

**WOMENSST 397R, Fall 2017: Sustainable Development, Women, and Gender:
The Romance, Rhetoric, and Realities**

Professor K. Asher (kasher@umass.edu) **Office:** W467 South College
Class time: TuTh 10:00-11:15am **Meets in:** South College 205
Office Hours: Tu 11:30am-12:30pm, or by appointment (check Moodle for times)
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The 2014 United Nations [World Survey on the role of women in development 2014](#) makes a strong case for linking gender equality and sustainable development. While neither concerns about gender equality nor sustainability are new, they are re-emerging as part of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. This upper level seminar examines perceived and existing links between economic development, women, and gender from various perspectives. Informed by feminist theories of power and politics we will engage critically with questions such as:

- ❖ How did concerns about "third world women" enter discussions about economic development and social change? And how have development institutions and interventions addressed women's needs and gender equality?
- ❖ Why and how are these discussions reemerging vis-à-vis sustainability and sustainable development, specifically vis-à-vis the "green" economy, food security, and population and reproductive rights?
- ❖ Do sustainability discussions in the US consider gender—specifically, the concerns faced by the poor, women of color, agricultural and domestic workers, migrants, etc.? If not, why not? If yes, how? What are their (dis)connects with global discussions?
- ❖ How have feminists and feminist theories of power explained and addressed the gendered aspects of sustainability?
- ❖ How have women across the world organized to address their concerns?

In the first part of the seminar, we will focus on understanding contemporary and historical definitions and debates about sustainable development and its links to gender. In the second part of the semester, we will deepen that understanding by revisiting key themes from the first part of the semester that are of particular interest to students. Throughout the semester we will be attentive to the racialized and gendered dimensions of persistent social, economic and political inequalities.

Course goals: The intended outcome of this course is to enable students to

- ❖ Contextualize 21st century concerns about sustainability within broader theories and debates about international development
- ❖ Assess how social justice and gender equity concerns intersect with issues of economic and environmental sustainability
- ❖ Become familiar with the parameters of different feminist approaches to understanding the links between economics, the environment, and society
- ❖ Develop strong analytical skills (in terms of reading, thinking, and writing)
- ❖ Engage critically and self-reflexively in current debates and actions for gender equality and sustainability.

Required Readings (Available via Amherst Books)

- ❖ Abramovitz, Mimi. 2000. *Under Attack, Fighting Back: Women and Welfare in the United States*. Monthly Review Press.
- ❖ Tsing, Anna. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World*. Princeton UP.
- ❖ Mies, Maria. *Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian housewives produce for the world market*. (1982 Zed Press, republished in 2012 by Spinife. Ebook for purchase at <http://www.spinifexpress.com.au/Bookstore/book/id=231/>).
- ❖ Additional Readings on Moodle

Background Readings (students should be familiar with concepts in the following)

- ❖ Black, Maggie. 2002. *No-Nonsense Guide to International Development*. New Internationalist.
- ❖ Grewal, Inderpal and Caren Kaplan, eds. 2006. *An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- ❖ Magdoff, Fred and John Bellamy Foster. 2011. *What Every Environmentalist Needs To Know about Capitalism: A Citizen's Guide to Capitalism and the Environment*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- ❖ A writing guide such as Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*, and a style manual such as Hacker's *A Pocket Manual of Style* (both published by St Martin's Press, NY), or Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*. 4th edition. Longman.

Assignments, Grades, and Ground Rules:

- ❖ Attendance and Participation (incl. how you engage your peers) 25%
- ❖ Three short Reading Reviews 20%
- ❖ Midterm Essay (due Oct 13) 25%
- ❖ Final Assignment (due Dec 15) 30%

Attendance and Absences: The success of the class depends on the instructor and students being physically and intellectual present in class. Being a little late occasionally is understandable. However, if you are more than 10 minutes late, you will be marked absent. If you have to miss class because of legitimate reasons (illness, injury, death of a loved one), excuse your absence in writing within a week of the missed session. Over three absences will result in the lowering of your overall grade, as even excused absences will affect your participation grade. So try not to miss class.

If missing class is unavoidable, know that it is your responsibility to catch up on what you missed. Set up a “study buddy” with whom you can exchange notes, review material, and check in about intellectual or logistical issues related to the class.

Study Buddy 1: _____

Study Buddy 2: _____

Preparation and Reading: Good participation and great conversations rest on good preparation. So do the assigned work, including the readings, before coming to class.

Develop a practice of reading closely to identify main theme(s) and examine the premise of an argument critically. Close reading fosters critical dialogues.

Participation: Good participation means active and mindful engagement with the course material and class participants, including your peers. Active and mindful engagement goes beyond agreements and disagreements to foster collective learning through critical dialogues about the topics and ideas generated by the course material. Critical dialogues entail listening, thinking, talking, and asking questions of the material and of each other. The best classrooms conversations are ones that expand your knowledge and understanding, and bring the intense pleasure of critical intellectual inquiry. It is a skill that requires practice and like other academic skills it is useful far beyond the classroom.

Notes: Learn to keep notes (digitally or in paper notebooks) on what you read, highlight key quotes (if you write the quotes in your notes, make sure you to write down the full citation with page numbers), on how an author makes an argument, how the terms of one article relate to the broader course themes. If you don't understand something or are confused, make notes to prompt you to ask questions about them in class. Bring your readings and notes to class! And don't forget to set up a study buddy.

Using smart phones in class is decidedly un-smart as it invites me to fail you. When in class **turn OFF your mobile devices**. You may seek permission to use your computer in class to refer to readings and notes, and to take notes. However, please do not connect to the Internet.

Online communications and Email etiquette: Instructions, study questions, and updates about the course will be posted on **Moodle** and/or sent through the class lists (see above). So make sure that your university email (yourname@umass.edu) is functional, and check Moodle regularly. I welcome appropriate email queries and will respond to them within a reasonable amount of time (24-48 hours is normal). For a distinction between appropriate and inappropriate email, familiarize yourself with [Emails as Professional Correspondences or Email Etiquette](#).

Office Hours are listed above and updated on Moodle. I strongly encourage you to stop by with questions about class material, brainstorm research ideas, talk about topics that sparked your intellectual curiosity, or discuss your performance in class. However, keep in mind that, office hours are not the space to review course material you missed or entertain inquiry such as "I was absent, what did I miss?" Talk to your study buddy first and then follow up with me to discuss specific queries.

Research: Go beyond wikipedia and google! [UMASS libraries \(click the Menu button on the upper right\) have excellent resources and amazing professional staff to help you meet your learning goals](#). So learn to use them and to do library research.

Writing is a crucial tool for learning and an invaluable skill for communicating what you learn. So learn to write well. Check out some of the excellent resources available to you, including <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> (one of the most extensive lists of handouts on

writing and research help). You can also get free writing help at the [Writing Center](#), and from the WGSS writing tutor ([Check Moodle for the tutor's office hours](#)). Take a copy of the assignment instructions and your draft response to your session. Engage your editing process by articulating what you want the tutor to focus on in addressing your work.

Finally, all **written assignments**:

- ❖ May be discussed with your peers or with me during my office hours
- ❖ Must be submitted **by the stated deadlines**. By handing in assignments late you forfeit your right to comments and lose half a letter grade for every day that your work is late. So learn to manage your time.
- ❖ May be revised and resubmitted accepted within two weeks of receiving comments back from the instructor. Submit hardcopies of your substantially revised written work along with the original submission(s). Note that resubmitting a paper does not guarantee a higher grade. In fact, cursorily rewritten work may receive a lower grade than the original.
- ❖ Should comply with the **Checklist of Written Work guidelines** (see below).
- ❖ Will be graded according to the **criteria** listed below.
- ❖ Sometimes I give slash grades (B/B+). This means that the assignment is tending towards the higher grade but is not there yet. If you do better in the next assignment of a similar nature, the prior one will automatically be graded higher.

CRITERIA FOR GRADING WRITTEN WORK

- A = a well organized, lucidly written paper free of mechanical errors (or oral argument) that indicates your thorough understanding of the material and your interesting insights or critical responses to it. In a phrase, an A paper is a “perfect 10” paper.
- B = a paper (or presentation) that offers evidence of your understanding of the material, but in which your points are obscured due to mechanical errors, lack of organization, inadequate evidence and/or insufficiently developed arguments.
- C = a paper in which the student’s understanding and response to the material is unclear or largely obscured due to any one or more factors listed under B.
- D, F = indicate that students are submitting unacceptable work.

GRADE CHART

	Out of 10	Out of 5	GPA
A	9.3 - 10	4.7 - 4.9	4
A-	8.6 - 9.2	4.3 - 4.6	3.7
B+	7.9 - 8.5	4.0 - 4.2	3.3
B	7.2 - 7.8	3.6 - 3.9	3.0
B-	6.5 - 7.1	3.3 - 3.5	2.7
C+	5.8 - 6.4	3.0 - 3.2	2.3
C	5.1 - 5.7	2.6 - 2.9	2.0
C-	4.4 - 5.0	2.3 - 2.5	1.7
D+	3.7 - 4.3	2.0 - 2.2	1.7
D	3.0 - 3.6	1.9 - 1.7	1.0
F	2.7 - 2.9		0.0

Accommodation Statement: Disability Services (DS) on campus keeps documentation on file of physical, psychological, or learning disability and provides services to students with disabilities: <http://www.umass.edu/disability/>. They also act as a liaison between students and professors. If you need accommodations related to disabilities, please contact DS and me within the first two weeks of the term (before the add/drop period ends) so that we can work together to meet your learning needs. *A letter from Disability Services is not sufficient excuse for late or missed work or absences.* If, after consulting the syllabus, you anticipate missing classes or think you will need alternative formats and timelines for assignments, please communicate with me in person during office hours so that we can make mutually agreeable arrangements.

Academic Honesty Statement: Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at UMass. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Pronoun Statement: I will gladly address you by the name you prefer and use the gender pronouns that correspond to your gender identity. Please advise the class and me on your name and pronoun preference, and the proper pronunciation of your name.

Checklist for Written Work for Prof Asher, AKA her 20 COMMANDMENTS!

1. I have a central argument or a main point and I state it clearly.
2. I define the key terms on which my argument is based.
3. I have developed my argument systematically and organized my points clearly. That is, my points follow from each other and speak to my central argument.
4. I substantiate my claims with supporting evidence, and cite relevant sources using a correct and consistent format. Prof Asher prefers the author-date style: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
5. By the middle of my paper, I have lost neither clarity nor focus.
6. I make clear transitions between my points and between paragraphs and sections.
7. The passive voice has not been used by me. Instead, I use the active voice.
8. I have edited my paper and it is free from repeated errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and I have used short sentences and made sure that my sentences do not run on like this one does.
9. My sources are formatted correctly and consistently, as is my Reference List.
10. In my introductory and concluding remarks, I neither over generalize nor make banal claims. Rather, I begin and conclude with insightful remarks about my topic.

Logistical and Mechanical details checklist

1. My paper has a title. It tells my reader what my paper is about.
2. My name, course name and number, type and number of the assignment, and the date of this paper appear single-spaced in the upper left hand corner of the first page.
3. I have used a legible font, double-spaced my writing, and used 1.25-inch margins.
4. I have numbered all the pages of my assignment
5. I have STAPLED all the pages of my assignment. Prof Asher will not accept paper clipped papers.
6. I am NOT including a cover page or a report cover with my assignments.
7. I have submitted my paper on time and in the format indicated on the assignment. Rubric for naming electronic documents: Your Last Name_Assignment_Course#_Term, e.g. Asher_Midterm_397RFall2017
8. I know that Prof Asher does not accept email papers. I know that late papers lose half a letter grade for each day the paper is late.
9. I have NOT plagiarized (<http://www.umass.edu/writingprogram/geninfo/plagiarism.html>)
10. I have conferenced this assignment at the Writing Center (<http://www.umass.edu/writingcenter/>) if necessary, or at the very least I have read and addressed the issues in Section V of Strunk and White's The Elements of Style.

Course Schedule: This is a working course schedule and is subject to change. For example, readings may be added or substituted at the professor's discretion. The readings listed under each week are for that week. That is, please read the listed material before coming to class.

Week 1: Gender and Sustainable Development – An introduction

Tu, Sept 5: Introduction to the course, its themes and approaches

- ❖ Read Chapters 1 and 2 of the UN [World Survey on the role of women in development 2014](#) (Report on Gender Equality and Sustainable Development)
- ❖ Greenberg, Miriam. 2013. What on Earth Is Sustainable? Toward critical sustainability studies. *Boom: A Journal of California* 3 (4): 54-66. (Moodle)
- ❖ In-class discussion facilitated by the following questions:
 - What do I understand by the terms sustainability/sustainable development? Women/gender?
 - What do I want to learn about them and the links between them? That is, what are my learning goals for the course?
 - How do I expect the class to help me meet my learning goals? How do I expect to contribute to the class?
- ❖ Post your responses to the above questions in the “learning goals” section on Moodle by 5pm by Wednesday, Sept 6. Read your classmates’ responses before class on Thursday. Bring hardcopies of your response to class on Thursday, Sept 7 to facilitate our discussion

Th, Sept 7:

- ❖ Read rest of the UN 2014 World Survey. Each student begins to identify key themes from the report (Agriculture and Food Security, Population and Reproductive Justice; Natural Resource Management, Green Economy, Public Health, Energy) as their special focus for the rest of the semester
- ❖ Continued discussion of your responses to the questions above

You can get a refresher on conceptual background for this week’s from:

- ❖ UNEP. 2004. [Women, environment and sustainable development: making the links](#), Chapter 2 in *Women and the Environment*. UNEP, WEDO, and UN Foundation.
- ❖ Dankelman, Irene. 2002. [Introduction: Gender, environment and sustainable development. In Natural Resources Management and gender: A global sourcebook](#). SJR Cummings, H. van Dam, and M. Valk, eds. Netherlands: Royal Tropical Institute, KIT.
- ❖ Black, Maggie. No-Nonsense guide to International Development

Week 2:

Tu, Sept 12: **Genealogies of Sustainability and Sustainable development**

- ❖ WCED. 1987. *Our Common Future*. (esp see Foreword and pp. 1-66, sections I and III).
- ❖ Harvey, David. 1996. The Environment of Justice. Pp. 366-402 in *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Blackwell.

- ❖ Stevens, Candace. 2010. [Are Women Key to Sustainable Development?](#) Sustainable Development Insights 003. The Frederick Pardee Center for the Study of the Long Range Future. Boston University.
- ❖ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>
- ❖ www.umass.edu/sustainability
- ❖ http://css.umich.edu/sites/default/files/css_doc/Bound_Factsheets_2016.pdf

Questions for discussion and reading review 1 (hard copy due in class, details on Moodle)

- ❖ Compare and contrast (C/C) discussions of sustainability and sustainable development based on the sources above. What themes emerge? What isn't there?
- ❖ How do political, economic, social, and cultural factors emerge in these discussions?
- ❖ Compare and contrast these definitions, debates, and links with those in the UN 2014 World Survey Report.
- ❖ What is your analytical understanding of these factors?

Th, Sept 14: Genealogies of Gender and Sustainable Development

- ❖ Braidotti et al. 1994. Chpt 5 in *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis*. London: Zed Books. (Moodle)
- ❖ <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/Powerful-Synergies.pdf> (this report unlike the 2014 report focuses on synergies. What, if anything, does it say about tradeoffs?)
- ❖ Sen, Gita and Avanti Mukherjee. 2013. No Empowerment without Rights, No Rights without Politics: Gender-Equality, MDGS, and the post 2015 Development Agenda. Working Paper Series.
- ❖ Esquivel, Valeria. 2016. Power and the Sustainable Development Goals: a feminist analysis. *Gender & Development* 24 (1): 9-23. DOI: 10.1080/13552074.2016.1147872

Background and Suggested Readings

- ❖ Middleton, Neil and Phil, O'Keefe. 2003. Pp. 1-49 in *Rio Plus Ten: Politics, Poverty and the Environment*. London: Pluto Press.
- ❖ Lovejoy, Thomas E. 1989. The Third World's environment: a global dilemma. *EPA Journal*, July-August 15 (4): 42-44.
- ❖ Greene, George. 1994 Caring for the earth. (reports on the 1992 Earth Summit). *Environment*, Sept 36(7): 25-28.

Week 3: Race, Sex and the gendered political economy

Tu, Sept 19:

- ❖ Mies, *The Lace Makers of Narsapur*
- ❖ [2012 newspaper article on lacemakers of Narasapur](#)
- ❖ Kloppenburg, pp. 22-27 (Moodle)

Th, Sept 21:

- ❖ Mies, *The Lace Makers of Narsapur*

Background and Suggested Readings

- ❖ Stanford, Jim. Economics for Everyone. <http://economicsforeveryone.ca/book-excerpts/>
- ❖ Interviews with Silvia Federici
 - ❖ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2KjabftlvE>
 - ❖ <https://blacksheepodcast.org/2014/02/23/the-making-of-capitalist-patriarchy-interview-with-silvia-federici/>
 - ❖ <https://viewpointmag.com/2015/04/15/witchtales-an-interview-with-silvia-federici/>
 - ❖ If you want to read elements of Federici's marxist critique of patriarchy and household labor, and a feminist critique of Marx, check out this piece <https://endofcapitalism.com/2013/05/29/a-feminist-critique-of-marx-by-silvia-federici/>

Week 4: Gendered political economy, the State and Welfare

Tu, Sept 26:

- ❖ Abramowitz, *Under Attack, Fighting Back*

Th, Sept 28

- ❖ Abramowitz, *Under Attack, Fighting Back*
- ❖ Duggan, Lisa. "Introduction" and "Downsizing Democracy." *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2003. xi - xxii and 1-21. (Moodle)

Background and Suggested readings

- ❖ Selections from the *Feminist Theory Reader*: 49 (Borris and Salazar Parreñas), 20 (Hartmann), 21 (Salazar Parreñas),
- ❖ Read a selection or two about "care" and "care work" from this blog: <http://blogs.umass.edu/folbre/>
- ❖ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 1997. Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts: Ideologies of Domination, Common Interests, and the Politics of Solidarity," Pp. 3-29 in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, edited by M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. New York: Routledge.

Week 5: Women, Gender and the persistent "Myth of Overpopulation"

Tu, Oct 3

- ❖ Hartmann, B. 2016. Preface and Introduction to *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The global politics of population control*. 3rd edition. Haymarket Books. (Moodle)
- ❖ Hartmann, B. 1997. Women, Population and the Environment: Whose Consensus? Whose Empowerment? Pp. 295-301 (excerpt) in N. Visvanathan et al, eds. *The Women, Gender, and Development Reader*. Zed Books.

Th, Oct 5

- ❖ Reread Chpt 5: Population, Sust Dev. and Gender Equality in 2014 UN Report
- ❖ Other readings TBA
- ❖ Discuss parameters of readings for second half of the semester

Oct 10: Monday schedule, No class

Week 6a: Revisiting course themes by work-shopping your midterm

Th, Oct 12: Bring 3 hardcopies of your midterm Essay to class (prompts and guidelines on Moodle)

Upload Midterm Essay on Moodle by 5pm on October 13

Week 7:

Tu, Oct 17:

❖ Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

Th, Oct 19:

❖ Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*

❖ Discuss parameters of readings for second half of the semester

Week 8: Themes/readings TBA

Tu, Oct 24:

Th, Oct 26:

Week 9: Themes/readings TBA

Tu, Oct 31:

Th, Nov 2:

Week 10: Themes/readings TBA

Tu: Nov 7:

Th, Nov 9:

Week 11: Themes/readings TBA

Tu, Nov 14:

Th, Nov 16:

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 12: Themes/readings TBA

Tu: Nov 28:

Th, Nov 30:

Week 13: Themes/readings TBA

Tu, Dec 5:

Th, Dec 7:

Week 13a:

Dec 12: Workshop drafts of final assignment. Bring 3 hardcopies of your final assignment to class (prompts and guidelines on Moodle)