

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY & WOMEN'S STUDIES
GSWS 9466B/4464G Gender and the Environment
WINTER 2024

Instructor: Professor Bipasha Baruah

Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships with Southwestern Ontario and the City of London. Within proximity of Western, there are 3 First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the wider region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing urban Indigenous population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all 11 of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada.

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Class Timings: Thursdays 10:30 am -1:30 pm

Office Hours: Thursdays: 1:30 to 2:30 pm, Mondays: 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm, or by appointment.

Course Description:

This course will focus on the linkages between gender, economy, environment, race, class, sexuality, environmental racism and environmental justice. We will examine key contemporary environmental issues such as climate change, food security, the “green” economy, low-carbon development and degrowth; access to water, sanitation, and energy; pollution; and biodiversity conservation from feminist perspectives. Feminist and queer theory will also be used to question and destabilize binary categories such as natural/unnatural, nature/culture, normal/abnormal as they relate to our understandings of “the environment.” The course will explore how racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, colonialism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression have shaped and continue to shape environmental discourses. We will also discuss emerging concepts such as solastalgia and ecological grief. Course materials will include academic and non-academic literature (including policy and journalistic literature), activist texts, case studies, fiction, and film.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

This course seeks to enable students to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To demonstrate an understanding of how gender, race, class, sexuality, environmental racism and environmental justice are related to one another;
2. To challenge binary representations and interpretations of nature and culture;
3. To understand how racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, imperialism, and other forms of oppression shape popular environmental discourse;

4. To understand contemporary environmental issues from feminist perspectives;
5. To optimize learning through academic and non-academic course readings, lectures, films, case studies, guest speakers, debates, written and verbal participation;
6. To provide students with the opportunity to relate course content to their daily lives, future studies, and careers.

Course Texts and Resources:

- Susan Buckingham, 2020, *Gender and Environment (Second edition)*, Routledge. **Available online from Western libraries.**
- Amitav Ghosh, 2005, *The Hungry Tide*, HarperCollins.

Links to some readings are included in the syllabus, others are posted as PDFs on OWL, and some are accessible online from Western libraries.

Student Assessment:

Blog, Op-ed, or Popular Article: 15% (due February 15)

Book Review – *The Hungry Tide*: 20% (due March 14)

Policy Brief and Presentation: 30% (15% each) (due April 4)

Research Paper: 25% (due April 11)

Attendance and participation: 10% (throughout the semester)

Book Review: Students are expected to write a review of *The Hungry Tide*. Please look under Assignments on OWL for a set of questions to use as guidelines for writing the book review.

Research Paper: The purpose of the research paper is to encourage in-depth research as well as clear and systematic argument on a topic of interest to the student and of relevance to the course. Papers are expected to be **no longer than 4,000 words for grad students and 3,000 words for undergrads** (inclusive of title, abstract, keynotes, footnotes and bibliography) and referenced in APA style. *The bibliography must include at least 10 references to scholarly and/or practitioner literature for graduate and undergraduate students.* The paper should follow the format of **Title, Abstract (100 words), Keywords (3-5), Introduction** (including objectives and rationale for the research), **Methodology** (explain which databases searches were conducted in, what the inclusion and exclusion criteria were, why the scholarly and/or practitioner literature included in the paper were selected, and how they were analyzed (inductive or deductive thematic analysis, for example), **Results/Findings, Discussion, Conclusion and Bibliography**. Look under Assignments on OWL for an example of a research paper based on Literature Review and Knowledge Synthesis.

Policy Brief: Policy briefs are useful tools for presenting research and recommendations to a non-specialized audience. They serve as a vehicle for providing evidence-based policy advice to help

readers make informed decisions. A strong policy brief distills research findings in plain language and makes clear policy recommendations. The best policy briefs are clear and concise stand-alone documents that focus on a single topic: <https://www.idrc.ca/en/how-write-policy-brief> (Please look under the Assignments tab on OWL for a sample policy brief).

Presentation: Students are expected to prepare 10-minute max. in-class presentations of their policy briefs and to answer questions about their research.

Blog, Op-ed or Popular Article: The purpose of this assignment is to enable students to gain experience writing about environmental issues and social justice for public audiences. Students may choose to prepare their 800-1,000-word article in the style of a popular journalistic/non-academic forum such as the *Globe & Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *Huffington Post*, *The Conversation*, *Western News* or *Policy Options*. Several articles from these sources already appear on the syllabus as readings.

Attendance and Participation: I may lecture occasionally but this is a seminar, so it is primarily focused on discussion. The purpose of student participation is to allow students to take an active part in learning as well as to foster mutual understanding and debate. Active participation refers to regular attendance in classes and frequent participation in discussion and debates. Qualitative participation refers to informed discussion, based on close analysis of assigned readings and critical analysis of the topic of the day, and to the student's ability to interact with classmates in a respectful manner.

I do not always agree with the readings I assign. You are not always expected to agree with them either. The readings are assigned to enable you to think critically and form your own opinions. Learning to read critically doesn't mean that you must always criticize what you're reading. It means engaging with and articulating both the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented.

As part of their participation grade, graduate students are also expected to lead the discussion of one course reading. Undergraduate students are expected to participate actively in class discussion and to contribute discussion questions for different course topics.

There is no final examination for this course.

Course Policies:

Attendance Requirement: Students are expected to attend all classes.

Failure to attend classes, present material in class, or participate in group activities, in the absence of a documented medical reason, will be reflected in the student's final grade.

Laptop and Electronics Policy: I reserve the right to ask any student to refrain from using their laptop computer in class. Students must not access social media during class. Mobile phones and other devices must be switched off during class.

Late Papers: Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 10% of the assignment grade per day. In other words, if an assignment is worth 20 points, you will lose 2 points for every day that it is late. Students are encouraged to assess their own time commitments well ahead of time.

Using Generative AI Language Apps

ChatGPT and its various analogues are not “research help” nor are they “grammar checkers.” They produce text based on a predictive model as to what word is most likely to come next. When asked to cite “research,” they have no capacity to do actual research, so they invent articles and books. You may find yourself citing a work whose author and title are complete fictions; more often, the AI attributes its imaginary research paper to a real scholar, but not necessarily one who even works in the area. Using a Generative AI app may seem like an easy way to manage your time or to simplify your workload, but if you use it without acknowledging that you are doing so, you are cheating. You are also depriving yourself of the value of education, since by using ChatGPT you are not building your own skills in critical thinking, research, or communication, all of which are areas of significant interest to potential employers. In brief, if you use a Generative AI app to help with your assignment, you must identify every part of your assignment that you did not write yourself. Anything else is a violation of academic integrity and subject to all the same penalties as more traditional types of plagiarism. If ChatGPT use is suspected, you may be asked to show your rough work, to answer questions about your sources and your research process, and to explain your argument orally.

Winter 2024 Course Schedule¹

Week 1: 11 January 2024

Introduction to the course

Op-ed, Chika Unigwe, It’s not just Greta Thunberg: why are we ignoring the developing world’s inspiring activists? *The Guardian*. 5 October 2019.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/05/greta-thunberg-developing-world-activists>

Op-ed. Bipasha Baruah. Development Unplugged (for the Canadian Council for International Co-operation): Reconciling Economic Security, Environmental Protection and Social Justice.

Huffington Post. April 1, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/development-unplugged/reconciling-economic-security_b_9583020.html

Op-ed. Damian Carrington, Why the Guardian is changing the language it uses about the environment. *The Globe & Mail*. 17 May 2019.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/17/why-the-guardian-is-changing-the-language-it-uses-about-the-environment>

Week 2: 18 January 2024: *Gender and Environment: Key Issues*

Susan Buckingham, *Gender and Environment* (Chapter 1: Linking Gender and the Environment) (Available online from Weldon)

¹ Readings marked with two asterisks (**) have been uploaded on the OWL course website. Readings that say Weldon are available online from Western Libraries.

Susan Buckingham, *Gender and Environment* (Chapter 3: Conceptualizing Gender-Environment Relationships) (Weldon)

**Claudia Radel. 2009. "Natures, Gendered." In *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, edited by Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift. Elsevier. Pp. 331-336.

Week 3: 25 January 2024: Gender and Climate Change

Joni Seager. 2003. Rachel Carson Died of Breast Cancer: The Coming of Age of Feminist Environmentalism. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28(3): 945-972. (Weldon)

Men, Masculinities and Climate Change: A Discussion Paper:

<https://menengage.org/resources/men-masculinities-and-climate-change-a-discussion-paper/>

Hartmann and Barajas-Roman: The Population Bomb is Back: With a Global Warming Twist:

http://www.isiswomen.org/phocadownload/print/isispub/wia/wia2009-2/2wia09_17features_betsy.pdf

Amitav Ghosh, *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* (Chapter 8: Fossilized Forests) (Weldon)

Week 4: 1 February 2024: Gender, Climate Change, Green Economy

**Wilson, Gendering Oil Tracing Western Petrosexual Relations

Baruah, B. and S. Biskupski-Mujanovic. 2023. Indigenous Women's Employment in Natural Resource Industries in Canada. *Women's Studies International Forum* 99: 102784.

Baruah, B. 2016. Renewable inequity? Women's employment in clean energy in industrialized, emerging and developing economies. *Natural Resources Forum* 41(1): 18-29.

Baruah, B. and S. Biskupski-Mujanovic. 2021. *Closing the Gender Gaps in Energy Sector Recruitment, Retention and Advancement*. In Webb, J., Tingey, M. & F. Wade (eds.) *Research Handbook on Energy and Society*. Edinburgh, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. pp. 169-184. (Weldon)

Week 5: 8 February 2024: Green economy versus degrowth

Paul Gallant, Deliberate Degrowth. *THIS*. August 6, 2020: <https://this.org/2020/08/06/deliberate-degrowth/>

Arundhati Roy, The pandemic is a portal. *Financial Times*. 3 April 2020. <https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

Rebecca Solnit, What if climate change meant not doom — but abundance? *The Washington Post*. 15 March 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/03/15/rebecca-solnit-climate-change-wealth-abundance/>

Umair Haque. Why Artificial Scarcity is Killing You: How Predatory Capitalism Breaks Societies, Economies, and Minds. 20 July 2018. <https://eand.co/why-artificial-scarcity-is-killing-you-d19ff364c812>

Bipasha Baruah. 2021. “What does degrowth say about gender equality and social justice?” SSHRC Final Report and Evidence Brief: https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/ifca-iac/evidence_briefs-donnees_probantes/earth_carrying_capacity-capacite_limite_terre/baruah-eng.aspx (Read Evidence Brief)

Week 6: 15 February 2024: The Future of Work (Blog/Popular Article Due)

Susan Buckingham, *Gender and Environment* (Chapter 5: Work) (Weldon)

Tim Smedley, How shorter workweeks could save Earth. *BBC Worklife*.

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190802-how-shorter-workweeks-could-save-earth>

Maddy Savage, Why Finland leads the world in flexible work. *BBC Worklife*.

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190807-why-finland-leads-the-world-in-flexible-work>

Corinna Dengler and Birte Strunk. 2018. The Monetized Economy versus Care and the Environment: Degrowth Perspectives on Reconciling an Antagonism. *Feminist Economics* 24(3): 160–183.

Week 7: Feb 19-23: SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

Week 8: 29 February 2024: Climate Change, Migration and Livelihoods

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Jemima Baada, Assistant Professor of Geography, University of British Columbia.

Baada, J., B. Baruah and I. Luginaah. 2019. ‘What we were running from is what we’re facing again’: examining the paradox of migration as a livelihood improvement strategy among migrant women farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. *Migration and Development* 8(3): 448-471.

Week 9: 7 March 2024: Class Discussion of *The Hungry Tide*

Tenhunen, Living with climate change in Sunderbans, India: www.endissa.net/cyclone-aila/living-with-climate-change-in-sundarbans-india/

Roy, Life versus livelihoods: is there any choice? <http://www.endissa.net/uncategorized-en/life-versus-livelihood-is-there-any-choice/>

National Geographic, This vanishing forest protects the coasts—and lives—of two countries: <https://earthjournalism.net/stories/this-vanishing-forest-protects-the-coasts-and-lives-of-two-countries>

Bengal Tigers May Not Survive Climate Change:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/06/science/tigers-climate-change-sundarbans.html>

Mostafa and Bose, The narrow focus on climate change in Bangladesh often reproduces exploitation and vulnerability rather than addressing it:

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2016/10/24/the-narrow-focus-on-climate-change-in-bangladesh-often-reproduces-exploitation-and-vulnerability-rather-than-addressing-it/>

Week 10: 14 March 2024: (BOOK REVIEW DUE)

Queer Ecology

**Noel Sturgeon, Penguin Family Values: The Nature of Planetary Environmental Reproductive Justice

**Andil Gosine, Non-white Reproduction and Same-Sex Eroticism: Queer Acts against Nature

Andil Gosine, *Nature's Wild: Love, Sex, and Law in the Caribbean*: Introduction:

<https://www.dukeupress.edu/natures-wild>

And Tango Makes Three: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WypjUa908hM>

Week 11: 21 March 2024 Environmental Justice and Racism

Peter Beech, What is environmental racism and how can we fight it? *World Economic Forum*. 31 July 2020: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/what-is-environmental-racism-pollution-covid-systemic/>

Baldwin, Cameron and Kobayashi, *Rethinking the Great White North: race, nature, and the historical geographies of whiteness in Canada* (Introduction: Where Is the Great White North? Spatializing History, Historicizing Whiteness) (Weldon)

Jocelyn Thorpe, *Rethinking the Great White North: race, nature, and the historical geographies of whiteness in Canada* (Part 4, Chapter 9: Temagami's Tangled Wild: The Making of Race, Nature, and Nation in Early-Twentieth-Century Ontario) (Weldon)

Leo Goldsmith and Michelle L. Bell. 2022. "Queering Environmental Justice: Unequal Environmental Health Burden on the LGBTQ+ Community." *American Journal of Public Health* 112(1):79–87.

Week 12: 28 March 2024: Ecological Grief

Ashlee Cunsolo and Neville Ellis. 2018. "Ecological grief as a mental health response to climate change-related loss." *Nature Climate Change* 8: 275–281.

Ashlee Cunsolo and Neville Ellis. Hope and mourning in the Anthropocene: Understanding ecological grief. *The Conversation*. 4 April 2018. <https://theconversation.com/hope-and-mourning-in-the-anthropocene-understanding-ecological-grief-88630>

Melissa Godin. Eco-Grief Around the World. *Atmos*. 1 January 2021. Eco-Grief Around the World. <https://atmos.earth/ecological-grief-climate-change-mental-health/>

Week 13: 4 April 2024: Student Presentations (POLICY BRIEFS DUE)

RESEARCH PAPER DUE: April 11, 2024