ECOFEMINISM
ENVS 179/WST 179  Spring 1999

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Environmental Program, U. of Vermont
153 S. Prospect St.
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T/Th 12:30-1:45
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This class is an introduction to the developing field of ecofeminism, which is both an academic subfield of philosophy and environmental ethics and a type of activism. We will read some of the most influential writers in the field -- theorists, historians, activists, and spiritual revisionists -- and consider the implications of their ideas for enviromental thought and analysis.

Course Purpose:
1) to bring an ecofeminist analysis and perspective to environmental issues;
2) to study ecofeminist theorists and historians for their intellectual contributions to the field;
3) to articulate personal views of women & nature and patterns of environmental domination;
4) to appreciate the role of women and ecofeminist activists in global environmental change;
5) to consider ecofeminist revisions of and alternatives to major world religious traditions.

Course Texts:
5) READER A collection of additional articles, available from the Bittersweet.

Course Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JAN 21 Thur</th>
<th>26 Tues</th>
<th>28 Thur</th>
<th>FEB 2 Tues</th>
<th>4 Thur</th>
<th>9 Tues</th>
<th>11 Thur</th>
<th>16 Tues</th>
<th>18 Thur</th>
<th>23 Tues</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is Ecofeminism?</strong></td>
<td>Roots and Forms of Ecofeminism</td>
<td>Political Implications</td>
<td>Mechanism, Organicism, and the Management of Nature</td>
<td>Women and Nature: a Western History</td>
<td>The Legacy Revealed</td>
<td>Finding a Voice</td>
<td><strong>Ecofeminist Activism</strong> (discuss projects)</td>
<td>Arenas of Ecofeminist Activism</td>
<td>Ecofeminist Theory The Logic of Domination</td>
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Assignments:
- Warren handout
- READER: Gaard and Gruen 1-11
- RW: Spretnak, p3; Merchant, p100; Eisler p23
- RW: King, p106; EF pp1-21
- READER: Merchant, D'Souza
- GRIF part 1
- **DUE: Response Paper #1**
- GRIF parts 3 & 4
- **DUE: Take-Home Exam #1**
- READER: Seager; RW: Quinby Nelson p173; Hamilton p21
- RW: Russell p223; EF: ch16-17; READER: Garrd & Gruen 25-32; RW: Plant p155
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Critiquing the Master Model</td>
<td>SACRED: Warren p119</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAR</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>Town Meeting Day/No class</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Dualisms and Colonization</td>
<td>READER: Plumwood ch2</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>Gender Bias in Science</td>
<td>READER: Martin, Schiebinger</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Gender Bias in Technology</td>
<td>READER: Cohn DUE: Response Paper #2</td>
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<td>16-18</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td><strong>International Ecofeminist Activism</strong></td>
<td>READER: Gaard&amp;Gruen 11-24</td>
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<td>Global Environmental Impacts on Women</td>
<td>EF: ch 5</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Women and “Development”</td>
<td>EF: ch 4, 7, 8</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>Reproduction Issues</td>
<td>EF: ch 2,10; READER: Diamond p201</td>
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<td>APRIL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Third World Women's Perspectives; Women's Concerns and Biotechnology</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td><strong>Ecofeminist Spirituality</strong></td>
<td>RW: Keller p41, Starhawk p73</td>
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<td>Revival of the Goddess</td>
<td>SACRED: Spretnak p261 DUE: Take-Home Exam #2</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Judeo-Christian Revisionists</td>
<td>SACRED: Reuther p13, Keller p30, Plaskow p70, McFague p84; RW: Christ p58</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>Buddhist &amp; Hindu Perspectives</td>
<td>SACRED: Kaza p50, Gupta p99</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Native American Experiences</td>
<td>SACRED: Sanchez p207; RW: Allen p52</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Issues in Eco-Spiritual Social Activism</td>
<td>SACRED: Smith p168, Orenstein p172, Caputi p229, Johnson p251 Rose p149; RW:Garb p264</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>Ecofeminist Activism: Group Reports</td>
<td>DUE: Ecofeminist Activism Projects</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Thur</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tues</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>(Finals Week)</td>
<td>DUE by 4pm in my box: Take-home Exam #3; Self and Course Evaluation</td>
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Course Methods:
The course will be held in seminar style, with a focus on discussion much of the time, depending on the subject matter. More challenging theoretical material will be presented in lecture format. Group projects, paired interviews, and small group presentations will also be part of the course. Students are expected to attend all classes and read the assigned articles before class. If you miss a class, please ask another student for assistance in catching up on the material. As only 1-2 classes are assigned per topic, the course will be moving along at a regular clip. Please make every effort to attend, both for yourself and for your peers.

Assignments:
1) Reading: This course is a seminar style course in which reading is central to the content. We will spend much of our time examining the reading in depth. You are expected to have read the reading before coming to class. If you have not done the reading, please limit your participation in the discussion. However, do come to class and learn from others.

2) Writing: There are three take-home exams for the course and three response papers. For the exams, a set of eight questions will be handed out a week before the exam is due. You will select five essays to write, 3-4 paragraphs in length. These papers will be most cordially received if they follow these guidelines:

a) All papers should be completed on a word processing program and printed out in either "Faster" or "Best" settings, or on a laser printer. Do not hand in work printed at the "Draft" setting or handwritten. These are difficult to read. Double (not triple)-space your papers, using 10 or 12pt type size, allowing normal 1.25" margins for comments. Number your pages, and staple all pages together for safety. At the top of all your papers, please be sure to give your name, college, and date. You do not need to use extra paper for a cover sheet. Printing on both sides of the page is fine, if your computer can do this. You may also use recycled paper (used on one side) as long as I can read the print for your paper.

b) Spellcheck and proofread your work before handing it in. Errors should be minimal. Learn how to use the spellcheck programs on the computers.

c) Use inclusive language; i.e. be conscious of your use of gender pronouns and referents. Use "people" or "humankind" instead of "man", and "he or she" or "they" instead of simply "he". If you have any questions about gender-appropriate language, please see me. Especially because this is a feminist course, I expect you to be conscientious with language.

d) Use your own words, and express your own thoughts. Don't fall into the habit of using others' words without giving them proper credit. Avoid long quotes, but work to express your understanding of an author's ideas in your own words. I want to hear your own voice, speaking respectfully of other's voices.

e) Turn work in on time, i.e. in class on the day it is due. Late papers are subject to penalties, the most important one being my lack of attention. I will read all the papers at once after they are turned in and try to return them to you within a week. Late papers become an irritant, a bother, and begin with my sense of them as "miscellaneous, not in the flow". You will receive the best feedback from me if your work comes in on time.

3) Response Papers (three short essays, 33 points each)
These will be short papers, 3 double-spaced pages long, in response to the recent reading, assigned throughout the semester. I will offer suggested questions for a focus or you may substitute your own topic. Excellent responses will show both depth of personal reflection and thoughtful inquiry and accurate representation of the author's ideas and perspectives. The papers provide an opportunity to integrate new ideas and perspectives from class readings and discussion with your own life experiences with friends, family, work, and other classes. Please write out the question you are working with at the top of the paper. Be specific and detailed wherever possible, whether
describing a person, place, or emotion. Avoid vagueness and abstraction. If you would like, please include other modes of expression besides narrative writing that illuminate your experience -- drawings, poetry, song words, magazine cutouts, newspaper clippings.

**Activist Project**

Students will work in groups of 3-6 people on a self-designed project emphasizing a relevant ecofeminist issue. Groups will prepare a feasibility plan for their project in early March, carry out the project during March and April and report on it to the class at the end of the semester. A detailed assignment sheet with specific guidelines will be provided.

**Grading:**

Your grade will be based on your written work, which will reflect both your understanding of the reading and your independent reflection, and on your oral participation in discussion and in the group project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take Home Exam #1</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
<td>February 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Exam #2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>March 30th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Exam #3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>May 7th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Activism Project</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>April 27th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Feb 9th, Mar 11th, April 20th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>500</td>
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If you are having trouble in the course in any way (intellectually, emotionally, physically) or just want to discuss these topics further, please come in and talk to me after class or during office hours. You are always welcome, even if appointments are filled (just be prepared to wait a bit).

**Cooperative Learning:**

Almost all successful environmental work is done in cooperative teams and through joint efforts. I highly encourage you to work with others in the class on your assignments (even the exams!), sharing resources and ideas and helping each other with direction, focus, and clarity. Please make an effort to get to know your colleagues. The more you learn with each other, the less you will be solely engaged with me in a learning relationship. Much of the women's movement, including ecofeminism, has been built on collaborative networking, so you should take this opportunity to develop these skills now.
ECOFEMINIST ACTIVISM PROJECT

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever does."

-- Margaret Mead

This class project is your chance to change the world in some small and immediate way. Drawing from your concern, anger, or compassion about your specific issues, this project will give you the opportunity to take action and change the way we think or act about women, oppressed peoples, and the environment. This project is not just another assignment, but rather a way to make an actual difference in your world.

Purpose:
1) to apply ecofeminist theory and principles to real ecological and social problems;
2) to research ways of practicing activism in an ecofeminist context;
3) to experience the joys and frustrations of becoming politically active with a community of people.

Part One: Action Plan
This provides a chance for you to conduct a realistic assessment of what is needed to carry out your project, making sure it is do-able with available resources and limited timeframe.

Assignment:
1) Prepare a 3-4 page action plan for your group on your proposed project, sketching out what it will look like and what you will need to carry it out. Include the following information:

   a) Team member names
   b) Purpose of project -- what will it accomplish and to what end? how does the project fit in with ecofeminist principles?
   c) Design -- what will happen? Give details in depth as best you can imagine, showing what you need to plan for.
   d) Time and location -- where will you do this and when? why this time and place? who will be your audience at this time and place?
   e) Resources -- what do you need to carry this out?
      -- people
      -- materials
      -- permissions
      -- weather
   f) Potential obstacles -- what could slow this down or stand in the way of success? would anything completely ruin it? do you have a back-up plan for poor weather if weather is a factor?

Try to think through all the details of what you imagine and consider all it will take to pull it off.

2) Be prepared to give a brief report to the class on what you have concocted on Tuesday, October 29th to get some brief feedback from classmates.
Part Two: Group Oral Reports

Due December 5th, 10th

1) Document your activism project in some way -- with video, photos, slides, surveys, stories, newspaper coverage. Be creative! Try to think of how best to communicate what happened for your group so the rest of the class can get a feeling for it. This will also make your presentation more lively and engaging.

2) Evaluate your experience. Reflect on what went well and why and what didn't go well and why. How did you group work together? What did you learn while doing the project? What were your criteria for success, and did you meet them?

3) Present your project to the class, involving all the members of your group. Show us your stuff! Keep to a time limit of 20 minutes with some room for questions so we can fit three presentations in per class period. Try to cover the topics listed below for thoroughness, but be concise in your presentation.

Criteria for grading:

a) Action Plan
   Purpose/Issues Involved
   Design/Imagination
   Time/Location
   Resources
   Potential Obstacles
   Thoroughness in Planning

b) Project/Event
   Effectiveness/Impact
   Degree of Effort
   Timing/Location

c) Class Report
   Documentation
   Context in Ecofeminism
   Project Self-Evaluation

d) Group Participation
   Preparation/Research
   Presentation