

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AND FEMINIST RESEARCH
WS 3312G: Gender and the Environment
WINTER 2017

Instructor: Professor Bipasha Baruah

Class: Tuesdays 12:30 - 3:30 pm

Classroom: SSC (Social Science) 2028

Instructor Office: Lawson Hall 3244

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 am to 12 noon.

Course Description:

This course will focus on the linkages between gender, 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 and low-carbon development; 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*.
- Hannah Reid, *Climate Change and Human Development* (required background reading)
- Andil Gosine and Cheryl Teelucksingh, *Environmental Justice and Racism in Canada*

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

Student Assessment:

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

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

Research Paper: 30%

Presentation: 20%

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*, *An Inconvenient Truth*) and a book review of *Silent Spring*. Students will be provided with a set of questions as guidelines for writing the film and 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 6,000 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 15 minute in-class presentations of their research topic, to answer questions about their research, and to carry out peer evaluation of research 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.

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 classes or tutorials. MP3 players, mobile phones and other mobile devices are not permitted during class time.

Late Papers: Late papers will be penalized. 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 2017 Course Schedule¹

Week 1: 10 January 2017

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

¹ Readings marked with an asterisk (*) have been uploaded on the OWL course website.

Week 2: 17 January 2017: Gender and Climate Change

Women and Climate Change: Impact and Agency in Human Rights, Security and Economic Development (Published by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security):

<https://giwps.georgetown.edu/sites/giwps/files/Women%20and%20Climate%20Change.pdf>

Executive Summary (pp. 9-10) and Introduction (pp. 11-18)

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: 24 January 2017: Gender and Climate Change

Women and Climate Change: Impact and Agency in Human Rights, Security and Economic Development (Published by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security):

<https://giwps.georgetown.edu/sites/giwps/files/Women%20and%20Climate%20Change.pdf>

Various Manifestations of Climate Change and their Gendered Impacts (pp. 19-44)

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

Week 4: 31 January 2017: Gender and Climate Change

Looking to COP 21: Mobilizing the International Community and Strengthening National Capacity (pp.45-60).

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

Bipasha Baruah and Crystal Gaudet. 2016. Confronting the Gender Gap in Canada's Green Transition. *This Changes Everything: The Leap*. <https://theleapblog.org/confronting-the-gender-gap-in-canadas-green-transition/> (original op-ed in *The Hill Times*)

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/>

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

Week 5: 7 February 2017

Shaping Policy in the Anthropocene: Gender Justice as a Social, Economic & Ecological Challenge (**Guest Lecturer: Dr. Phoebe Spencer, University of Vermont**)

Additional readings will be posted.

Week 6: 14 February 2017:

Classroom discussion of *Silent Spring*

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

Week 7: No Class (SPRING BREAK!)

Week 8: 28 February 2017:

Ervine, The Politics and Practice of Carbon Offsetting: Silencing Dissent*

Documentary: *This Changes Everything/ An Inconvenient Truth*

(BOOK REVIEW DUE)

Week 9: 7 March 2017

Environmental Justice and Racism

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Andil Gosine, York University

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

<http://www.ubcpres.ca/books/pdf/chapters/2011/RethinkingTheGreatWhiteNorth.pdf>

Gosine and Teelucksingh, Naming/Framing Environmental Justice in Canada*

Gosine and Teelucksingh, Representing Nature and Environmentalism*

Gosine and Teelucksingh, Stories Less Told: Environmental Justice Activists Speak*

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

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

Week 10: 14 March 2017

Queer Ecology

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

Johnson, How to Queer Ecology: One Goose at a Time: <https://orionmagazine.org/article/how-to-queer-ecology-once-goose-at-a-time/>

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

Gosine, 'Race', Culture, Power, Sex, Desire, Love: Writing in 'Men who have Sex with Men'*

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

Documentary: *March of the Penguins*

Week 11: 21 March 2017: Student Presentations

Week 12: 28 March 2017: Student Presentations

Week 13: April 4 2017: Student Presentations (FILM REVIEW DUE)

Research Paper Due: April 25, 2017.