WS 313-4  Women & the Environment: ecofeminism  
and sustainable communities  
WS 825-5  Graduate Seminar on Women, Technology & Social Change

Marilyn MacDonald  
Office Hours:  17:30-18:20   AQ 5105A  
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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, to nourish family life), 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 – whether  
physical, cognitive, aesthetic, emotional, inter/intra personal or spiritual – as a hazardous  
process in need of strong social controls.

Thus, what we mean by environment, environmentalist, development, needs, equity,  
nature wilderness, science, technology, and so on, and to whom we extend moral worth  
and/or community membership, will determine what and who are considered as problems in,  
and solutions to, the achievement of sustainability.

As well, 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  15%  
Attendance & participation  5%

*WS 825, requirement is for a 20-22 page research essay, and for extended discussion (additional  
3 hrs) tbd.

Required readings:  
Diamond, Irene, & Gloria Orenstein (eds.) 1990.  Reweaving the world: the emergence of ecofeminism.  
San Francisco, Sierra Club Books.  

Undergraduate Prerequisites:  
Six credit hours including WS 101 and/or WS 102. Students who have taken this course as a Women’s  
Studies Special Topics course may not register for WS 313-4