm(s) for earth/land relationship/partnership ethic
- Bodies: theoretically, historically
- Reproduction / midwifery
- Women and Meat

Projects

Evening Class: Learning Place at the College Farm – Week of September 28th TBA

You will be required to attend an additional evening class at the College Farm, based on the collective schedule of the course. This evening class will have 1-2 short readings about the bioregional, agricultural importance of the Cumberland Valley.

Mapping Midterm – Due Friday October 15th

Ecofeminism Podcast – Due During Final Exam Time (TBA)

Create a short podcast (or video!) explaining ecofeminism in 30 seconds or less, and giving a 1 minute overview of a particular topic you found interesting over the course of the semester. These projects will be shared via the and with classmates during the final meeting time.

Ecofeminism Course Schedule

THEORY AND GROUNDWORK

Week One: Introduction to Ecofeminism

Tuesday August 31st

- Mies & Shiva, Ecofeminism

In class reflection: What prejudices/presumptions have guided perceptions of your body? Of gender? Nature?

Friday September 3rd

- Gaard, Greta. 1998. Pp. 11-52 in *Ecological Politics: Ecofeminists and the Greens*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (Study the Ecofeminist Map)
- Epstein, Barbara. 1993. Ecofeminism and Grass-roots Environmentalism in the United States, pp. 144-152 in Hofrichter, Richard (ed.). *Toxic struggles: the theory and practice of environmental justice*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Alvin Y. Wang, "Gender and Nature: A Psychological Analysis of Ecofeminist Theory" (*Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 1999, vol. 29, issue 11, pp 2410-2424).
- Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Ecofeminism: Symbolic & Social Connections..." (from *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* edited by Carol J. Adams; New York: Continuum, 1993)

Week Two: Grounding Ecofeminism: Biology, Nature, and the Body

Tuesday September 7th

WRITING DUE: ECOFEMINISM UNPACKED BLOG (online by class time)

- Plumwood, Val. 1993. Feminism and Ecofeminism. Pp 19-40. From *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. "Dueling Dualisms" from *Sexing the Body* (New York: Basic Books, 2000)
- Serano, Julia. "Boygasm and Girlgasm" from *Whipping Girl* (Seal Press, 2007).

Friday September 10th

- Elizabeth Grosz, "Refiguring Bodies" (from *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Indiana University Press, 1994).
- Gruen, L. (1993). Dismantling oppression: An analysis of the connection between women and animals. In G. Gaard (Ed.), *Ecofeminism: Women, animals, nature* (pp. 60-90). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Somerville, Siobhan. "Introduction" and "Scientific Racism" from *Queering the Color Line* (Duke University Press, 2000).

Week Three: Our Home: Women Speak for/with the Land

Tuesday September 14

- Plant, Judith, 1990, Revaluing Home: Feminism and Bioregionalism, Pp. 21-23 in Andruss, V., Plant, C., Plant, J. & Wright, E. *Home! A bioregional reader*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Forsey, Helen, 1990, Community: Meeting Our Deepest Needs, pp. 83-85 in Andruss, V., Plant, C., Plant, J. & Wright, E., *Home! A bioregional reader*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

- Conon, William. The Trouble With Wilderness.
http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Trouble_with_Wilderness_Main.html

Living is Breathing is Being Exercise

Friday, September 17

- Andrea Smith, "Rape of the Land" (from *Conquest*)
- Sturgeon, N. (1997). The nature of race: Discourses of racial difference in ecofeminism. In K. J. Warren (Ed.), *Ecofeminism: Women. culture. nature* (pp. 260-278). Bloomington, M: Indiana University Press.
- Hill Collins, Patricia. "The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood." *Black Feminist Thought*, Routledge 1991.
- Dolores Williams, "Sin, Nature and Black Women's Bodies" (from *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* edited by Carol J. Adams; New York: Continuum, 1993)
- Jenny Reardon, "Discourses of Participation."

Week Four: Connecting 'isms' and Power

Tuesday, September 21 – Class meets from 12:30-2:45pm (Guest lecture from Prof. Megan Glick)

- Adler, Margot. 1989. The juice and the mystery. Pp. 151-154 in Judith Plant (ed), *Healing the Wounds: the Promise of Ecofeminism*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Plumwood, Val. 1993. Dualism: The Logic of Colonialism. Pp 41-68. From *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

Friday, September 24

WRITING DUE: Gendered, Dualistic Bodies Paper

- Lorde, Audre. "Uses of the Erotic." (from *Sister Outsider*, The Crossing Press, 1983).
- bell hooks, Chapters 1-7 (from *Belonging: A Culture of Place*; New York, Routledge, 2009)

Week Five: Our Home: Women Speak for/with the Land

Tuesday, September 28

WRITING DUE: BIOREGIONAL QUIZ BLOG

- Plant, Judith, 1990, Searching for Common Ground: Ecofeminism and Bioregionalism, pp. 79-82 in Andruss, V., Plant, C., Plant, J. & Wright, E., *Home! A bioregional reader*. Philadelphia: New Society.
- Williams, Terry Tempest. *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. New York: Vintage, 1991.
- Leonard, Charles, Jim Dodge, Lynn Milliman, and Victoria Stockley, 1990, Where you at? A Bioregional Quiz, Pp.. 29-30 in Andruss, V., Plant, C., Plant, J. & Wright, E. *Home! A bioregional reader*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Hayden, Delores. "Is it Possible to Design a Nonsexist City?" *Gender and Planning*.

Friday, October 1

- Barbara Kingsolver, from *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*
- LaDuke, Winona. 1993. A Society Based on Conquest Cannot be Sustained: Native Peoples and the Environmental Crisis, pp. in. 98-106 Hofrichter, Richard (ed.), *Toxic struggles: the theory and practice of environmental justice*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Bradley, Candice. 1997. Chapter 17: Keeping the Soil in Good Heart: Women Weeders, the Environment, and Ecofeminism. Karen J. Warren (ed.) *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture and Nature*. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.

EVENING THIS WEEK: (Meet @ the College Farm)

Week Six: The Creation Narrative / Our Home: Women Speak for/with the Land

Tuesday, October 5

- Carolyn Merchant, "Reinventing Eden." Chapter 1.
- The Hebrew Christian Creation Story
- Iroquois creation story.
- Andrea Smith, "For All Those Who Were Indian in a Former Life" (from *Ecofeminism and the Sacred* edited by Carol J. Adams; New York: Continuum, 1993)
- Eisler, Riane. 1987. Chapter 8. The Other Half of History: Part I. Pp. 104-119 and Chapter 9. The Other Half of History. Part II. Pp.120-134. The Chalice and the Blade. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Friday, October 8: Class at Waggoner's Gap

- Crouch, Martha L. 2001. From Golden Rice to Terminator Technology: Why Agricultural Biotechnology Will Not Feed the World or Save the Environment. Pp. 22- 39 in Brian Tokar (ed) *Redesigning Life? The Worldwide Challenge to Genetic Engineering*. New York: Zed Books.
- Thomas Hariot. A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/hariot/hariot.html>
- Vandana Shiva: Soil Not Oil excerpt

Week Seven: Ecofeminist Mapping

Tuesday, October 12 - Work on Ecofeminist Mapping Project in class

WRITING DUE: THIS LAND IS MY LAND BLOG

Friday, October 15

MIDTERM DUE: ECOFEMINIST MAPPING PROJECT

Come prepared to share with the class

Tuesday, October 19

NO CLASS—FALL PAUSE

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Week Eight: Menstruation – Toxic Tampons and Coming of Age

Friday, October 23

- Menstruation Coming of Age – The White Buffalo Calf Woman Story
- Disney Presents "The Story of Menstruation." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kWR-riKRe4>

Week Nine: Reproductive Justice

Tuesday, October 26

- Nelson, Jennifer. "'Abortions Under Community Control'" from *Women of Color and the Reproductive Justice Movement* (New York University Press, 2003)
- Loretta Ross, "The Color of Choice" (from *The Color of Violence: the INCITE! anthology* edited by INCITE: Women of Color Against Violence; Cambridge, MA, South End Press, 2006)

- ---. "What is Reproductive Justice?" from *The Reproductive Justice Briefing Book*, available at <http://www.sistersong.net/documents/RJBriefingBook.pdf>.
- Briggs, Laura. "Discourses of 'forced sterilization' in Puerto Rico: the Problem with the Speaking Subaltern". *discourse: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 10.2 (1998).

Friday, October 30: *Location TBA* - Joint discussion with Prof. Glick's Race & the Body course

- David Serlin, "Reconstructing the Hiroshima Maidens."
 - Documentary Clip: *White Light / Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Dir. Steven Okasaki, 2007).
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Week Ten: Climate Change & Gender Development; Resistance to War and Violence

Tuesday, November 2

WRITING DUE: ECOFEMINISM UNPACKED

CHOOSE FINAL ISSUES PAPER TOPIC

- ROJAS-CHEATHAM, Parades, Griffin, Shah, and Shen. (2009). LOOKING BOTH WAYS: Women's Lives at the Crossroads of Reproductive Justice and Climate Justice. Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice. The Momentum Series – Expanding the Movement for Empowerment and Reproductive Justice.

Friday, November 5

- Seager, Joni. 1993. Creating a Culture of Destruction: Gender, Militarism, and the Environment. Pp. 58-66 Hofrichter, Richard (ed.), *Toxic struggles: the theory and practice of environmental justice*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
 - Warren, Karen and Duane Cady. 1996. Feminism and Peace: Seeing Connections.. pp. 2-15 in Cady, D. and Warren, K. *Bringing Peace Home: Feminism, Violence and Nature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press
 - Kelly, Petra. 1997. Chapter Six: Women and Power. pp. 112-119 in Karen J. Warren (ed.) *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture and Nature*. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.
 - Gaard, Greta. 1997. Chapter 14: Rhetoric, Rape, and Ecowarefare in the Persian Gulf. Karen J. Warren (ed.) *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture and Nature*. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.
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Week Eleven: Consumers and Killers: The Beauty Industry & Nail Salons

Tuesday, November 9: MOVIES DUE: Watch *Story of Stuff: Cosmetics* and *16 Deaths per Day*

Friday, November 12

- Miliann Kang, "The Managed Hand" (from *The Managed Hand*)
 - WVE report, "Glossed Over: Health Hazards Associated with Toxic Exposure in Nail Salons."
 - NPR Report "WGBH Investigates: Sexual and Human Trafficking in the Boston Area." Thursday, July 8, 2010
 - ---. Framing a Proactive Research Agenda to Advance Worker Health and Safety in the Nail Salon and Cosmetology Communities. 2010. California Healthy Nail Salon Initiative.
 - "Human Health – Sick of Man-Made Chemicals." 2006. From "Toxic World." Women in Europe for a Common Future, pg. 13-22.
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Week Twelve: Dumping Grounds, Body and Planet

Tuesday, November 16

- Marion Moses, "Farmworkers and Pesticides," from *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots* (packet)

- Penny Newman, "Killing Legally with Toxic Waste: Women and Environment in the United States," from *Close to Home: Women Reconnect Ecology, Health and Development Worldwide*, ed. Vandana Shiva (packet)
- Kraus, Celene. 1993. Blue Collar Women & Toxic-Waste Protest: The Process of Politicization. Pp. 107-117 in Hofrichter, Richard (ed.). *Toxic struggles: the theory and practice of environmental justice*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers

Friday, November 19: Guest Lecture by Dr. Greg Howard

- Excerpt from Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*
- Johnson Controls – Supreme Court Decisions - Batteries & Gender Processing

Week Thirteen: Ecofeminist Organizational Tools

Tuesday, November 23

- Starhawk, 1997, Chapter 6. Building community processes for groups. Pp. 92-113 and Chapter 7. Circles and webs: group structures. Pp. 114-134 in *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, and Politics*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Deep listening and Deep Ecology exercise

Friday November 26th: NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fourteen: Reflection and Synthesis

Tuesday, November 30

WRITING DUE: Cosmetics Toxicity Report
Podcast Workshop at Bosler Media Center

Friday, December 3:

- Layli Phillips, "Womanism: On Its Own" (from *The Womanist Reader* edited by Layli Phillips; New York: Routledge, 2006)

Week Fifteen: Partnership Ethic

Tuesday, December 7: Discussion of partnership ethic

Friday, December 10: LAST CLASS

PAPER DUE: Contemporary Issues Research Paper

FINAL EXAMS

December 11 & 12	Reading period
December 13-18	Final Exams
January 4	All grades due