

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY & WOMEN'S STUDIES
GSWS 9466: Gender and the Environment
WINTER 2027 DRAFT Syllabus

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 contributions of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada and commits to undoing historical and contemporary injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples.

Instructor: Dr. Bipasha Baruah, Professor & Western Research Chair

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

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 2:00 – 4:00 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. Neither of the course texts has to be purchased.

Student Assessment:

1. Op-ed, Blog, or Popular Article: 20% (due Week 6)
2. Book Review – *The Hungry Tide*: 20% (due Week 10)
3. Policy Brief: 30% (15% each) (due Week 14)
4. Presentation: 15% (Weeks 13 and 14)
5. GBA+ certification: 5% (must be completed before the last day of the semester)
6. Attendance and participation: 10% (throughout the semester)

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

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 for a sample policy brief on Brightspace).

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

Op-ed, Blog, 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-word max. 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 op-eds and articles from these sources already appear on the syllabus as readings.

GBA+ Certification: You will earn a micro-credential within this course. You can complete the course online at your convenience. Everyone who presents the completion certificate by the last day of class will receive the full 5% of the course grade. The course should take no more than 2 hours to complete: <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-analysis-plus/take-course.html>

I also recommend completing the 3 optional modules of the GBA+ course (The History of GBA+, GBA+ Roles and Responsibilities, Building a Framework to Support GBA+ in your Organization) but there is no additional grade for doing so.

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. As part of their participation grade, each student is expected to lead the discussion of one course reading.

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.

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

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 it 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 Generative AI 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 2027 Course Schedule¹

Week 1: 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>

**Op-ed. Bipasha Baruah. 2026. How adopting green energy can restrain despots and dictators and make the world safer. *Toronto Star*, May 6.

Week 2: Gender and Environment: Key Terms and Issues

Susan Buckingham, *Gender and Environment* (Chapter 1: Linking Gender and the Environment) (WL)

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

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

Week 3: 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. (WL)

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

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

**Wilson, Gendering Oil Tracing Western Petrosocial Relations

Week 4: Men, Masculinities, and Climate Change

Kadri Aavik, Jeff Hearn, Martin Hultman & Tamara Shefer. 2025. Men, masculinities, and the planet at the end of(M)Anthropocene: ecological/social/economic/political relations, processes and consequences. NORMA, 20:4 (254-268), DOI: 10.1080/18902138.2025.2576458 (WL)

Stine Thidemann Faber & Jonatan Leer. 2026. Green fathering in the (m)Anthropocene. NORMA 21:1 (36-52), DOI: 10.1080/18902138.2025.2590269 (WL)

Janice Swan. 2025. Denial is a pipeline in Canada: a feminist critical discourse analysis of Canadian far-right climate obstruction. NORMA 20:4 (346-363), DOI: 10.1080/18902138.2025.2575245 (WL)

Week 5: Green economy versus degrowth

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

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 and Andrea Burke. 2025. What does degrowth say about gender equality and social justice? In Susan Buckingham (ed.). *Feminist Climate Policy in Industrialised States*. Routledge. Pp.159-175. (WL)

Week 6: The Future of Work (OP-ED DUE)

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

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>

Emily Peck, 'You Are Mommy Tracked to the Billionth Degree.' *Politico*. 15 November 2021.
<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/11/15/women-remote-work-penalty-solutions-520601>

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. (WL)

Week 7: SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

Week 8: Climate Change and Migration

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

Jemima Baada, Bipasha Baruah and Isaac 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. (WL)

Kathinka Fossum Evertsen & Kees van der Geest. 2020. Gender, environment and migration in Bangladesh. *Climate and Development*, 12 (1): 12-22, DOI: 10.1080/17565529.2019.1596059 (WL)

Week 9: Agriculture, Food security, forgotten crops

Bipasha Baruah. 2024. [Persistent Gendered Inequality, Property, and Unsustainability](#). The Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science Global South Blog. 13 November 2024.

Preeti Jha, Are forgotten crops the future of food?. *BBC*. 21 August 2018.
<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20180821-are-forgotten-crops-the-future-of-food>

Norman Miller. 2021. The forgotten foods that could excite our tastebuds. *BBC*.
<https://www.bbc.com/future/bespoke/follow-the-food/the-forgotten-plants-that-could-excite-our-tastebuds/>

Dina Najjar and Bipasha Baruah. 2024. Beer, barley, livestock, milk: Who adopts agricultural innovations in rural Rajasthan? *World Development Perspectives*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wdp.2024.100643> (WL)

Week 10: Queer Ecology (BOOK REVIEW DUE)

**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: 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) (WL)

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: 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/>

Jade Sasser. [The complex link between population decline and a warming planet](#). *Los Angeles Times*. 7 June 2021.

Anne Hendrixson and Jade Sasser. 2021. [Don't Blame Babies \(or Their Mothers\) for Climate Change](#). *Ms. Magazine*. 28 May 2021.

Week 13: Student Presentations

Week 14: Student Presentations and Course Wrap-Up (POLICY BRIEFS DUE)