

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**  
**THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AND FEMINIST RESEARCH**  
**GSWS 9466B/4464G Gender and the Environment**  
**WINTER 2020**

**Instructor:** Professor Bipasha Baruah

**Class:** Tuesdays 1:30 - 4:30 pm

**Classroom:** Western Interdisciplinary Research Building (WIRB) 1160

**Instructor Office:** Lawson Hall 3244

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**Office Hours:** Thursdays 10 am to 12 noon, or by appointment

**Course Description:**

This course will focus on the linkages between gender, economy, environment, human development, race, 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 wildlife conservation from feminist perspectives. Feminist and queer theory will also be used to interrogate binary categories such as natural/unnatural, nature/culture, normal/abnormal as they relate to our understandings of “nature and the environment.” The course will explore how racism, sexism, heterosexism, colonialism, imperialism and other forms of oppression have shaped and continue to shape environmental discourses. Course materials will include academic and non-academic 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, sexuality, development and environmental justice are related to one another;
2. To challenge binary representations and interpretations of nature and culture;
3. To understand how racism, 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:

- Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (PDF available online)
- Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide*

Links to some readings are included in the syllabus and others are posted as PDFs on OWL.

## Student Assessment:

Book Review – *Silent Spring* (1,000 words max): 15%

Book Review – *The Hungry Tide* (1,000 words max): 15%

Film Review (1,500 words max): 20%

Research Paper: 30%

Presentation: 10%

Attendance and participation: 10%

*Film Review and Book Review:* Students are expected to write a critical review of one of the following documentaries (*This Changes Everything*, *The March of the Penguins*, *Anthropocene: The Human Epoch*) and book reviews of *Silent Spring* and *The Hungry Tide*. Students will be provided with a set of questions as guidelines for writing the film and book reviews.

*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 5,000 words** (inclusive of title, 100-word abstract, footnotes and bibliography) and referenced in APA style. The bibliography must include at least 15 references to scholarly and/or practitioner literature.

*Research Presentation:* Students are expected to prepare 10 minute in-class presentations of their research paper, to answer questions about their research, and to carry out peer evaluation of presentations.

*Attendance and Participation:* 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 always have to be critical of 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.

**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.

The university regulations require that the following plagiarism information be included on course syllabi:

### **Scholastic Offences:**

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/crsout.pdf>

### **Specifically on Plagiarism:**

***"Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see the 'Scholastic Offense Policy' in the Western Academic Calendar).***

Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking." --- U.W.O. Senate statement on plagiarism

**Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites for this course.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

## Winter 2020 Course Schedule<sup>1</sup>

### Week 1: 7 January 2020

Introduction to the course

Op-ed. Bipasha Baruah. 2016. Development Unplugged (for the Canadian Council for International Co-operation): Reconciling Economic Security, Environmental Protection and Social Justice. *Huffington Post*. April 1. [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/development-unplugged/reconciling-economic-security\\_b\\_9583020.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/development-unplugged/reconciling-economic-security_b_9583020.html)

Damian Carrington, Why the Guardian is changing the language it uses about the environment. *The Globe & Mail*. 17 May. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/17/why-the-guardian-is-changing-the-language-it-uses-about-the-environment>

### Week 2: 14 January 2020: *Gender and Climate Change*

Radel, Natures, Gendered\*

Wilson, Gendering Oil Tracing Western Petrosexual Relations\*

Angie Daze, Why Gender Matters in Climate Change Adaptation: <https://www.iisd.org/blog/gender-climate-change>

Addressing Gender Equality in Climate Change Adaptation: <http://napglobalnetwork.org/resource/infographic-addressing-gender-equality-in-climate-change-adaptation/>

Geraldine Terry, No climate justice without gender justice\*

Men, Masculinities and Climate Change: A Discussion Paper:

<http://menengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Men-Masculinities-and-Climate-Change-FINAL.pdf>

### Week 3: 21 January 2020: *Gender and Climate Change*

Bipasha Baruah, Creating Opportunities for Women in the Renewable Energy Sector: Findings from Research in India\*

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

Documentary: *Hands on – women, climate, change*

### Week 4: 28 January 2020: *Gender and Climate Change*

Baruah, B. 2019. Commentary: Addressing the diversity challenge in energy sector recruitment. IEA. <https://www.iea.org/newsroom/news/2019/july/addressing-the-diversity-challenge-in-energy-sector-recruitment.html>

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<sup>1</sup> Readings marked with an asterisk (\*) have been uploaded on the OWL course website.

Bipasha Baruah, Renewable Inequity? Women's employment in clean energy in industrialized, emerging and developing economies\*

Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective:

<https://www.irena.org/publications/2019/Jan/Renewable-Energy-A-Gender-Perspective>

Baruah, B. & A. Chaianong. (2019). Status Report on Gender Equality in the Energy Sector. Paris: IEA. [http://www.cleanenergyministerial.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/Status%20Report%20on%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20the%20Energy%20Sector\\_0.pdf](http://www.cleanenergyministerial.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/Status%20Report%20on%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20the%20Energy%20Sector_0.pdf)

Bipasha Baruah and Crystal Gaudet. 2016. Confronting the Gender Gap in Canada's Green Transition. *This Changes Everything: The Leap*. <https://news.westernu.ca/2016/09/baruah-gaudet-confronting-gender-gap-canadas-green-transition/>

### **Week 5: 4 February 2020: Migration and Climate Change**

Guest Lecturer: Jemima Baada

Baada, Baruah and 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\*

Nyantakyi-Frimpong, Unmasking difference: intersectionality and smallholder farmers' vulnerability to climate extremes in Northern Ghana\*

Mostafa and Bose, The narrow focus on climate change in Bangladesh often reproduces exploitation and vulnerability rather than addressing it:  
<http://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 6: 11 February 2020**

Classroom discussion of *Silent Spring*

Seager, Rachel Carson Died of Breast Cancer: The Coming of Age of Feminist Environmentalism\*

PBS Documentary: Rachel Carson

### **Week 7: No Class (SPRING BREAK!)**

### **Week 8: 25 February 2020: The Future of Work (BOOK REVIEW – Silent Spring - DUE)**

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.

Eicker and Keil, Who cares? A convergence of feminist economics and degrowth:  
<https://www.exploring-economics.org/en/discover/who-cares/>

### **Week 9: 3 March 2020**

#### **Environmental Justice and Racism**

Baldwin, Cameron and Kobayashi, Introduction: Where Is the Great White North? Spatializing History, Historicizing Whiteness\*

Lovelace, Attawapiskat and colonialism: Seeing the forest and the trees:

<http://rabble.ca/news/2011/12/attawapiskat-and-colonialism-seeing-forest-and-trees>

Malcolm Harris, An Indigenous Critique of the New Green Deal:

<http://www.wrongkindofgreen.org/2019/04/18/an-indigenous-critique-of-the-green-new-deal/>

Baruah, B. and S. Biskupski-Mujanovic. Indigenous Women's Employment in Natural Resources Industries: Patterns, Challenges, Opportunities\*

### **Week 10: 10 March 2020**

#### **Queer Ecology**

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

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

*And Tango Makes Three*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyPjUa908hM>

Documentary: *March of the Penguins*

### **Week 11: 17 March 2020**

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/](http://www.endissa.net/cyclone-aila/living-with-climate-change-in-sundarbans-india/)

National Geographic, This vanishing forest protects the coasts—and lives—of two countries: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2019/07/sundarbans-mangrove-forest-in-bangladesh-india-threatened-by-rising-waters-illegal-logging/>

Bengal Tigers May Not Survive Climate Change:

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

### **Week 12: 24 March 2020: Student Presentations**

**Week 13: 31 March 2020: Student Presentations and Course Wrap Up (FILM REVIEW DUE)**

**BOOK REVIEW – *The Hungry Tide* – DUE: April 7, 2020**

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE: April 26, 2020.**