

WMNST 540: Women and the Environment

Professor Bonnie Kime Scott

Fall 2009



Contact Information:

Class meetings: Tues/Thurs
11-12:15

Location: LS 365

(Life Sciences North)

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Thurs. 1-2 and by

appointment

GA: Valerie Suffron

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Course Description: This course explores the work of women environmental activists and nature writers from the late 19th century to the present, inclusive of diverse racial and ethnic communities, rural and urban global settings, and popular movements. It focuses on eco-feminist theory through various periods and alliances, and includes selected issues and focuses of environmental justice, as well as an exploration of creative writing and feminist spirituality, centered in nature.

Anticipated Student Learning Outcomes:

- Gain a historical knowledge of those who have written and theorized about the environment and environmental justice, with a focus upon women writers
- Apply feminist intersectional principles to environmental identities and issues of power
- Rethink the binary association of woman with nature
- Think both locally and globally about environmental issues and strategies
- Develop critical and creative writing skills, applied to nature
- Practice feminist pedagogy and research

Texts: You are encouraged to purchase these, or arrange to share. Titles will also be on reserve.

Breton, Mary Joy. *Women Pioneers for the Environment*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998. (Breton)

Anderson, Lorraine, ed. *Sisters of the Earth: Women's Prose and Poetry about Nature*, 2nd edn. NY: Vintage/Random House.2003. (*Sisters*)

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. 1962; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994. (Carson)

- Donovan, Josephine and Carol J. Adams, eds. *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*. New York: Columbia UP, 2007. (*Feminist Care*)
- Warren, Karen J. *Ecofeminist Philosophy*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000. (Warren)
- Shiva, Vandana. *Stolen Harvest*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2000. (Shiva)
- Stein, Rachel. *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality and Activism*. Rutgers University Press, 2004. (Stein)

Electronic Course Reader (ER). Selected titles available on course reserves at circulation desk in Love Library. Some readings are available Blackboard

Access to Electronic Course Reader. From the SDSU main page follow the links to the Library (infodome): <http://infodome.sdsu.edu/> and look for the electronic course reserves site under “Information for” > “Students”> “course reserves”> “electronic course reserves”> “ecr”> “electronic reserves and reserve pages”> = WMNST 596. I will supply our password.

Expectations from Students:

- All assignments are expected on time unless an excuse is provided **in advance**. There will be a deduction in grade for any work submitted late, unexcused. Be in contact if you have good reasons for needing an extension!
- Be prepared and attentive in every class. It is important to have the reading done, to strive to understand any difficulties it presents, and to have reactions that you share in class on a regular basis. We will discuss uses of blackboard for out of class discussions and student led discussions of individual articles. (5%)
- Regular attendance (**miss no more than 2 classes** without an excuse in advance).
- Submit all written work on time. **Any late excuses must be obtained in advance.**
- Minimize distractions. Cell phones off. Computers permitted for note taking, but not for surfing the web. We may occasionally call on someone to look things up, on the spot.
- Personal journal of current and recollected encounters with nature and environmental issues. Loose-leaf binder recommended (this saves paper and gives you more flexibility). **Minimum of 1 page-length entry per week; 15 total** (average entries in this quantity would earn a C). See supplemental handout on blackboard for ideas and further expectations. Periodic “checkups” blackboard posting, and in-class use. (20%). You are invited to read from your journal in class, raising issues that are of immediate interest during most class sessions.
- 2 Short Papers, 4-5 pages each (15 % each). These can pave the way for your final paper and will help build writing skills.
- Final Paper, 10 pages minimum suggested length, plus lightly annotated bibliography and class presentation (35%). Due on the last day of classes (Dec. 11). We will develop a suggested list of possible topics. Consider topics treated later in the course, such as environmental justice and healing.
- Contribution to a positive classroom atmosphere—to the extent possible creating a safe space for the exchange of diverse opinions and ideas. Help one another (the instructor too!) achieve clarity so that everyone can follow what we are doing. Avoid putting anyone on the spot as the representative of a standpoint or identification (racial group, disability, sexuality). Respond to ideas that differ from yours with civility. It is fine to challenge questionable statements: blind spots regarding norms, hierarchies, divisions, or

positions of privilege and power, unfortunate choice of language. Be aware of your body language as well as your spoken words.

Grading Percentages (subject to discussion)

Environmental Feminist Journal 14 items/ 1 per week, minimum: 20 %

Short (3-5 page) papers: 2@ 10% each= 20%

SD Field Trip Blackboard presentation and discussion: 10%

Class discussion and facilitation of one article: 5%

Final paper, presentation: 35%

Women's Studies colloquia or other lectures/visits serving as a course extension, 10%,

1 page account of each of 2, brought to class.

4 additional journal entries as an alternative.

Avoid Plagiarism, i.e. unacknowledged borrowing from books, articles, films, TV, the internet and the work of other students in fulfilling any of your assignments, oral or written, no matter how slight. Cite sources of paraphrased ideas as well as direct quotations from texts and give credit for diagrams and illustrations. Good pedagogy and scholarship enters into a conversation with existing studies and makes your critical sources available to others so that they can carry your study further. Penalties, which are arrived at via the discretion of the instructor and the Judicial Procedures Office may range as follows: failure of the assignment, failure of the course; warning, probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. The University of Indiana has very helpful pamphlets regarding plagiarism and proper citation of source. Please visit the websites: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml> and <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets.shtml> for more information.

Students with a disability:

Students who need accommodation of disabilities should contact me privately to discuss specific accommodations for which they have received authorization. If you have a disability, but have not contacted Student Disability Services at 619-594-6473 (Calpulli Center, Third Floor, Suite 3101), please do so before making an appointment to see me.

Consider a Major or Minor in Women's Studies:

The program, which is the oldest in the nation, celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2010, offers exciting courses, is committed to women's issues and social justice, and is adaptable to your interests and concerns. Women's Studies is not impacted!

For more information contact the Undergraduate Advisor, Dr. Doreen Mattingly, at MATTINGL@mail.sdsu.edu, (619) 594-8033, 342 Arts and Letters.

WMNST 540: Schedule of Topics and Readings

(This could change slightly. Updates will be made on Blackboard and discussed in class)

Week/ Date	Assignments
1: Sept. 1, 3	<p>I. INTRODUCTION: Nature as a Personal Place and a Feminist Issue T: Grounding Ourselves. Discussion: What is your natural ground? Accompanying texts: Harjo, “Fire”; Andrews, “Beginning with Place” in <i>Sisters</i>, 3-7; optional. Recommended: “Our Kinship” section of <i>Sisters</i> Begin an environmental feminist journal R: Ecofeminisms: Warren Chapters 1 and 2; Gray, “Turning to Another Way,” <i>Sisters</i>, 380-84</p>
2: Sept. 8, 10	<p>II. HERSTORIES T: Earth Goddesses Taggard, “Demeter,” 435-6, Williams “The Bowl”, 193-6 <i>Sisters</i> Eisler, “The Gaia Tradition” ER Merchant, “Corn Mothers” ER</p> <p>R Women and Science (early examples) Gates, “Cataloging the Natural World” (ER) Jewett, “A White Heron” 23-35, Williams, “Audubon” 332-4 <i>Sisters</i> Woolf, “Miss Ormerod: Economic Entomologist” (ER) Porter, “A Wonder Tale,” 270-80 <i>Sisters</i></p>
3: Sept. 15, 17	<p>T: “The First Lady of Environmental Science” (Ellen Swallow) Breton Rachel Carson in Breton 72; begin <i>Silent Spring</i> R: Carson, <i>Silent Spring</i>: Close reading of chapters. Select a date of interest to help with discussion. Have a conference this week or early next to discuss your first short paper.</p>
4: Sept. 22, 24	<p>III: DIVERSE ECO-FEMINISMS T: Medicine Eagle, “The Rainbow Bridge,” 386-92, Hogan, “What Holds the Water,” 403-8, <i>Sisters</i> Foreword, Intro, and Unger, “Women, Sexuality and Environmental Justice in American History,” 45-60 (Stein) O’Hara “Feminist Ecological Economics” R: Film of <i>Silent Spring</i> Bring journals to class for sharing and review as time allows Illustration: Brooke Medicine Eagle</p>
5: Sept. 29, Oct. 1	<p>T: : Sturgeon, “The Nature of Race” (ER) Ybarra “‘Lo que equero es tierra’: Longing and Belonging in Moraga’s Ecological Vision,” 240-48 (Stein) R: Viramontes “The Moths” (ER) Gaard “Toward a Queer Ecofeminism,” 21-44 (Stein) Deming, “Spirit of Love,” 379-80 <i>Sisters</i> Bring journals to class for sharing and review as time allows</p>

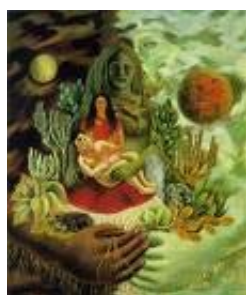


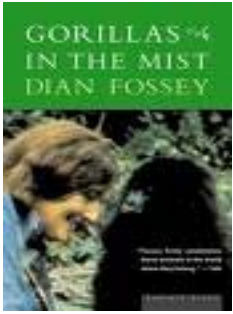





Illustration: Frida Kahlo. The Love Embrace



<p>6: Oct. 6, 8</p>  <p>Illustration: EPA site on Love Canal</p>	<p>T: De Chiro, “Producing ‘Roundup Ready’ Communities?” 139-60 (Stein) Le Sueur, “Annunciation” 129-141 <i>Sisters</i> Adams and Donovan, Introduction to <i>Feminist Care</i></p> <p>R: IV: FOCUSES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE Health Equity, Pollution, Contamination Kaalund, “Witness to Truth: Black Women Heeding the Call for Environmental Justice” 78-92 (Stein) Mirikitani, “Love Canal” 346-9, Wheelwright, “Allegra Canyon with Afterword” 350-57, Awiakta, “When Earth Becomes an ‘it’” 358-9, Griffin, “Use” 330-32 <i>Sisters</i></p>
<p>7: Oct. 13, 15</p>	<p>T: Berila, “Toxic Bodies . . . Heteronormative Landscapes” 127-38, Lucas, “No Remedy for the Inuit” 191-208 (Stein), Williams, “Clearcut” 379-80, <i>Sisters</i></p> <p>R: Film: <i>Blue Vinyl</i> Start reading <i>Stolen Harvest</i></p> <p>First short paper due: Women shaping eco-feminism on historical figures and/or selected ecofeminist approaches</p>
<p>8: Oct. 20, 22</p> 	<p>Sustainable Food</p> <p>T: La Duke, “Wild Rice” (ER), Piercy “Common Living Dirt,” <i>Sisters</i> 400-403 Shiva, <i>Stolen Harvest</i></p> <p>R Chapter 9, “Casting New Models” (Breton) Kingsolver, from <i>Animal, Vegetable Miracle</i> Ch 11 &14 (ER)</p> <p>Bring journals to class for sharing and review</p> <p>Illustration: Adams, <i>The Sexual Politics of Meat</i></p>
<p>9: Oct 27, 29</p>	<p>Companion Species</p> <p>T: Griffin, “The Hunt” 328-30; Johnson, “Heart’s Fox” 236, Hinchman, “Sudden Knowing” 244-6. Millay, “The Fawn” 258, <i>Sisters</i> Ch. 6 (Warren); Ch 11 (Breton)</p> <p>R: View film: <i>Gorillas in the Mist</i></p>

<p>10: Nov. 3, 5</p> 	<p>T: Whitlock Gorilla Girl (BB); Haraway “Morphing in the Order” (ER)</p> <p>R: Act Locally: Self-chosen field trip, learning about local environmental group. No formal class. This will be organized further, consulting you.</p> <p>Illustration: Fossey book cover showing the author and Digit.</p>
<p>11: Nov.10, 12</p>  <p>Wangari Maathai</p>	<p>T: Donovan Ch. 2: “Animal Rights and Feminist Theory”; Adams Ch. 8: “Caring about Suffering”; Slicer Ch 4: “Your Daughter or Your Dog”; Clement Ch. 12 “Problems about Wild Animals” all in <i>Feminist Care</i></p> <p>Woods and Water</p> <p>R “Martyr Amrita Devi” 3; Judi Bari, 26 (Breton); Hurston, “Blossoming Pear Tree” 12-14; Rawlings “Magnolia Tree” 45-8; Cooper, “Hewers of Wood” 359-65, Hill, “Storm” 166-9, <i>Sisters</i> Woolf from “A Mark on the Wall” (BB) Dai Quing, 94-101 (Breton) Moore, “Amazing Grace,” Kingsolver, “Desert Pond”, Silko, “Love Poem” <i>Sisters</i></p>
<p>12: Nov. 17, 19</p>	<p>V. SITUATED SPIRIT</p> <p>T: Plumwood “Nature in the Active Voice” In special issue of Australian Humanities Review: http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/</p> <p>R: Second short paper due on ecofeminism in the community based on Nov. 5 assignment Bring journals to class for sharing and discussion Share Thanksgiving recipes and discuss the holiday</p>
<p>13: Nov. 24</p> 	<p>T: Faculty furlough day. No class</p> <p>R: No class. Happy Thanksgiving!</p>

<p>14: Dec. 1, 3</p> 	<p>T: Kheel, Chapter 1, <i>Feminist Care</i> Dickinson, “Why” 77-8; Erdrich, “Luna” 19-22 <i>Sisters</i> Woolf, “The Death of the Moth” (ER) Environmental Feminist Journal due</p> <p>R: Alaimo, from “Playing Nature” (ER) Luhan “Trek in the Blue Hills” 99-10, Gunn Allen “Kop is’taya” 392-4, Brant “Native Origin” 396-400, 4 <i>Sisters</i></p>
<p>15: Dec. 8, 10</p>	<p>Presentations of final papers:</p> <p>Final papers due the final day of class, Dec. 10.</p>