WS 450/550: Ecofeminism (3 credits)

Instructor: Dr. Madronna Holden
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Course Description:
This course explores the connections between women and the natural world, examining models of long-enduring “women-centered” societies and their erosion through colonialism, “mal-development”, environmental racism, and misapplication of Western science and technology, as we develop the ecofeminist vision of a “democracy of all life”.

Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

Learning Outcomes for 450 students:
By the end of this course, students should be able to
1. Describe three essential characteristics of women-centered societies.
2. Contrast women-centered societies and patriarchal societies with respect to their relationship to the natural world.
3. Give parallels between the valuing of nature and the valuing of women in different cultural and historical contexts.
4. Demonstrate the links between the way we treat nature and the way in which we treat other human beings.
5. Describe the ecofeminist perspective on science and global economic development.
6. Demonstrate how our body images reflect our relationships with the natural world.
7. Demonstrate how patriarchy uses concepts of "wild" and "domestic" to enforce systems of oppression.
8. Compare and contrast immanent and transcendent spirituality.
9. Draw up an ecofeminist vision of the future, using Vandana Shiva’s concept of ecofeminism as a “democracy of all life”.

Additional Learning Outcomes for 550 students:
By the end of the course, 550 students will complete the learning outcomes of WS450 students above and in addition, should:
1. Develop a critical overview of the social, historical, and economic contexts of change in women-centered societies.
2. Apply the ecofeminist understanding of “underdeveloped” and “overdeveloped” societies to modern development issues and the global economy with respect to women and the environment.
3. Utilize the work of contemporary third world women and organizations such as Wangari Maathai and the Greenbelt Movement (Africa), Jeanette Armstrong and the En’owkin Centre (British Columbia), Organization of Women Environmentalists of the Sierra de Petatlán (Mexico), Mata Amritanandamayi Devi (Ammachi) and Vandana Shiva (India), to develop a critical understanding of the relationship between theory and action in ecofeminism.

Course texts
Required:
Ecofeminism, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva
Grandmothers Counsel the World, Carol Schaefer
Your class notes
Selected essays on Our Earth/Ourselves.
Contrasting worldview outline on blackboard (on our readings page)

Optional:
“Restoring the World: Reviving the Language of Life”
Ecofeminism and the Sacred, ed. by Carol Adams
Intimate Nature, ed. by Linda Hogan, Deena Metzger, and Brenda Peterson

Evaluation

The following points will earn 450 students the following grades:
A 1500+; A- 1499-1450; B+ 1449-1400; B 1399-1350; B- 1349-1300; C+ 1299-1220; C 1219-1140; C- 1139-1050; D+ 1049-990; D 989-920; D- 919-850; Below 850: failing.

The following points will earn 450 students the following grades:
A 1500+; A- 1499-1450; B+ 1449-1400; B 1399-1350; B- 1349-1300; C+ 1299-1220; C 1219-1150; C- 1149-1100; D+ 1099-1050; D 1049-1000; D- 999-950; Below 950: failing.

In this class, you are not graded on a percentage scale, but on the total points you earn.

Once you turn in your required assignments and earn 1500 points, you will earn an A in this class without any additional work.

Once you turn in your class plan and earn 1100 points, you will earn a C- (or pass) in this class without further work.

The following points will earn 550 students the following grades:
A 1700+; A- 1699-1650; B+ 1649-1600; B 1599-1550; B- 1549-1500; C+ 1499-1420; C 1419-1350; C- 1349-1300; D+ 1299-1250; D 1149-1100; D- 1099-1050; Below 1050: failing.

In this class, you are not graded on a percentage scale, but on the total points you earn.

Once you submit your required assignments and earn 1700 points, you will earn an A in this class without turning in any additional work.

Once you submit your required assignments and earn 1300 points, you will earn a “pass” (or the B- required for graduate credit) in this class.

OSU academic standards include a strong stand against plagiarism
Any reading material (including class texts and lesson discussion) presented word for word in your paper must be in quotes, with its source given, or it is plagiarism and due a zero grade.
This link outlines OSU expectations on student conduct, including avoiding plagiarism:
http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm.

Students with Disabilities
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability and Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.
Course Evaluation
We encourage you to engage in the course evaluation process each term—online, of course. The evaluation form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions by Ecampus. You will login to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.

Appropriate and inappropriate sources
Dictionary definitions, Wikipedia, and many other websites are not appropriate sources to use in writing your assignments. You have ample material in our class readings and links with which to respond to assignments. Please focus on these—and your own thinking—to develop your work. If you wish to reference additional material, please use peer-reviewed material only.

Writing Guidelines

Format

■ Please double space your work and line left margins only to allow me to comment more easily
■ Always indicate which question (or which part of a question) you are answering.

Content

Present your own ideas
Your papers give you a chance to develop and express your own insights with respect to class material. I will never grade you down for expressing your own point of view—in fact, I expect you to do so. Your papers should go beyond a mere summary or repetition of class material.

Avoid dictionary definitions
Concepts in this course are philosophical terms or ideas I will ask you define and discuss in your own terms. Dictionary definitions are never what I want when I ask you to define a concept or discuss an idea.

Support your points
Substantiate the points you make. Explain why you make each of your assertions, and support your position with concrete examples from class materials. (What is it in class material that gives you your idea? Why?)

Specify your ideas
Avoid sweeping or vague statements (“people have always acted this way”). Avoid statement attributed to vague authority (“It is common knowledge,” “They say”). Use generalized terms and ideas only if you specify how you are using them in your particular discussion. Support any general terms you do use with concrete examples.

Focus your work
Edit out statements that detract from your discussion because they are not directly related to your topic. Avoid over-long summaries of reading material that do not pertain directly to your points. A paper can as easily be too long than too short. Avoid repetition. Don’t dilute your presentation by saying the same thing more than once.

Connect your ideas with one another
Organize your paper clearly around your specific points. As you write, don’t move to a new point without relating it to the previous one.

Use the ideas of others appropriately
Quotes should support your ideas, not speak for you. In order to avoid the latter; try to limit quotes to two lines (not sentences) in length. Always indicate what a quote means to you. Paraphrase longer quotes in your own words or break them into smaller parts that you discuss part by part. Be wary of unintentional plagiarism. Give credit for ideas you use, even if you are paraphrasing them.
Answer questions completely
Address each part of a question in turn. Papers will be docked if you fail to discuss any part of a question. You may earn a point of extra credit by answering the following question in bold at the end of lesson one’s assignment: what part of these guidelines do you think you will give you the biggest challenge to follow?

Proof carefully
I will mark your paper down if your paper averages more than three proofing errors per page, since this obviously affects the strength and clarity of your presentation. If you have trouble catching proofing errors, try proofing your work out loud.

Don’t let grammatical errors handicap your presentation of ideas
I mark grammatical errors for your information. Though I do not generally count off for these errors, they will certainly affect your grade if they effect the clear presentation of your ideas. I will count off for grammatical errors if the same errors appear persistently. There are a number of excellent writing guides that will help you to understand and correct the errors I have marked.

Additional hints
--Spellcheckers are useful, but don’t let them replace your own proofreading, as did the student who wrote her paper discussing how women have “neutered” (she meant “nurtured”) their children.
--Don’t assume the reader (even your professor!) understands your ideas because we share common knowledge. To strengthen and clarify your paper, imagine you are writing to a co-worker (or a complete stranger!), explaining your ideas thoroughly enough for that person to understand them.