WS 313-4 Women & the Environment: ecofeminism & sustainable communities

WS 825-5 Graduate Seminar on Women, Technology & Social Change

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The ways in which we perceive the natural world (and ourselves in it) provide a framework for our understandings of social relationship. Women, when differentiated from men by their ability to be the environment (i.e., to bear an embryo/foetus), have often been coessentialized with nature. In a society centred on modern (or Western) science and technology, women/nature and the virtues of womanhood/wild(er)ness often are viewed at best as inappropriate and at worst as dangerous to the public good, and creativity is viewed as being in need of strong social controls.

Thus, what we mean by environmentalist, development, equity, nature and so on, and to whom we extend moral worth and/or community membership, will determine our concept of sustainability.

We will identify strategies for environmentally-based social justice which have been pursued in different feminist worldviews. Of particular concern will be the place of eco-feminism within feminisms and environmentalism, and the ways in which ecofeminist analyses have affected, and been affected by, the interactions amongst these two social justice movements.

Evaluation:
Midterm 35%
Research essay (10-12 pages)*** 30%
Class presentation 5%
Environmental Code 10%
Journal 10%
Attendance & participation 10%

*** For WS 825-5, a 20-22 page research essay is required, and extended discussion time will be scheduled (to be decided).

Required reading:

Undergraduate Prerequisites:
Six credit hours including WS 101 or WS 102. Students who have taken this course as a Women’s Studies Special Topics course may not take this course for further credit.

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN’S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT.