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Class meetings: M-Th 2:30-4:00, BC 212

PAGS 346, WMNS 346 Feminism, Ecology, and Peace  
Fall, 2003

In this class we shall examine the intersection of three kinds of oppression-- sexism, exploitation of the earth, and class and colonial violence--from a multidisciplinary perspective. Uniting our readings and investigations is a consideration of the way that cultures, and especially Western culture, both encourage and resist oppression. Alternatives to oppressive economic and social structures will be considered.

I. Purposes

Although we may want to articulate some of our purposes as we go along, they can tentatively be listed as follows:

- A. To trace a history of attitudes towards nature and women in Western culture, and to some extent in other cultures, and to assess the extent to which they are inter-related.
- B. To examine the rise of modernity and the development of modern science, noting assumptions about nature and women which emerged in the modern period
- C. To study some philosophical approaches to the question of human nature and humans' relation to nature
- D. To analyze the effects of globalization on nature and women in formerly colonized areas as well as in Europe and the United States
- E. To consider the relationship between women, race, and class
- F. To refine our reading and writing skills
- G. To create a "safe space" where people can express themselves with confidence. This will be a semester-long project which will require everyone's cooperation and good will.
- H. To consider our own relationship to systemic discourses about women, race, class, and nature
- I. To become acquainted with some significant authors who have written about feminism, ecology, and peace

## II. Requirements

### A. Write two papers

1. The first paper, due October 16th, should be on The Reproduction of Femininity Among Your Ancestors. It should include references to our readings (and to other readings which you consider pertinent), but it should center on interviews with your family members. You may choose to focus on a particular ancestor; on the other hand, you may wish to identify patterns of behavior which have manifested themselves across the generations. You may choose to write about a person or group of persons; the subject matter is the ways in which little girls in your family have been socialized to become women. However the point of the assignment is less to produce a biographical study than to analyze maturation patterns familiar to the women in your family. What were some assumptions which governed their up-bringing? Do you see relationships between attitudes towards femininity in your family, and attitudes towards other symbolic structures in our culture? How have your female ancestors responded to the challenges they have faced in their particular temporal and spatial locations? The paper should be about 8 pages long. Although it will inevitably describe behaviors, the essay should move beyond description towards coherence and persuasive interpretation.

2. Write a research paper about 10 pages long. It should include notes and bibliography in proper form. The paper may choose any topic suggested by class discussions and readings. It should not merely summarize or report; the paper should provide evidence to support an argument. The paper is due on the last day of class.

3. See below for the criteria by which the papers will be evaluated.

B. Form part of an oral report group with four other members of the class. You should choose a topic on which to give a presentation between Dec. 1st and Dec. 11th. The research should center on Richmond, looking for institutions and practices which relate to the themes studied in this class. Criteria for oral reports will be distributed early in the term.

C. Participate in class discussions and activities, helping to create an atmosphere in which each can do his or her best. Attendance matters. If you miss more than twice, you will not receive a grade higher than a B in this class. (I make exceptions in cases of severe illness or emergencies which require you to be off campus).

III. Criteria for papers: Although papers will not be graded mechanically, as if there were only one good way to write an academic essay, they will be evaluated according to standard academic criteria. These criteria are what one would expect if one were to submit a work to a scholarly journal.

- A. Fidelity to the texts (written, oral, monumental, etc.)
- B. Appropriate use of evidence in the sense of presenting specific citations from texts and also in the sense of covering a topic and embedding it in a context
- C. Power of analysis
- D. Originality of argument and insight
- E. Clarity
- F. Attention to grammar and spelling
- G. "Thickness" of description and interpretation, i. e., ability to move beyond a superficial presentation and to relate complex insights and examples
- H. Charm, i. e., attention to presentation and writing style
- I. Proper citation. I shall give you some advice on and examples of notes and bibliography

Lateness will be penalized at the rate of a letter grade a day. Extensions will be granted in some cases such as serious illness or a family emergency which requires one to be off campus for several days

#### IV. Class evaluation

Paper I	25%
Paper II	40%
Oral Presentation	25%
Participation, including quizzes	10%

V. Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, psychiatric, visual, and/or hearing) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and Academic Support Services at the beginning of the semester.

#### VI. Readings

A book of readings bound by Office Services which may be purchased at the Bookstore  
Carolyn Merchant, THE DEATH OF NATURE  
Maria Mies, PATRIARCHY AND ACCUMULATION ON A WORLD SCALE  
Angela Davis, WOMEN, RACE AND CLASS

CLASS SCHEDULE

Please be ready to deal with the assignments listed below on the dates indicated. The articles can be found in a book of readings bound for this class, hereafter referred to as BR.

- 9/28 Th Introduction
- 9/1 M Arne Naess, on Deep Ecology BR  
Charlene Spretnak, Ecofeminism, Our Roots and Flowering BR
- 9/4 Th Kirkpatrick Sale, article in THE NATION, 1988 BR  
Carol Gilligan on the care ethic BR
- Assignment: Martin Heidegger, The Thing  
Prepare a paragraph written in the style of Heidegger
- 9/11 Th Martin Heidegger, The Thing BR
- 9/15 M Heidegger, continued
- 9/18 Th Susan Bordo, "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity" and  
"Reading the Slender Body" in Susan Bordo, UNBEARABLE  
WEIGHT, FEMINISM, WESTERN CULTURE, AND THE  
BODY (Berkeley: U. of California, 1993), 165-212 (47 pp.)
- Begin paper on The Reproduction of Femininity Among my  
Ancestors (due October 16th)
- 9/22 M Carolyn Merchant, THE DEATH OF NATURE, xv-xx, ch. 1
- 9/25 Th Merchant, chs. 2 and 4 (Skip 3)

- 9/29 M Merchant 5-6, beginning of 7 (to 172) (36 pp.)  
Decide on oral report groups
- 10/2 Th Merchant 7-8  
Decide on oral report groups  
Hand in two pages of your paper on The Reproduction of  
Femininity among my Ancestors
- OCTOBER
- 10/6 M Merchant 11, 12, epilogue (42 pp.)
- 10/9 Th Maria Mies, PATRIARCHY AND ACCUMULATION ON A  
WORLD SCALE, 1-43
- 10/13 M MIDTERM VACATION
- 10/16 Th Video, Learning from Ladokh  
Richard Peets and Michael Watts, Conclusion, Towards a theory of  
liberation Ecology, LIBERATION ECOLOGIES (London:  
Routledge) , 260-268  
Papers due on the Reproduction of Femininity among your  
Ancestors
- 10/20 M Mies 44-87
- 10/23 Th Mies 88-132
- 10/27 M Mies 133-176

12/8 M

Oral Report

12/11 Th

Oral report

PAPERS DUE for everyone except those in the final oral report group. They may turn their papers in during the time scheduled for finals for this class.

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