

FG 215/EV 277: Ecofeminism

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Block 4, 2010-11

Welcome to ecofeminism! This class connects ideas about feminism and social justice with those of environmental degradation, using domination as a common theme. We'll look at potential links between the domination of women by men, of people of color by white people, of people of the Global South by those of the North, and of the natural world by human beings. We will study environmental issues in this broader framework. This block we will focus on the linked issues of sustainability and global climate change. We'll examine both the local and global aspects of these issues, as well as the relationship between these two levels.

Service learning: A significant part of the course will be service learning; we'll be studying and contributing to sustainability efforts on the Colorado College Campus and in the Colorado Springs Community. The purpose of this is threefold: First it will help us to put our developing ideas about ecofeminism into practice. Second, it will give us an opportunity to see how social change works in society. Finally, we'll look critically at these efforts from an ecofeminist perspective. This activity will be the equivalent of a lab in a science course, to help us see how the concepts we are studying actually work in practice.

You will work as part of the community for approximately four hours per week (twelve hours total). You will also be expected to reflect on your service and its relation to the course in our class discussion and in your written work in the class, particularly in the final project.

Some possibilities:

- Participate in an on-campus sustainability project (Emily Wright will give us some possibilities).
- Participate in Project SmartLight (<http://conservationhardware.org/smartlight/>). Emily has organized some time for us.
- Participate in the Green Cities Coalition (<http://www.greencoloradosprings.org/>).
- Participate in a political action or group that is ecofeminist.
- Organize an ecofeminist action or group.
- Something else—check with me.

Textbooks: Our two main textbooks are available in the bookstore:

Buying Time and Getting By: The Voluntary Simplicity Movement, by Mary Grigsby

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future, by Bill McKibben

We'll also be reading a number of short works, which are available on PROWL. The PROWL website for the class is: <https://prowl.coloradocollege.edu/course/view.php?id=2007>.

The enrollment key is RachelCarson.

Class meetings: We'll meet every day from 9 am until about noon in Barnes 219. We'll use the time to discuss the reading assignment for that day, and for other activities. What we'll do during class will be to a large extent determined by your thoughts and questions. So come prepared with notes from the reading and your service learning activities, and with ideas about what you'd like to discuss. We may occasionally meet in the afternoon for service projects.

Assignments: Written assignments are listed below. We'll discuss each in class as they come close. The day each written assignment is turned in, we'll spend some class time discussing them, so you should be prepared to say a few words about your work.

Ecofeminist Warrior Assignment
Due December 6, 2010 (second Monday)

Research and present a brief discussion (4-5 pages double spaced) of a model ecofeminist—a young (younger than 30 or so) ecofeminist person or organization. This can be someone you know from your home community or in Colorado Springs, someone you have come across during personal activism, reading, or in independent research. Do not confine yourself to white Americans—look for minority or Third World activists as well. Remember that all feminists are not women, and all women are not feminists. Briefly describe the person or organization, the problem s/he is trying to solve, and the results. Explain why you think this is an ecofeminist model. Remember that, while a project need not directly address all gender, social justice, and environmental issues, the lens should be broad enough to encompass all those points of view.

If you have trouble thinking of someone, you might look at Bill McKibben's organization "350" (<http://www.350.org/>) or at *Utne Reader's* "50 Visionaries who are Changing your World" (<http://www.utne.com/2008-11-13/50-Visionaries-Who-Are-Changing-Your-World.aspx>). But don't choose McKibben himself—he's too old.

Young Homesteader/Voluntary Simplicity Assignment
Due December 13, 2010 (third Monday)

The motto of the Voluntary Simplicity movement is "a life that is outwardly simple, inwardly rich." The idea is not to deprive yourself of things you really need, but to realize that it is *more* fun, not less, to bake your own bread, sew your own clothes, make your own music, and so on.

Following in the footsteps of Jenna Wogonrich, try one of her "made from scratch" projects, or a variation, or make up one of your own.

I'd prefer that you try a new skill, something you don't normally do. But if you want to build on skills you already have, that's okay with me.

Some suggestions:

- Cook something major (bread, spaghetti sauce, soup) from scratch. Use as many basic ingredients as possible (within in reason—you can use flour, pasta, etc). Invite friends to share your meal with you.
- Create a garment—by sewing, knitting, crocheting—as a gift for a friend.
- Create a gift for a friend or family member by some other means—woodworking, jewelry, drawing or painting.
- Organize a DIY evening of entertainment with your friends. No electronic toys allowed.
 - Music and singing—everyone brings an instrument to play and sing together.
 - Dramatic reading of a play.
 - Read and discuss a book that you are all interested in but don't have time to read. A book exemplifying ecofeminist or sustainability principles would be best, of course.
- Something else—check with me if you're not sure.

Write a short (4-5 pages double spaced) paper describing your project, why you think it fits the spirit of voluntary simplicity, how it went, what was successful, and what you would do differently next time. What voluntary simplicity projects have you done before?

Final Project
Community Sustainability Proposal
Paper due Monday, December 20, 2010 (fourth Monday)
Reviews due December 22, 2010 (fourth Wednesday)

This is a two part project. First, imagine that the Colorado College EcoFund and the Colorado Spring Green Cities Coalition have just announced a new grant program to fund projects to improve the sustainability of Colorado College and Colorado Springs. Your first task is to write a proposal to this fund for an ecofeminist project. The proposal should be 7-10 pages long (double spaced), and should cover the following topics:

1. How is this project ecofeminist—this should include references to class reading and discussion.
2. How will this project increase the sustainability of the community?
3. What are the details of the project? Who will do it? What are their qualifications? What is the timetable?
4. What is the budget and its justification? This should be as complete as possible.

Second, imagine that you are part of a panel of judges to review these projects and decide which ones to fund. With a group of 3 of your peers, you will review each other's papers and evaluate them on the following criteria:

1. Is the project ecofeminist? Why or why not?
2. Will the project significantly improve the sustainability of the community? How?
3. Is the project feasible, given the personpower, timetable and budget?
4. What is the overall rating: Excellent, very good, good, fair, poor?

You will turn in three written evaluations as well as your own proposal. The evaluations collectively will constitute 1/3 of your final project grade.

Final papers due Monday, December 20

Review panels meet to go over proposals Tuesday, December 21.

Evaluations due Wednesday, December 22.

Grade: Your grade in the course will be determined as shown below. Percentages are intended as guidelines; different students may put more time into different areas and so will be graded somewhat differently.

Class participation	15%
Service learning participation	15%
Ecofeminist Warrior paper	20%
Young homesteader/Voluntary Simplicity project	20%
Final project	25%

Honor Code: Part of the spirit of ecofeminism for me is working cooperatively with other people, sharing ideas and insights. You are welcome to discuss the reading and your work in the course with anyone, or to use any sources for research. Be sure to properly credit the ideas of others, including ideas you have gotten from your friends, the reading, or class discussion. In group discussions and projects, work respectfully and harmoniously with your group.

Religious Observances

Important religious holidays occur during this block. If the activities of this class interfere with your religious practices, please let me know IMMEDIATELY so we can work out an alternative.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability and require accommodations for this course, please speak with me privately as soon as possible so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with Disability Services (Learning Commons at Tutt Library, Room 152, 227-8285), the office responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities.