

**Gender and Geography (WMST 298A)  
Fall 2010**

Location: Meneely Hall 102

Time: T/R 3:30 – 4:50

Instructor: Jessica Hayes-Conroy

Office Hours: 2 - 3:20 T/R or by appt

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**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

As a point of entry to discussions of gender, place and culture, this course will explore the diverse ways in which geographers have conceived of, analyzed and redefined gender. In particular, using contemporary geographic texts, we will explore the gendered dynamics of environmentalism, resource management, health and the body, agriculture and food, and globalization, among other topics. Emphasis will be placed on recognizing and researching cultural difference across these various topical areas. Readings and class discussion will build through shorter assignments toward a final research paper/presentation.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course is designed to introduce students to both classic and current research in feminist geography that is specifically relevant to the study of natural environments and “nature” more broadly defined. At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to:

- Critique the social construction of gender as it relates to human-environment interaction.
- Analyze representations of gender and nature in social institutions and the media.
- Evaluate claims related to human ability, reproduction of place, and bodily health.
- Apply theories of gender and nature in the context of conducting research.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** All texts are available through onCourse or library reserves

**EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:**

My practice of teaching is informed by feminist scholars, and is based upon two understandings: First is that the classrooms in which we teach and learn are not apart from the broader world that we seek to understand and transform through education. In other words, our spaces of education, and our selves as producers of knowledge, are a part of what we endeavor as scholars to *know*, to *understand*. Second, the role of the teacher in this process is not simply to share information, but to share in and facilitate a collective process of intellectual growth. Learning, therefore, is a two-way street – one in which everyone involved must play an active part. While this process is not always easy, if we act as critical thinkers and responsible scholars, it will always be a road full of possibility and hope. Bell hooks, one of my favorite feminist scholars, sums up the experience and practice of higher education like this:

“The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom with all its limitations remains a **location of possibility**. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, **an openness of mind and heart** that allows us to **face reality** even as we collectively imagine ways to **move beyond** boundaries, to transgress. This is education as

the **practice of freedom.**” (bell hooks, quoted in *Teaching to Transgress*, Routledge: London; 1994, pp 207)

#### REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT:

ASSIGNMENT	Value
<i>Talking Points</i>	15%
<i>Discussion Facilitation</i>	10%
<i>Concept Applications (3X5%)</i>	15%
<b>RESEARCH PAPER</b>	
<i>Title &amp; Abstract</i>	10%
<i>Draft of Research Paper</i>	20%
<i>Final Research Paper</i>	25%
<i>Final Research Presentation</i>	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

This course will be run as a seminar. Each week will be dedicated to in-depth discussion of a particular set of readings, which build on each other over the semester. Because the readings and discussions are the foundation of this class, attendance and participation is mandatory. You are allowed to miss up to three classes with no penalty. Missing more than three classes will significantly reduce your final (cumulative) grade. After three unexcused absences, I will reduce your final grade by one letter for each additional class missed. Note that coming to class unprepared is equivalent to missing a class. *Students cannot make up talking points or discussion facilitation except in case of illness or emergency; any other late work will incur a penalty.*

#### Talking Points:

In order to facilitate productive discussions each week, students are required to prepare a short paragraph or bullet list of ‘talking points,’ a copy of which should be handed in EVERY CLASS DAY. These are informal notes and questions (approximately ½ - 1 page, typed) that arise during close readings of the assigned texts. They can be as broad or as specific as desired, and can relate to other readings or current events as well. Talking points will be assessed by a check plus (A) check (B) or check minus (C), based upon relevance to class concepts and demonstration of your grasp of the reading material. They will help me to both encourage and assess class participation. The examples offered below will give you some idea of how to tackle this:

A Talking Point may be:

- An idea that struck you as particularly important. Why do you think that we should focus on this idea? What does it help us to do, solve, or understand?
- A statement that might be contradictory, controversial, or complimentary to our other readings, or to your own knowledge and experience. Why do you agree or disagree with this particular statement? What other viewpoints exist?
- A phrase or point that needs further clarification – a complicated argument that you need help unpacking. (But don’t just ask your question; show your work by attempting an answer as well!)

#### Discussion Facilitation:

In addition to daily talking points, everyone in class will have a turn to act as a discussion/activity leader. During the first week of the semester, each student will sign up for leading one class day.

For the day you lead discussion, you should prepare a brief (one page or less) handout that summarizes the main “meta-arguments” and any particular key terms in the reading(s) for that day. The handout should also include a brief biography of the author(s), as well as a few opening discussion questions. (This handout will be in lieu of your talking points for that day). Please bring enough copies for everyone in the class. Leaders are also strongly encouraged to bring in outside material (music, newspaper articles, clips from videos), or to develop a short activity in order to encourage discussion and interaction. Feel free to be creative! You will be assessed on the quality of your handout and your level of preparedness for leading discussion.

### **Concept Application Assignments:**

Over the course of the semester, I will distribute three short written assignments (one per month) that will be due the following week in class. These assignments are a way for me to assess each student’s comprehension of the concepts and themes from class readings and discussion. In this sense, they are similar to a “take home exam,” and *should be accomplished independently* (using outside texts and resources as necessary). Students may be asked to use a theory or concept to respond to a current event article, an excerpt from a popular book, or some other piece of cultural text. Responses should be in the form of a “long answer” type of exam question – perhaps not as developed or organized as a 5 paragraph essay, but longer and more thought out than a simple short answer question (approximately 400-700 words, typed). Assessment will be based upon the student’s ability to accurately and effectively define and use the concept or theory to analyze the cultural text. Although the writing itself can be somewhat informal, clarity and coherency are important. Due dates are Sept 30<sup>th</sup>, Oct 28<sup>th</sup>, and Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Research Paper:**

In lieu of a final exam, the class will build toward a formal research paper of 6-8 pages (not including figures or references) on a topic of your choosing. This paper will be written in stages over the course of the semester, and it should be treated as a semester-long project. It is intended as an opportunity for students to both draw from and expand upon the semester’s readings and discussion on an area of personal interest. Therefore, it is a requirement that students use at least 2 class readings as references for this paper, as well as 2 new readings from outside of class (see the list of recommended readings on oncourse for further ideas). The paper must also feature original, primary research, which could involve textual analysis, interviews, participant observation, surveys, or other chosen methods. *You must get your topic and method cleared by me prior to the deadlines below.*

#### *Title & Abstract*

After choosing a topic, the first step in beginning to craft your research paper is to write a working title and abstract. Although titles and abstracts are often tackled towards the end of the writing process, writing them early can be a useful way to organize your initial thoughts and ideas into a succinctly written plan of action. An abstract is not the same as an introduction. It is 150-250 words (max), and it needs to have elements of the entire paper within it. You must include (in brief, well-worded sentences): 1. context and background to your problem or issue (i.e. why it is important to our society, and to the academy), 2. a statement of your main argument, 3. a description of your methods, 4. potential or expected findings, and 5. the expected implications or significance of this research beyond the topic at hand. While some of the details may change as the paper progresses, this exercise is important in helping writers to anticipate the direction her/his paper will take. Don’t be fooled by the brevity of words; an abstract takes time to write! You should be significantly involved in the investigative stage of your paper by the time you tackle this assignment. The title and abstract are due on Oct 7<sup>th</sup>.

#### *Draft of Research Paper*

A month after your title and abstract are due, you should be ready to hand in a draft of your research paper (Nov 9<sup>th</sup>). While you might not be entirely finished with all aspects of your primary and secondary research, this should be a complete draft. Your paper should be typed, double-spaced, with a 12-point font, consistent formatting, and (approx) one-inch margins. You must include an introduction, well-organized body paragraphs (divided into sections with headings), a brief conclusion, and a complete list of citations (use an accepted format). Expect to receive considerable feedback. I will be reviewing these drafts much in the same way as an editor for an academic journal would review material for potential publication. I will pay attention to the logic and organization of your argument, the effectiveness of the evidence you present, the relevance of cited literature, and the accuracy of your citations. Along with a marked copy of your draft, I will give you a list of suggested corrections to make prior to the final draft. The grade that you receive on the draft will represent an estimate of your final grade if you were to NOT complete these revisions. (Please note, it is VERY hard to get an “A” on this assignment; at this stage, “A” papers would be publishable with little to no revision). Please see the reference materials on oncourse, and/or a writing tutor at Wheaton, for help with your draft.

### *Final Research Paper*

Final papers are due by the beginning of class on the last class day of the semester (Dec 9<sup>th</sup>). The final version should clearly reflect the changes suggested during your draft stage. Along with your final version, you should write a letter (much like an author writes to a potential publisher) outlining in detail the steps you have taken to revise the draft according to the suggestions listed. There is a helpful reference about responding to reviewers’ comments on oncourse. If you feel as though some of the suggested corrections were unnecessary, or impossible, you may also explain and justify this in your letter as well. If you have effectively made, and demonstrated or justified, all of the changes suggested, you should expect to receive a higher mark for this draft.

### *Paper Presentations*

Presentations will take place the last week of classes (Dec 7<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>), and should be planned, but short (no more than 5 minutes each) in order to leave room for questions. In your presentation, you should include a description of your main argument and it’s relevance to class concepts/readings, one or two specific examples (at most) to give a ‘taste’ of the detail that your paper goes into, and an explanation of why this project is significant. You should practice and time your presentation before you come to class.

### **POLICIES:**

**YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OFFICE HOURS.**

### **Honor Code**

All students are required to abide by the Wheaton College Honor Code. By handing in any assignment throughout the semester, you are telling me: “ I have abided by the Wheaton College Honor Code in this work.” DO NOT hand in an assignment if your work within does not adhere to the Honor Code guidelines. *If you need more time or more assistance with an assignment in order to abide by the Honor Code, please come talk to me.*

### **Course Changes**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule below during the course of the semester. I am also open to suggestions for additions and substitutions; please contact me if you have ideas!

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Discussion Topic</b>	<b>Readings &amp; Assignments Due</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b>		
Thurs, Sept 2	Introduction & Overview	K Palitza 2010 "Climate change policy ignores women farmers" <i>Mail &amp; Guardian Online</i> (to be distributed in class)
<b>WEEK 2</b>		
<b>Placing Geography</b>		
Tues, Sept 7	- What belongs to feminist geography?	M Domosh 1997 "The Personal and the Political" <i>Progress in Human Geography</i>  R Longhurst 2000 "Masculinities, Male Identity, and Men" <i>Progress in Human Geography</i>  J Sharp 2008 "What Belongs to Feminist Geography? Emotion, Power, and Change" <i>Progress in Human Geography</i>
Thurs, Sept 9	- What is place?	A Pred 1984 "Place as Historically Contingent Process" <i>Annals of the AAG</i>
<b>WEEK 3</b>		
<b>Feminism and Power</b>		
Tues, Sept 14	- What counts as feminism?	H Trask 1996 "Feminism and Hawaiian Nationalism" <i>Signs</i>  U Narayan 2004 "The Project of Feminist Epistemology" <i>The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader</i>
Thurs, Sept 16	- Why are power and marginality important to feminist research?	A Tsing 1993. "Opening" <i>The Realm of the Diamond Queen</i>
<b>WEEK 4</b>		
<b>Understanding Nature</b>		
Tues, Sept 21	- What does it mean that nature is a 'construction'?	D Demeritt 2003 Ch 2 "Being Constructive about Nature" <i>Social Nature</i>
Thurs, Sept 23	- How is nature gendered?	J Moeckli and B Braun 2003 Ch 6 "Gendered Natures" <i>Social Nature</i>  ✓ CA1 distributed
<b>WEEK 5</b>		
<b>Feminist Method/ology</b>		
Tues, Sept 28	- How do we come to know?	D Haraway 1991 "Situated Knowledges" <i>Simians, Cyborgs, and Women</i>
Thurs, Sept 30	- How do we 'do' feminist	A Nightingale 2003 "A Feminist in the

	geography?	Forest” <i>Acme</i> ✓ CA1 due
<b>WEEK 6</b>	<b>Feminist Political Ecology</b>	
Tues, Oct 5	- What is political ecology?	R. L. Bryant 2003 “Political Ecology: A critical agenda” in <i>Social Nature</i>
Thurs, Oct 7	- How is political ecology feminist?	M Mehta 1996 “Our Lives are No Different from that of Our Buffaloes” <i>Feminist Political Ecology</i> ✓ Title and Abstract due
<b>WEEK 7</b>	<b>Gender as Changing</b>	
Tues, Oct 12	FALL BREAK	NO CLASS
Thurs, Oct 14	- How is gender influenced by environmental struggle?	Harris 2006 “Irrigation, Gender, and Social Geographies of Changing Waterscapes...” <i>Environment and Planning D</i>
<b>WEEK 8</b>	<b>Environmental Justice</b>	
Tues, Oct 19	- What constitutes environmental (in)justice?	Murphy 2004 “Uncertain Exposures and the Privilege of Imperception” <i>OSIRIS</i>
Thurs, Oct 21	- What is white privilege?	N Pulido 2000 “Rethinking Environmental Racism” <i>Annals of the AAG</i> ✓ CA2 distributed
<b>WEEK 9</b>	<b>‘Natural’ Disasters</b>	
Tues, Oct 26	- In what ways was Katrina more-than-‘natural’?	C Katz 2010 “Bad Elements” <i>Gender, Place, and Culture</i>
Thurs, Oct 28	- How are the risks and realities of climate change gendered?	R Lane & R McNaught 2009 “Ch 8: Building Gendered Approaches to Adaptation in the Pacific” <i>Climate Change and Gender Justice</i> A Nightingale 2009 “Warming up the Climate Change Debate” <i>Journal of Forest and Livelihood</i> ✓ CA2 due
<b>WEEK 10</b>	<b>Animals</b>	
Tues, Nov 2	- How has the ideal of masculinity driven environmental devastation?	J Emel 1995 “Are you Man Enough, Big Bad Enough?” in <i>Env. &amp; Planning D</i>

Thurs, Nov 4	- In what ways is the animal-human relationship gendered and raced?	G Elder, J Wolch, J Emel 1998 "Race, Place, and the Bounds of Humanity" <i>Society and Animals</i>
<b>WEEK 11</b>	<b>Globalization</b>	
Tues, Nov 9	- Does global capitalism devalue both women and nature?	M Wright 2001 "Feminine Villains, Masculine Heroes, and the Reproduction of Ciudad Juarez" <i>Social Text</i>  Viewing of Maquilapolis Paper Draft due
Thurs, Nov 11	NWSA CONFERENCE	NO CLASS
<b>WEEK 12</b>	<b>Bodily Ability</b>	
Tues, Nov 16	- In what ways is ability 'natural'?	L Newbury 2003 "Will anybody Carry that Canoe?" <i>Canadian Journal of Env. Ed.</i>  ✓ CA3 distributed
Thurs, Nov 18	- What spaces and practices produce 'natural' forms?	L Johnston 1996 "Flexing Femininity" <i>Gender, Place, and Culture</i>
<b>WEEK 13</b>	<b>Food/Eating</b>	
Tues, Nov 23	- Is eating a gendered and raced activity?	R Slocum 2008 "Thinking race through corporeal feminist theory" in <i>Social and Cultural Geography</i>  ✓ CA3 due
Thurs, Nov 25	THANKSGIVING	NO CLASS
<b>WEEK 14</b>	<b>Militarism</b>	
Tues, Nov 30	- In what ways is the military a patriarchal institution?	J Seager 1999 "Patriarchal Vandalism" <i>Dangerous Intersections</i>
Thurs, Dec 2	- What does imperialism mean to women?	C Enloe 1990 "International Politics of the Banana" <i>Bananas, Beaches, and Bases</i>
<b>WEEK 15</b>	<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>	
Tues, Dec 7	Paper Presentations	✓ Presentations due
Thurs, Dec 9	Paper Presentations	✓ Presentations due ✓ Final Papers & Letters due
<b>WEEK 16</b>	<b>FINALS WEEK</b>	
	There is no final exam for this course.	All late work must be handed in by 5pm, Monday Dec 13 <sup>th</sup> . No work will be accepted for credit after this date.