

**DRAFT SYLLABUS: Subject to Change**  
**ERS 275 – Gendering Environmental Politics**  
**Winter 2016**

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. EV2-2007

**Course Description**

Our social identities – such as gender, race, and class – shape our interactions with our environment. Gender roles might shape what type of agricultural labour you do. Racialized minority communities may find themselves living close to industrial facilities or without access to clean drinking water. Poorer countries often import hazardous waste from wealthier Western countries but lack the means to handle it safely. And your gender, race, and/or class identities might limit (or enhance) your ability to speak out about environmental hazards and participate in political processes.

This course will provide students with the tools to analyze gender and other forms of social difference in the context of environmental and resource issues. Drawing from case studies from around the world, this course looks at the ways in which gender, race and class shape access to resources, influence resource management and extraction, and create precarious working and living conditions. This course also examines how governance, policy, and resistance politics can be used to create social and environmental change. Students will become familiar with the concept of intersectionality, and how it can be applied to the study of environmental and ecological challenges and policy development. Students will be equipped with the tools needed to ask questions about gender and intersectionality in their future studies.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Define key concepts of gender, race, and class
- Describe how gender, race, class and other social identities shape our interactions with the environment
- Identify various strategies for changing environmental governance and policy
- Analyze environmental issues and politics with attention to gender, race, and class

**Academic integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.]

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

**Note for students with disabilities:** [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

**Turnitin.com and alternatives:** Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin and alternatives in this course.

Note: students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. See [Academic Integrity - Guidelines for Instructors](#) for more information.

## Course Assignments

Class Participation	10%
“Blog Posts”	20%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Research Paper	30%
Final Exam	30%

## Class Participation

Each week, classes will be a blend of lectures, videos, discussions, and in-class activities. Students are expected to attend each class having done the readings and be ready to participate in discussions and activities. Each class will also begin with a “News Briefing”, which is a chance for anyone to share anything related to gender and environmental politics over the past week.

Students will be evaluated on the *quality* of their participation in discussions and activities. This grade will be awarded at the end of the term, taking into account all of the in-class participation over the duration of the course.

### **“Blog Posts”**

Students are responsible for writing two (2) “blog posts” over the course of the term. Students will write short pieces (500-700 words) in response to the readings over the preceding weeks. These blog posts should explain a key concept, argument, or debate from the readings: imagine yourself writing the post to describe something interesting and why your readers should care about it. As with a blog post, the pieces should be written with a general audience in mind, using clear and accessible language. In addition, the blog post may include images or other media that help your reader understand what you are describing. Blog posts do not need to have a bibliography, but they **must** acknowledge the authors of the ideas they are discussing. Any direct quotes must also be attributed to their author.

“Blog posts” will be graded on the comprehension of key concepts, organization, and clarity of writing. Each post will be worth 10% of the final grade. Posts will be submitted through UWLEARN, but will not be made visible to the public. Students are free to post their own writing to their personal blogs after their assignments have been graded.

### **“Blog Post” Due Dates:**

1<sup>st</sup> Blog (based on readings from weeks 2, 3, or 4) – January 29

2<sup>nd</sup> Blog (based on readings from weeks 4, 5, or 6) – February 12

### **Major Research Paper**

The grade for the research paper is divided between two assignments:

#### **Annotated Bibliography – 10% - Due Week of March 4<sup>th</sup>**

To help prepare for the research paper, each student will produce a 1-2 page annotated bibliography. Your annotated bibliography should begin with a short description of your chosen research topic. You do not need to have a central thesis statement at this stage, but if you anticipate the thesis you will be advancing, you can outline it here.

After the statement of your research topic, include an entry for each source you have collected so far. Each source should be formatted according to MLA format. For each source, write a short 150-word summary of the central theme of the piece as well as what it adds to your thinking about your research topic. The bibliography should contain at least 5 academic sources, 4 of which should *not* be required readings in the course.

#### **Research Paper – 30% - Due Week of March 25/28**

For the research paper, students will use what they have learned about intersectionality and use this analytical angle to examine a contemporary issue in contemporary environmental politics. Students are permitted to pursue topics discussed in class, but they must go beyond the readings outlined in the syllabus. When employing an intersectional lens, students are expected to consider how gender identity interacts with race, class, ability/disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and/or other social identities.

Areas of contemporary environmental politics students might analyze include (but are not limited to):

- Climate Change
- Representation in local, regional, or global politics
- Pollution and/or Waste
- Use of Pesticides and Herbicides
- Industrial Agriculture
- Labour Practices in Resource Extraction
- Food Insecurity
- Management of Resources and Ecosystems
- Land Grabbing
- Sustainability and Resilience
- Green-washing and Consumer Choices
- Grassroots Environmental Movements
- Green Revolution
- Agricultural Biotechnology
- International Trade Practices
- Indigenous Land Governance

Research Papers must be between 2000 - 2400 words long. Writing clearly and concisely is part of the assignment, so do not exceed the 2400 word limit. Papers shorter than 2000 words require more research or analysis, and will be marked accordingly.

## **Course Outline**

### **Week 1 – Jan. 4 – Introduction**

- Introduction to the course – expectations and assignments

### **Section I – Key Concepts**

#### **Week 2 – Jan. 11 – Ecofeminism and its Critics**

#### **Week 3 – Jan. 18 – Class divides, Environmental Racism, and Intersectionality**

#### **Week 4 – Jan. 25 – Who speaks for whom? Governance, Policies, Representation and Resistance**

### **Section II – Gender and Environmental Issues**

This section of the course looks more in depth at contemporary issues and policies with an intersectional lens. These weeks will apply concepts learned in the first section of the course.

**Week 5 – Feb. 1 – Gender, Land, and Agricultural production**

**Week 6 – Feb. 8 – Water**

READING WEEK – FEB 15 – 19 – NO CLASSES

**Week 7 – Feb. 22 – Resource Extraction and Gender: Canada and Abroad – Annotated Bibliography Due**

**Week 8 – Feb. 29 – Sex and the City: Gender, Race, Class, and Urban Environments**

**Week 9 – Mar. 7 – Inequality and Climate Change Adaptation – Who can afford to adapt? Who can afford not to?**

**Week 10 – Mar. 14 – No Class**

**Week 11 – March 21 - The Race to the Bottom: Environmental hazards and Inequality**

**Week 12 – March 28 - Conclusion: Why intersectional analysis matters**

- Course Summary
- Research Papers Due
- Exam Review