

Womensst 392J/692J: **Feminisms and Environmental Justice**

Course numbers: Womensst 392J/692J

Term: Spring 2016

Professor K. Asher (kasher@umass.edu)

Spire numbers: 69816/69817

Class time: TuTh 1-2:15pm

Meets in: Bartlett 212

Office Hours: Tu 2:30-3:30pm, Th 11:30am-12:30pm, or by appointment;

Office: Bartlett 387

Course mailing lists: womensst-392j-01-spr16@courses.umass.edu

womensst-692j-01-spr16@courses.umass.edu (all students can post to these lists)

Course Description

While feminism and environmental justice are both political projects of social change, their objects or objectives are not the same. As we sink into the 21st century, amid looming fears of ecological catastrophes and socio-economic crises, is a conversation between these two projects likely to be productive for both struggles, or are their goals at odds with each other? This class will examine the perceived, existing, and potential links (or disjuncts) between feminism and environmental justice. Our interdisciplinary inquiry will be guided by questions such as: What is understood by the terms “feminism” and “environmental justice”? How have “nature” and the “environment” figured in feminist writings and feminist ideas of justice? Conversely, how do “women” and “gender” figure in ideas and struggles for environmental justice? Are these ideas explicitly or implicitly “feminist”?

Course outcomes: Enable students to

- ❖ Contextualize 21st century “environmental justice” and feminist struggles within broader histories and debates about economic globalization and social change
- ❖ Recognize and assess the various linkages between economic development, the environment, and social struggles (including those for gender, racial, class, and sexual freedoms)
- ❖ Understand the analytical parameters of the capitalist mode of production and feminist perspectives on sex, gender, society, and nature.
- ❖ Apply political economic and feminist theories to analyze social and environmental problems, especially current justice struggles
- ❖ See the complex, contradictory and power laden connections between the “local” and the “global,” i.e. think transnationally
- ❖ Develop strong reading, thinking, and writing skills
- ❖ Become proficient in library research, use of different databases (such as Environment Index, Web of Science, Expanded Academic, JSTOR, GreenFile, ScienceDirect, GenderWatch, Academic Search Premier) and assessing academic versus other sources of knowledge and information production
- ❖ Engage critically and self-reflexively in theoretical debates and political actions for a just world for humans and non-humans.

Required Readings

- ❖ Black, Maggie. 2015. *No Nonsense Guide to International Development*. New Internationalist. (older editions okay) (Available via Amherst Books – buy local!)
- ❖ Other readings on Moodle or through links below
- ❖ 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 Instructions:

- ❖ Attendance and Participation (including how you engage the class material, and your peer’s ideas and writings) 20%
- ❖ 4 or 5 short (1 page, 500 words max) reading responses (hardcopies due in class on Jan 26, Feb 23, Mar 8, Mar 22, Apr TBA) 20%
- ❖ Three Take home Essays (via Turnitin Feb 17, Mar 11, Apr 1) 40%
- ❖ Final Exam essay (due via Turnitin May 2) 20 %

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 you have to, 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, discuss class topics and more.

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.

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 foster critical dialogues.

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, makes sure your 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.

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 loose 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 follow my **writing guidelines** (see the end of the syllabus).
- ❖ Will be graded according to the **criteria** listed below.

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 |

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.

Accommodation for documented disability: If you have a **documented physical, psychological, or learning disability** on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), please inform me within the first two weeks of the semester to make necessary arrangements: <http://www.umass.edu/disability/procedures.pdf>

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.

* * *

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

Week 1: Introduction to the class, its key terms, and its participants

Tu, Jan 19: **Our perceptions of feminism, environmentalism, and justice**

- ❖ View: selections from *Disruption*
- ❖ Discussion: What do I understand by environmental justice? Feminism? What do I want to learn about them and the links between them? How do I expect the class to help me meet my learning goals? How do I expect to contribute to the class?
- ❖ Post your learning goals on Moodle by 5pm by Wednesday, Jan 20. Read your classmates’ responses before class on Thursday.

Th, Jan 21: What is Climate Justice?

- ❖ Bruno, Kenny, Joshua Karliner and China Brotsky. 1999. [Greenhouse gangsters or Climate Justice?](#) San Francisco, CA: Transnational Resource & Action Center.

Recommended: [What Now for Climate Justice?](#)

Week 2: Climate Justice and the debates about the Paris agreements

Tu, Jan 26:

- ❖ <http://www.worldacademy.org/content/cop21-climate-accord>
- ❖ Read one recent (published between Dec 12, 2015-Jan 12, 2016) article from www.parisclimatejustice.org and one from <http://350.org/paris/>. Bring hard copies of the articles to class
- ❖ Hard copy of reading Response 1 due in class. Prompts on Moodle.

Th, Jan 28: **Feminism, Climate Change, and Environmental Justice**

- ❖ MacGregor, Sherilyn. 2010. A Stranger Silence Still: The Need for Feminist Social Research on Climate Change. *The Sociological Review* 57:124-40.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2010.01889.x/abstract>

Recommended

- ❖ Seager, Joni. 2009. Death by Degrees: Taking a Feminist Hard Look at the 2° Climate Policy. *KVINDER, KØN & FORSKNING* 3(4):11-21.
<https://tidsskrift.dk/index.php/KKF/article/view/44305/84084>
- ❖ Wainwright, Joel and Geoff Mann 2015. [Climate Change and the Adaptation of the Political](#). *Annals of American Geographers* 105(2): 313–321.
- ❖ -----, 2013. [Climate Leviathan](#). *Antipode*. 45 (1): 1-22.
- ❖ Cabello, Joanna and Tamra Gilbertson (eds) 2015. [Paths Beyond Paris](#): Movements, Action and Solidarity towards Climate Justice. The Corner House.

Week 3: The Emergence of Environmental Problems

Tu: Feb 2:

- ❖ Carson, Rachel. 1962. *Silent Spring*. (selections on Moodle)
- ❖ World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Report). 1987. *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press (excerpts on Moodle).

Th, Feb 4:

- ❖ Economist. Survey: The Global Environment, The great race. Jul 4th 2002. (Moodle)
- ❖ Middleton, Neil and Phil, O’Keefe. 2003. Pp. 1-49 in *Rio Plus Ten: Politics, Poverty and the Environment*. London: Pluto Press. (Moodle)
- ❖ Greene, George. 1994 Caring for the earth (reports on the 1992 Earth Summit). *Environment*, Sept 36(7): 25-28. (Moodle)

Recommended:

- ❖ Lousley, Cheryl. Narrating a Global Future: Our Common Future and the Public Hearings of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Pp. 245-267, in *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities*, DeLoughrey, Elizabeth Didur, Jill and Carrigan, Anthony, eds. Routledge (FC ebook)

Week 4: Development, the Environment, Gender, and Race

Tu: Feb 9:

- ❖ Black, No Nonsense Guide to International Development (buy from Amherst Books)

Th, Feb 11: Women, Gender, Development, and the Environment

- ❖ Braidotti et al. 1994. Chpt 5 in *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis*. London: Zed Books. (Moodle)
- ❖ <https://www.greengrants.org/pressing-challenges/women/announcing-the-2014-summit-on-women-climate/>

Recommended

- ❖ McMichael, *Globalization: Myths and Realities* (Moodle)
- ❖ Williamson, John. 1990. What Washington Means by Policy Reform. Chapter 2 in *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?* John Williamson, ed. Updated Nov 2002. <http://www.iie.com/publications/papers/williamson1102-2.htm>
- ❖ Finnegan, W. 2003. *The Economics of Empire: Notes on the Washington Consensus*. Harpers Magazine. May: 41-54. (Moodle)

Week 5: Tu: Feb 16 – NO CLASS (Monday schedule)

First Take Home Essay (10% of grade) due (due via Turnitin) by 5pm Feb 17

Th, Feb 18: **Meet in Library**

Week 6: Feminist Perspectives and Debates on Environmental Justice

Tu: Feb 23

- ❖ Identify a few sources that illustrate feminist perspectives on environmental justice. Choose two to share with the class. One can be an online, popular or magazine source. The other should be an academic article or book to be located through a database or other forms of library research. Reading Response 2 (due in class) should be on the academic source.
- ❖ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-environmental/>
- ❖ 4pm. Margo Weiss, *Visions of Sexual Justice*. Campus Center 904-908

Th, Feb 25:

- ❖ Hawkins, Roberta. Diana Ojeda, et al. 2011. Gender and Environment: Critical Tradition and New Challenges. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29 (2): 237-253. (On Moodle inside folder)
- ❖ **Recommended but optional:** See folder of readings on Moodle

Week 7: Political Economy of Capitalism

Tu: Mar 1

- ❖ Wolf, Eric. *Chapter 3 (Modes of Production) in Europe and the People without history*. University of California Press. (Moodle)
- ❖ Kloppenburg, *First the Seed*, pp. 22-27 (Moodle)

Th, Mar 3:

- ❖ Kloppenburg, Jack R. 2004 (1998). Introduction, and Science, Agriculture, and Social Change (Chapter 2). Pp. 1-49 in *First the seed: the political economy of plant biotechnology, 1492-2000*. 2nd Edition. University of Wisconsin Press. (Moodle)
- ❖ Cronon, William. 1992. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. WW Norton. (selections on Moodle)

Week 8: Social Movements and Environmental Activism

Tu: Mar 8: **Reading Response 3 due in class**

- ❖ Read one US and one “international” selection from one or more of the following (I will put the books on reserve)
 - ❖ *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice*
 - ❖ *Global Ecologies and the environmental humanities*
 - ❖ *Sharing the earth: an international environmental justice reader*
- ❖ 4pm: Banu Subramaniam’s distinguished faculty lecture, *Interdisciplinary Hauntings: The Ghostly World of Nature Cultures*. Bernie Dallas Rm, Goodell

Th, Mar 10:

- ❖ https://spaceformovement.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/space_for_movement1.pdf
- ❖ <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/>
- ❖ Smith, Deirdre. 2014. [The Climate Movement Must Stand with Ferguson](#). Pp. 1-4, August 21.

Second Essay (due via Turnitin on Moodle) by noon March 11

SPRING BREAK (March 14-18)

Week 9: : Revisiting Capitalism, the Environment, Sex, Gender, Race

Tu: Mar 22:

- ❖ Kaplan, Robert D. 1994. [The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism, and Disease are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of Our Planet](#). *The Atlantic Monthly*, February, pp. 44-76.
- ❖ Peluso, Nancy and Michael Watts 2001. *Violent environments*. In *Violent Environments*, N. Peluso and M. Watts, eds. Cornell University Press. (Moodle)
- ❖ Reading Response 4 due in class

Th, Mar 24:

- ❖ Hartmann, B. *Reproductive Rights, Reproductive Wrongs*. (excerpt on Moodle)

Recommended

- ❖ Harvey, David. 1996. *The Environment of Justice*, in *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Blackwell
- ❖ Peet, Richard and Michael Watts. 1996. *Liberation Ecology: Development, sustainability, and environment in an age of market triumphalism*. Pp. 1-45 in *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*, eds. R. Peet and M. Watts. First edition. London and New York: Routledge.

March 25: June Jordan Poetics symposium

Week 10: RESEARCH INTENSIVE WEEK

Tu: Mar 29: Library session

Th, Mar 31: Session with Writing Tutor

Literature Review Essay due via Turnitin by noon, April 1 (15% of grade)

Week 11: Themes collectively selected in first half of the semester

Tu, Apr 5:



Th, Apr 7:

- ❖ **CLPP's** 35th annual conference, *From Abortion Rights to Social Justice: Building the Movement for Reproductive Freedom*, will take place April 8-10, 2016 at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA

Week 12: Themes collectively selected in first half of the semester

Tu, Apr 12:



Th, Apr 14:



Week 13: Themes collectively selected in first half of the semester

Tu, Apr 19:



Th, Apr 21:



Week 14:

Tu, Apr 26: LAST CLASS

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. There are NO double-returns between my paragraphs.
5. I have numbered all the pages of my assignment
6. I have STAPLED all the pages of my assignment. Prof Asher will not accept paper clipped papers.
7. As per Prof. Asher's instructions, I am NOT including a cover page or a report cover with my assignments.
8. I am submitting a hardcopy of my paper on time. I know that Prof Asher does not accept email submissions and that late papers lose half a letter grade for each day the paper is late.
9. I understand what plagiarism (<http://www.umass.edu/writingprogram/geninfo/plagiarism.html>) means and have avoided it.
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.