

Gender, Race, and Ecology

Ruth Goldstein, PhD

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Sterling 3425, Tuesday 8-10:30am (in-person but hybrid options possible)

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30am-11:30am and by appointment (Zoom options available)

This course and the Gender and Women's Studies department recognizes that the University of Wisconsin, Madison occupies is the ancestral home of the Ho-Chunk Nation, who have called this land Teejop (day-JOPE) since time immemorial. In the first treaty following the Indian Removal Act in 1830, the state government forcibly removed the Ho-Chunk from their home in 1832. In the decades that followed, the federal and state government sought to completely remove the Ho-Chunk from Wisconsin. Despite these attempts, many Ho-Chunk people continued to return to their home in present-day Wisconsin. We acknowledge the circumstances that led to the forced removal of the Ho-Chunk people, and honor their history of resistance and resilience. The Ho-Chunk Nation and the other eleven First Nations residing in the boundaries of present-day Wisconsin remain vibrant and strong. We recognize and respect the inherent sovereignty of the twelve First Nations that reside in the boundaries of the state of Wisconsin. This history of colonization informs this course and hopes for a collaborative future. (See the Prevention Research Center for more details: <https://prc.wisc.edu/land-acknowledgement/>)

Course Description: Ecological spaces and nonhuman beings play a key role in human politics, the human imagination, and in constructing this idea of “the human.” Animals have long played a key role (not voluntarily) in distinguishing a hierarchy among humans, but plants also play a key role in the Western Enlightenment ideal that sets humans as “apart from” rather than “part of” an ecology of beings. Bringing environmental studies, indigenous studies, and critical race theory perspectives to bear on gender and sexuality studies, this course takes feminism as an identity, an object of analysis, a methodological approach and social justice practice. The term, “eco”, from the Greek “oikos,” has multiple translations: “dwelling,” “household,” “home,” “family” and “hearth,” laying the foundation for examining the roles that gender and sexuality play in changing forms of kinship, citizenship, and (environmental) politics beyond and within the concept of the human. These different meanings of the “eco” in *economy* and *ecology* shape scholarly analyses as well as the lived experiences for those do not feel “at home” in a white, elitist ableist, hetero-normative structure. The ecologies that we will consider have a broad range. I will ask us to also consider the “social ecologies” not just between humans and nonhumans, but also the ones shaped by the structures that we inhabit (ideological and physical). We will examine myriad life forms. Land and plants will undergird other worldly forays. Plants have political import in agricultural innovation, biodiversity conservation, indigenous intellectual property rights, and pharmaceutical development – empires of different orders. We will also question the ways that “being a vegetable” has become synonymous with cognitive impairment, seeking to upset how “barren land” signifies a disabled landscape while we also trouble that stubborn line between nonhuman animals and human ones.

Class Structure:

This is a graduate seminar course. I will post a general framing of the readings prior to each class with some questions to consider while you read (but are optional to respond to in written form), along with an introduction to the main authors posted in "Discussions." (If it's a multi-authored scientific piece, these bios usually appear in the article itself). I will frame the readings and in-class discussion in a more formal way, bringing in relevant current global events for theoretical analysis. This model serves as an invitation for us to consider how the course materials apply to life outside the classroom and, I hope, your own research topics. There is a weekly "précis" due on Monday by 12pm before class. This allows for time to digest and perhaps even to read what your peers have written before class on Tuesday morning. I will ask for co-led facilitation of class at least once during the semester. This looks like anything from a multimodal presentation (maybe there's a video or podcast clip you want to play) and a series of discussion questions that serve as a jumping off point. Or maybe, it's just a series of questions that you jointly offer for us. While I have questions, clear "take-away" points and sections of the readings to analyze, the goal is to create a classroom environment where organic, dynamic, agile conversations can take place. While the material can be dense and present complex arguments, the environment of the classroom is meant to encourage thoughtful and creative intellectual collaboration.

Course Objectives:

- Develop a fundamental axis of critique to examine the politics of "truth" and (scientific) knowledge.
- Enrich one's understanding of what a plant, animal, river, a mountain, or a field is for different people across time and space. This seems like a simple question, but the different ways that nonhuman life forms and landscapes relate to people and have personhood are inflected with gender, race, sexuality, and ableist notions.
- Consider the economic and political stakes of biopiracy for communities (often indigenous) when it comes to scientific development.
- Articulate the long history and continuing impact of racist, sexist, ableist "scientific" ideals stemming from the European Enlightenment that affect notions of property and nature today.
- Weigh the benefits and drawbacks of a "queer ecologies" approach and what a trans feminist approach has to offer.

You will be expected to:

- Critically analyze academic literary and scientific texts, as well as communicate them to a broader audience.
- Examine and put into conversation different modes of analysis – literary, popular media, documentary - into productive conversation with (social) science and humanities materials.
- Write academic term papers that combine an understanding of the course's theoretical material with your own analysis to think about continuing or current social problems.
- Bring historical and current scientific and social science insights to your chosen field of study
- Incorporate your own intellectual (and activist) interests in conversation with why plants and animals are more than vegetal, static, unintelligent life and how they become a lens through which to understand the construction of the category of "the human."

- Participate in a queer and trans and feminist practice of critique

Required readings:

You will find all required and suggested readings uploaded online or through UW Libraries.

Requirements and Policies

1. **Reading:** Each class begins with a discussion of a specified section of the required texts. You are encouraged to read ahead, but that is not necessarily. You are, however, required to at least keep pace with the class reading schedule.
2. **Writing assignments:** Frankly, I am pretty chill. You will have a midterm and a final. We will have weekly / bi-weekly précis (summary analysis) and I understand that life can be unwieldy. I just ask that you communicate with me about your needs.
3. **Class discussion and participation:** I want this to be an exciting collaborative space where we can try on ideas and not feel ashamed to ask questions. I will ask for everyone to take a turn guiding discussion with questions after the third week.
4. **Attendance:** It's really nice when people show up.
5. **Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to uphold University expectations for academic integrity by submitting only their own original works and ideas for all assignments in this course. Violations of academic integrity can result in a range of repercussions depending on the severity of the violation, from having to repeat the assignment to expulsion from the University. All academic integrity violations will be recorded and reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (OSCCS). For more on academic misconduct procedures at UW-Madison see: <https://students.wisc.edu/student-conduct/academic-integrity/>
6. **Classroom Conduct:** Students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner toward both their peers and faculty at all times. While disagreement and passion are welcome in our discussions, the emotional and intellectual safety of everyone is of utmost importance. Students behaving in a way which disrespects, harms, threatens, or otherwise significantly negatively impacts others in the classroom will have their participation grade voided for that class period. Repeated violations will result in a zero for participation in the course.
7. **Universal Design & Accommodations:** I believe everyone has a right to a quality education and that classrooms can adapt to students' needs. Everyone learns differently. If you have ideas on how you can best learn and express your learning in this class, if you have an undocumented disability, or if you have a change in disability status during the semester, I encourage you to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss a learning plan. If you have a documented disability, please provide me your accommodation information within the first two weeks of class. The University accommodation policy reads as follows:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty will work either directly

with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Questions about documenting your disability can be directed to the McBurney Disability Resource Center (mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu, 608/263-2741).

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: Institutional statement on diversity: Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison seeks to fulfill its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

SEXUAL HARASSMENT & OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT: As an instructor, I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. UW–Madison offers a variety of resources for students impacted by sexual misconduct.

If you wish to seek out free, confidential support, there are a number of [services](#) available on campus and in the community.

If you would like to report sexual misconduct to the campus, a number of [reporting options](#) are available. In addition, each department has staff members, known as Responsible Employees, who can assist you. If you are an undergraduate student, most of the academic and career advisors you work with are designated Responsible Employees. Please note that Responsible Employees are required to report specific disclosures that you share about sexual misconduct to UW-Madison's [Title IX Office](#).

The Department of Gender & Women's Studies has the following Responsible Employees:

Department Chair, Dr. Judy Houck (jahouck@wisc.edu)

Department Administrator, Jamie Gratrix (jamie.gratrix@wisc.edu)

Graduate Coordinator, Duachi Yang (duachi.yang@wisc.edu)

Undergraduate Advisor, Lachrista Greco (lachrista.greco@wisc.edu).

PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS & THE USE OF AUDIO RECORDED LECTURERS STATEMENT: See more information about [privacy of student records and the usage of audio-recorded lectures](#).

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

COURSE EVALUATIONS: Students will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your learning experience. Student participation is an integral component of this course, and your confidential feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation. UW-Madison uses a digital course evaluation survey tool called [HELIOCAMPUS](#). For this course, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying you that your course evaluation is available. In the email you will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID. Evaluations are anonymous. Your participation is an integral component of this course, and your feedback is important to me. I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

Assignments:

This course is graded on the UW-Madison grading system: A (93-100%), AB (88-92%), B (83-87%), BC (78-82%), C (70-77%), D (60-69%), F (below 60%). The assignments are weighted as follows:

Evaluation:

Final Project	35%
Mid-Term Project	25%
Weekly Précis	25%
Guiding Discussion	15%

The mid-term and final project have more than one prompt. This kind of “choose your own adventure” strategy is geared towards creating intellectual space for students to decide what matters most to them and/or what project serves them best. Midterm options include creating your own syllabus, an annotated bibliography for dissertation or MA thesis chapter or creative project. Final projects will involve options like a draft of a dissertation/thesis chapter, a grant proposal, a literature review, an essay developed from a research question that directly contributes to your scholarly trajectory, etc... Photo essays, sculpture, podcasts, you name it, I am open to it.

**** PLEASE NOTE:** the syllabus is a living document. It may change as the semester progresses. If anything, readings will be decreased or swapped out for something else. My attempts in this syllabus reflect movements to [#CiteBlackWomen](#) authors and engage critiques of various academic disciplines that have both arisen from European colonial practices and continued to perpetuate them (and not flippantly “[decolonizing](#)” the syllabus). In situating my knowledge, as it were, I acknowledge my positionality and privilege as well as how I might then seek to transform social and ecological spaces for the better.

I also ask you to consider this syllabus a “**welcome letter**” to think, explore, and yes, contribute to! I welcome ideas and sources and will do my best to shift things around if it feels absolute that a certain source be incorporated. At the end of January, we will have a national moment of déjà-vu that also ushers in considerable unknowns. My aim is that this classroom space is one you look forward to inhabiting each week.

Part 1: “Doing Science” and the Human(ent)ities

Week 1: Introduction to Gender, Race, and Ecology

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

Introduction to the course and among ourselves. **Each syllabus tells a story, an intellectual biography of its author. This is but one way to tell a narrative about gender, race, and ecology but it is certainly not the only one.** In this first meeting, I hope to hear from each of you about your intellectual interests, how and if (they don’t have to) they pertain to activist and political commitments. I cannot separate my teaching and research from intertwined struggles for social and environmental justice. This is not to require anyone else to engage that way, but rather an expression of transparency on my part and how I approach scholarly literature.

During class time, I would like us to read (again) Audre Lorde’s “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (110-114). In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984. I believe that we have the time to do this. Every return to this piece, I come up with something new. I ask us to think about the “oikos” through Lorde’s piece. It’s a powerful way to identify green colonialism and continued erasures of people and their knowledge when we couch it (to use a house furniture metaphor) in Black feminist studies and largely calls to dismantle hierarchies of power.

How to read this syllabus and approach this course: It can seem like a lot of reading. (I know I can get carried away, so you let me know!) BUT, I try to be specific about which chapters will be centered in conversation. There are also podcasts and other media involved. Ultimately, I am interested in presenting you with different materials and ways of engaging that speak to your own interests. If anything, this course and the supplementary (recommended if of interest) materials are here for you to navigate in a “choose your own adventure” sort of way. The mid-term and final project are also designed to meet you where you are in your journey. **Going on the job market or about to teach your own class?** Develop a syllabus and research prospectus in this class. **Working**

on your dissertation? Create an annotated bibliography, a literature review, or work on a dissertation chapter. **Applying for grants?** Work on a proposal in this course.

As we discuss environmental racism, multispecies ethnographies, and undertake a version of queering ecofeminism, we will also consider (what I believe to be) a dearth of engagement with Indigenous Studies and Black Studies (though this is slowly changing). Of the many aims of this course, I ask that we ask **“who benefits”** from keeping people apart – from one another, from seeing themselves as part of global ecology (a separation of nature/culture) and pushing exclusive notions of progress. I ask us to examine the implicit assumptions that one carries (if not just ourselves than in our chosen disciplines) about what constitutes “good” scholarship, excellence in research. Here, I am getting at notions of innovation and “newness” and how so often BIPOC populations and BIPOC scholars and innovators are erased in the making of “science” – regardless or even more so because of their (perceived) gender and sexuality.

****** I do not assign my own work. I do have these cited in the supplementary materials. I do not ask students to read my work and comment on it in a formal way because I don’t feel it’s all that fair when, despite my best attempts to dismantle power relations, I am still responsible for assigning final grades and letters of recommendation. That said, happy to discuss my own research, methods, and texts. I just don’t want to require it! This is another way of saying that I appreciate being held accountable to my words. I think it makes me a better scholar if not also person.

Week 2: Queer and Trans Ecologies – On Relating to Whom and What We Study Or, Making Chosen Family

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

- 1) Kimmerer, Robin Wall. “Skywoman Falling” (pages 3-10). In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013.
- 2) Scott, Charlie Amáyá. “Beyond the Binary: Retelling the Diné Creation Story.” *Yes Magazine*, January 4, 2023.
- 3) Ojeda, Diana, et al. "[Feminist ecologies](#)." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 47.1 (2022): 149-171. (This is an overview and helpful if an introduction to feminist political ecology and background is needed. It is an overview into which we might assert more of a queer and trans feminist approach).
- 4) Wolfe Hazard, Cleo. *Underflows: Queer Trans Ecologies and River Justice*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. ****with a focus on the Prologue, the Introduction, Chapter 2, 3, and 4.**

Discuss: How we relate to the humans and nonhumans that we seek to understand, trying to get away from “studying others” to “studying with others.” While it’s helpful to have some cognizance of José Muñoz and queer theory, it is not imperative! It’s my job to elucidate and create an interdisciplinary thinking space. What appeals to me about this text has to do with how we can all think about our relationship to time, to the land, water, air, soil and microbes, whose land we are on and why that matters. The role of affect, thus, is key. For those stepping into fieldwork roles, this text attempts to create a different methodology for conducting natural science in the field.

Recommended Resources:

Bedford, Anna. "Introduction: Transecology—(Re) claiming the natural, belonging, intimacy, and impurity." *Transecology*. Routledge, 2020. 1-16.

Cram, E. "Queer and Trans Ecologies as Care Practice of Indispensability." *Environmental Communication* 18.1-2 (2024): 21-27.

Klein, Samantha, et al. "Transforming restoration science: multiple knowledges and community research cogeneration in the Klamath and Duwamish Rivers." *The American Naturalist* 200.1 (2022): 156-167.

Vakoch, Douglas A., ed. *Transecology: Transgender perspectives on environment and nature*. Routledge, 2020.

Wergin, Carsten. "From Transculture to Transecology: Coming to Terms with Multispecies Conviviality in the Education for Sustainable Development." *beiEDUCATION Journal*. *Transdisziplinäre Studien zur Lehrerbildung* 9 (2023): 83-95.

Week 3: "Cat-calling" Nature's Body: Taxonomic Misogyny, Racism, Ableism and Fatphobia

February 4, 2025

1) Schiebinger, Londa L. [*Nature's body: Gender in the making of modern science*](#). Rutgers University Press, 2004. ** With a focus on the **Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3**, the section entitled **"Do Women Shape the Race"** in **Chapter 4, Chapter 5** (focus on Sarah Baartman), and "Nature's Body Wronged."

2) Jackson, Zakiyyah Iman. "Animal: New directions in the theorization of race and posthumanism." *Feminist studies* 39.3 (2013): 669-685.

3) Ahuja, Neel. "Postcolonial critique in a multispecies world." *PMLA* 124.2 (2009): 556-563.

4) Chala, Desalegn, et al. "[Stop using racist, unethical, and inappropriate names in taxonomy.](#)" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 121.45 (2024): e2415490121. (this is short and an opinion piece)

5) Callaway, Ewen. "[Hundreds of racist plant names will change after historic vote by botanists.](#)" *Nature* (2024). (This is also short!)

Discuss: The European idealized (human) body of nature in its gendered, racialized, and fertile form along with the dehumanizations and violence that it justified. Taxonomic categories that remain, with us today, though some, as of very recently, are changing.

Recommended Resources:

Herbers, Joan M. "[Racist words in science.](#)" *BioScience* 70.11 (2020): 946-946.

Fears, Darryl. "[Dozens of bird names honoring enslavers and racists will be changed.](#)" *The Washington Post* (2023): NA-NA.

Haraway, Donna. "Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective." *Women, science, and technology*. Routledge, 2013. 455-472.

Jackson, Zakiyyah Iman. "Becoming human: Matter and meaning in an antiblack world." *Becoming human*. New York University Press, 2020.

Renkl, Margaret. "[North American Birds Will No Longer Be Named for Racists.](#)" *The New York Times* (2023): 9-9.

Suzuki, Yuka. *The nature of whiteness: Race, animals, and nation in Zimbabwe*. University of Washington Press, 2016.

Part II: Queering Relations

Week 4: Relationality Beyond Settler Sex and Nature

February 11, 2025

1) TallBear, Kim, and Angela Willey. "Critical relationality: Queer, Indigenous, and multispecies belonging beyond settler sex & nature." *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies* 10.1 (2019): 5-15. ** Focus on pages **5, 6, 9 and 15**. You are welcome to read all the texts in this issue, but we will only focus on Sophie Duncan's piece and carry through Tallbear and Willey's provocations to think with in the introduction. **(15 min)**

2) Reed, Jennifer J. [From Ecofeminism to Ecosexuality: Queering the Environmental Movement](#) Pp. 92-102 in *Ecosexuality: When Nature Inspires the Arts of Love*, edited by Serena Gaia Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Lindsay Hagamen (2015). Puerto Rico: 3WayKiss via CreateSpace. (ecosexbook.com) **(25 min)**

3) Duncan, Sophie. "The (Un) Natural Archive." *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies* 10.1 (2019): 61-99. (This is a multimodal piece, so less text than it might seem) **(30 min)**

4) Todd, Zoë. "An Indigenous Feminist's Take on The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word For Colonialism." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29.1(2016): 4-22. **(45 min)**

5) **Listen:** For the Wild - [Queer Nature: On Reclaiming Wild Safe Space.](#) Ayana Young in conversation with Pinar and So Sinopoulos-Lloyd, December 20, 2018.

Discuss: Unsettling “naturalized” heteronormative relations and continuing colonial appropriations. Queer nature emerges as a way to reclaim so-called wild spaces. (Feel free to consider some of pop culture’s more odd expressions like “Naked and Afraid” to contrast with what practices and bodies are “natural” or “unnatural” in the archive or in the woods.

Recommended Resources:

Campo Woytuk, Nadia, et al. "Designing fertility otherwise: Of human, animal and soil relations." (2023).

Feng, Jeff L. Toward queer climate justice. University of California, Santa Barbara, 2022.

Przybyło, Ela. "Ace-Ecologies: The Asexual Erotics of Loving Kin." *Asexualities*. Routledge, 2024. 37-54.

Sprinkle, Annie, et al. *Assuming the ecosexual position: The earth as lover*. U of Minnesota Press, 2021.

TallBear, Kim. "Beyond the life/not-life binary: A feminist-indigenous reading of cryopreservation, interspecies thinking, and the new materialisms." (2017).

TallBear, Kim. "Why interspecies thinking needs indigenous standpoints." *Cultural Anthropology* 24.1 (2011): 1-8.

Todd, Zoe. "Indigenizing the anthropocene." *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters among aesthetics, politics, environments and epistemologies* (2015): 241-54.

Todd, Zoe. "Fish, kin and hope: Tending to water violations in Amiskwaciwâskahikan and Treaty Six Territory." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry* 43.1 (2017): 102-107.

Willey, Angela. *Undoing monogamy: The politics of science and the possibilities of biology*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Listen: [Decolonizing Sex: All my Relations](#) – Kim Tallbear (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate) with Matika Wilbur (Swinomish and Tulalip), and Temryss Lane (Lummi Nation), May 19, 2019. ** I have written tribal affiliations as Tallbear, Wilbur, and Lane have them represented online. I wonder about parentheticals, but again, I have tried to identify people as they have self-represented in the public sphere.

Week 5: Different Ways of Knowing, Naming, and Conversing with Nonhumans

Monday, February 19, 2024:

1) Listen to Joe Pitawanakwat in “[This plant medicine teacher is reclaiming Anishinaabe names for species. Why that could be good for the planet](#)” (25 min)

2) Kimmerer, Robin. “Plant Sweetgrass” (1-10) and “In the Footsteps of Nanabozho: Becoming Indigenous to Place” (205-215). In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013. (35 min)

3) Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2017. “[Learning the Grammar of Animacy.](#)” *Anthropology of Consciousness* 28(2):128–134. DOI: 10.1111/anoc.12081128 (35 min)

4) LaDuke, Winona. [Voices from White Earth: Gaa-waabaabiganikaag](#). Annual E.F. Schumacher Lecture, 1993 (20 min)

5) Prager, Sarah. "[Four flowering plants that have been decidedly queered: The queer history of the pansy and other flowers.](#)" Jstor Daily (2020). (15 min)

Discuss: The importance of languages, more on the politics of classification systems and naming, (medicinal) knowledge, and “what is a plant” in these multilingual, multicultural, and multi-wor(l)dly contexts. I will draw on some of the insights from Cámara-Lereta, Rodrigo and Jordi Bascompte. 2021. “[Language extinction triggers the loss of unique medicinal knowledge.](#)” *PNAS* 118(24): e2103683118

Recommended Resources:

Ambrose, Charles. 2010. “Carolus Linnaeus (Carl von Linné), 1707-1778: [The Swede Who Named Almost Everything.](#)” *Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics Faculty Publications*. 34.

George, Sam. *Botany, Sexuality, and Women's Writing 1760-1830: from Modest Shoot to Forward Plant*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2012.

La Duke, Winona. *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005.

LaPier, Rosayln. “What’s in a Name?” *Montana Naturalist* (2015): 6-8.

LaPier, Rosalyn. “Plants, Purification, and Prayer.” *Montana Naturalist* (2016): 16-17.

Schiebinger, Londa. Chapter 5: “Linguistic Imperialism” (194 – 225) in *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004

Week 6: Sexual Politics and The Plants and Animals of Empire

Monday, February 28, 2025:

1) Traverso, Vittoria. “[The Tree That Changed the World Map.](#)” *BBC Travel*, May 28, 2020. (10 min)

2) Baber, Zaheer. “[The Plants of Empire: Botanic Gardens, Colonial Power and Botanical Knowledge.](#)” *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 46,4(2016): 659-679. (45 min).

3) Ahuja, Neel. "[Abu Zubaydah and the caterpillar.](#)" *Social Text* 29.1 (2011): 127-149. (40 min)

4) Kosek, Jake. "[Ecologies of empire: on the new uses of the honeybee.](#)" *Cultural Anthropology* 25.4 (2010): 650-678. (35 min)

5) Gaard, Greta. "[Toward a queer ecofeminism.](#)" *Hypatia* 12.1 (1997): 114-137. (35 min)

Optional - Federici, Sylvia. "The Great Caliban and the Rebel Body" (133-155) and "The Great Witch-Hunt in Europe" (163 – 206). In *Caliban and the Witch*. Brooklyn, New York: Autonomedia, 2004. **I will bring in some insights from these passages.

Discuss: Continuing legacies of European colonial bodies that matter, human and nonhuman – and the humans that become animalized and treated as property.

Recommended Resources:

Ahuja, Neel. *Bioinsecurities: Disease interventions, empire, and the government of species*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Amorim-Maia, Ana T., et al. "Intersectional climate justice: A conceptual pathway for bridging adaptation planning, transformative action, and social equity." *Urban climate* 41 (2022): 101053.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Posthuman feminism*. Cambridge: Polity, 2022

Federici, Silvia. *Re-enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*. Pm Press, 2018.

Mignolo, Walter D., and Catherine E. Walsh. *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Duke University Press, 2018.

Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: Towards the human, after man, its overrepresentation—An argument." *CR: The new centennial review* 3.3 (2003): 257-337.

Part III: Queering Ethics, Resistance and Crip Time

Week 7: We've Always Been (on) a Queer Planet

March 4, 2025

1) Johnson, Alex Carr. "[How to Queer Ecology: One Goose at a Time.](#)" *Orion Magazine*, March 24, 2011. (15 min)

2) Terry, Jennifer. "'Unnatural acts' in nature: The scientific fascination with queer animals." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 6.2 (2000): 151-193. (45 min)

3) Alaimo, Stacey. "Dwelling in the Dissolved" (1-14) and "Eluding Capture: The Science, Culture, and Pleasure of "Queer" Animals (41-62). In [*Exposed: Environmental politics and pleasures in posthuman times*](#). University of Minnesota Press, 2016. (60 min)

4) Ahuja, Neel. "Intimate atmospheres: Queer theory in a time of extinctions." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21.2-3 (2015): 365-385.

5) Listen: "[In Conversation: An Episode on Climate Justice and Queer and Trans Liberation](#) (60 min)

Discuss: What a queer planet offers us in a time of species extinction, whether this is different from other epochs of species' extinction and test a hierarchy of life forms as they impact us. Grief, survival, and pleasure continue to be important human AND nonhuman emotions on a planet that increasingly feels unsafe to those who perhaps never felt precarity.

Recommended Resources:

Bauman, Whitney A. "Queer Values for a Queer Climate: Developing a Versatile Planetary Ethic." *Meaningful Flesh* (2018): 103.

Davis, Josh L. *A Little Queer Natural History*. University of Chicago Press, 2024.

McHugh, Susan. "Queer (and) animal theories." (2009): 153-169.

Riggs, Damien W., et al. *Queer entanglements: Intersections of gender, sexuality, and animal companionship*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Van der Toorn, Jozanneke, Ruthie Pliskin, and Thekla Morgenroth. "Not quite over the rainbow: The unrelenting and insidious nature of heteronormative ideology." *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* 34 (2020): 160-165.

Warner, Michael, ed. *Fear of a queer planet: Queer politics and social theory*. Vol. 6. U of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Wesner, Ashton. "Messing up mating: queer feminist engagements with animal behavior science." *Women's Studies* 48.3 (2019): 309-345.

Week 8: Eco-Crip Theory, Disabled Ecologies, Care, and the Resistance of Vegetal Life

March 11, 2025

1) Marder, Michael. "[Resist like a plant! On the Vegetal Life of Political Movements.](#)" *Peace Studies Journal* 5.1(2012): 24-32 (40 min)

2) Taylor, Sunaura, "[Disabled Ecologies: Living with Impaired Landscapes.](#)" (45 min watch)

3) Clare, Eli. Clare, Eli. "Notes on natural worlds, disabled bodies, and a politics of cure." In [*Disability studies and the environmental humanities: Toward an eco-crip theory*](#) (2017): 242-68. (45 min)

4) Kafer, Alison. "Bodies of nature." In [*Disability studies and the environmental humanities: Toward an eco-crip theory*](#) (2017): 201-241. (45 min)

5) Barrett, Kay Undalay. "[To Hold the Grief & the Growth¹: On Crip Ecologies.](#)" (timeless, it's poetry)

Discuss: What does it mean to live on an impaired landscape? How does fertility for human and nonhuman animal bodies relate to ableist notions of reproducing the nation? Then, on the other extreme, pregnant people and those recently postpartum occupy a disability work category, based on what their perceived output and corresponding salary cut is. In what ways can resisting like a plant and disentangling the politics of cure ground us in a socio-environmental justice otherwise?

Recommended Resources:

Bauman, Whitney A. "Disability Studies, Queer Theory, and the New Materialism: Environmental Metaphors for a Planet on the Move." *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 19.1 (2015): 69-73.

Cram, E., Martin P. Law, and Phaedra C. Pezzullo. "Crippling environmental communication: A review of eco-ableism, eco-normativity, and climate justice futurities." *Environmental Communication* 16.7 (2022): 851-863.

Funke, Peter N., "Building Rhizomatic Social Movements? Movement-Building Relays during the Current Epoch of Contention" (2014). Government and International Affairs Faculty Publications. Paper 117. http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gia_facpub/117

Kling, Kristin Godtman. "Accessible nature: Balancing contradiction in protected areas." *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 7.5 (2024): 2036-2057.

Myers, Natasha. 2014. "[A Kriya for Cultivating Your Inner Plant.](#)" *Centre for Imaginative Ethnography, Imaginings Series*. <http://imaginativeethnography.org/imaginings/affect/sensing-botanical-sensoria/>

Tsaplina, Maria. [The Animate Earth](#). *Orion: People and Nature*, 2021.

Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow land: Israel's architecture of occupation*. Verso books, 2012.

Week 9: Ethical Landscapes: Slippages of Native, Alien, Invasive and Invited Species

Midterm due on **Friday, March 22, 2024**

Monday, March 18, 2025

- 1) Ives, Sarah. "[Farming the South African “Bush”: Ecologies of belonging and exclusion in rooibos tea.](#)" *American Ethnologist* 41.4(2014): 698–713. (45-60 min).
- 2) Subramaniam, Banu. "[The Aliens Have Landed! Reflections on the Rhetoric of Biological Invasions.](#)" *Meridians* 2.1(2001): 26-40. (40 min).
- 3) Subramaniam, Banu, and Madelaine Bartlett. "[Re-imagining reproduction: the queer possibilities of plants.](#)" *Integrative and Comparative Biology* 63.4 (2023): 946-959. (35 min)
- 4) Listen or read: Kimmerer, Robin. "[The Serviceberry. An Economy of Abundance.](#)" *Emergence Magazine*, December 20, 2020. (45 min)
- 5) **Watch/Listen:** [First Nations: Ethical Landscapes, Sacred Plants](#)

Discuss: The slippery politics of speci(e)ous language. It's fascinating while also horrifying to see how concerns over invasive plants or animals infiltrate human speech and seep into tacit assumptions of who belongs.

Recommended Resources:

Black Elk, Linda. "Native Science: Understanding and Respecting Other Ways of Thinking." *Rangelands* 38.1(2016): 3-4.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2014.

Grann, David. *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*. Oxford: Doubleday, 2017.

Helmreich, Stefan. "[How Scientists Think; About ‘Natives’ for Example. A Problem of Taxonomy Among Biologists of Alien Species in Hawaii.](#)" *Royal Anthropological Institute* 11 (2005): 107-128.

Lepofsky, Dana. "Seeking a More Ethical Future for Ethnobiology Publishing: A 40-Year Perspective from Journal of ethnobiology." *Journal of Ethnobiology* 41.2(2021): 122-143.

McAlvay et al. "Ethnobiology Phase VI: Decolonizing Institutions, Projects, and Scholarship." *Journal of Ethnobiology* 41.2(2021):170-191.

Shepard, Glenn. H. "A Sensory Ecology of Medicinal Plant Therapy in Two Amazonian Societies." *American Anthropologist*, 106.2 (2004): 252–266.

Fernández-Llamazares, Álvaro. "Scientists' Warning to Humanity on Threats to Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems." *Journal of Ethnobiology* 41.2(2021): 144-169.

Week 10: Spring Break

Part IV: Changing Climates, Seeds and Soil

Week 11: Landscapes of Occupation: Or an Architecture of What (Has) Roots and Shoots

April 1, 2025

- 1) Klein, Naomi. 2016. "[Let Them Drown: The Violence of Othering in a Warming World.](#)" *London Review of Books* 38(11): 11-14. **(This is a 20-30 minute read.)** Available through Wisconsin Libraries and PDF on Canvas.
- 2) Sharif, Lila. "Vanishing Palestine." *Critical Ethnic Studies* 2.1 (2016): 17-39. **(45 min)**
- 3) Weizman, Eyal. "Colonialism and Climate Change" and "The Climate of the Naqab's History," (253-267). In [Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability](#). New York, Zone Books, 2017.
- 4) Weizman, Eyal. "[Walking through walls: Soldiers as architects in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.](#)" *Radical Philosophy* 136(2006): 8-22.
- 5) Simmons, Kristen. 2017. "[Settler Atmospheric.](#)" Member Voices, Fieldsights, *Cultural Anthropology*, November 20.

Discuss: The many aspects of green colonialism that might increase oxygen production for some but suffocate and displace others. Left-wing scholars and revolutionaries also have their ideas coopted. It's not just the trees whose existence is coopted to justify takeover of other people's lands.

Recommended Resources:

Brady, Aletta, Anthony Torres and Phillip Brown. "[What the Queer Community Brings to the Fight for Climate Justice.](#)" *The Grist*. April 9, 2019.

GLAAD: [There's no planet B: why climate change is an LGBTQ issue](#)

Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007.

Klein, Naomi. *The Battle for Paradise: Puerto Rico Takes on the Disaster Capitalists*. Chicago: Haymarket

Books, 2018.

Newkirk II, Vann. [“Trump’s EPA Concludes Environmental Racism is Real.”](#) *The Atlantic Monthly*. February 28, 2018.

Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: UC Press Books, 2001.

Merchant, Carolyn. *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture*. United States: Taylor & Francis, 2013.

Singh, Juliette. *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Warren, Karen. [Introduction to Ecofeminism and Social Justice](#). In *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Edited by Michael E. Zimmerman, J. Baird Callicott, George Sessions, Karen J. Warren, and John Clark. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1993, pp. 253-267.

Week 12: Gardens of the Dispossessed and the Seeds of Survivance

April 8, 2025

1) Carney, Judith A. [“African Traditional Plant Knowledge in the Circum-Caribbean Region.”](#) *Journal of Ethnobiology* 23.2(2003): 167-185. (35-40 min)

2) Carney, Judith A. and Richard Nicholas Rosomoff. 2011. Chapter 7: [“Gardens of the Dispossessed”](#) (123-138) *In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa’s Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (35 min).

3) Leah Penniman - [Farming While Black](#) - EcoFarm 2020 Keynote (45 min)

4) Schiebinger, Londa. [The art of medicine: Exotic abortifacients and lost knowledge.](#) *The Lancet* 371(2008): 718-719. (15 min)

5) Roberts, Carolyn. [“Medicine, Knowledge, and Power in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.”](#) (watch 35-45 min).

Discuss: Garden spaces and food sovereignty represent literally and figuratively the seeds of survival and autochthony. The human-plant connection is a bond beyond physical nourishment, however, these plants are also kin, a connection to a homeland left behind, and the embodiment of hope for a future.

Recommended Resources:

NYBG Lectures on “Black Botany”

Patchett, Anne. *State of Wonder: A Novel*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2011.

Penniman, Leah. *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2018.

White, Monica. *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

Van Wyk, Ben-Erik and Michael Wink. *Phytomedicines, Herbal Drugs, and Poisons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press and London: Kew Royal Botanic Gardens Publishing, 2014.

Week 13: Soil, Minerals, Science, and Plantation Futures

April 15, 2025

- 1) Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 14.3(1989): 575-600.
- 2) Lyons, Kristina. "[Decomposition as Life Politics: Soils, Selva, and Small Farmers under the Gun of the U.S.-Colombian War on Drugs.](#)" *Cultural Anthropology* 31.1(2016): 56–81. (45-60 min).
- 3) McKittrick, Katherine. "On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place." *Social & Cultural Geography* 12.8 (2011): 947-963.
- 4) Chao, Sophie. "[Plantation.](#)" *Environmental Humanities* 14.2 (2022): 361-366.
- 5) Chen, Mel Y. "Introduction: Animating Animacy" (1-22) and "Lead's Racial Mattering" (159-188). In [Animacies: Biopolitics, racial mattering, and queer affect](#). Duke University Press, 2012.

Discuss: Situating our final weeks in where we position ourselves, in what part of the species hierarchy do we see possibility for intervention, we will consider toxicity from a chemical and social perspective. The hope, of course, is that our language and efforts can contribute to mitigating such toxicity and animate resistance.

Recommended Resources:

Bellacasa, Maria Puig de la. "[Making Time for Soil: Technoscientific Futurity and the Pace of Care.](#)" *Social Studies of Science* 45.5 (2015): 691–716.

Bhattacharyya, Gargi. *Rethinking racial capitalism: Questions of reproduction and survival*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The extractive zone: Social ecologies and decolonial perspectives*. Duke University Press, 2017.

Jackson, Zakiyyah Iman. "Becoming human: Matter and meaning in an antiblack world." *Becoming human*. New York University Press, 2020.

Nading, Alex M. "Living in a toxic world." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 49.1 (2020): 209-224.

Puar, Jasbir K. *The right to maim: Debility, capacity, disability*. Duke University Press, 2017.

Part V: Other Shores

Week 14: Shoals, Sands, (Toxic) Spill and Sea

April 22, 2025

1) Chen, Mel Y. "Afterword: The Spill and the Sea". *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2012, pp. 223-238.

2) King, Tiffany Lethabo. "Preface"(ix-xvi), "Introduction" (1-35), and "At the Pores of the Plantation," (111-140). *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*, New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2019.

3) Agard-Jones, Vanessa. What the Sands Remember. *GLQ* 18.2-3 (2021): 325–346.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-1472917>

4) Nixon, Rob. "The Epilogue: Scenes of from the Seabed: The Future of Dissent (263-280). In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Discuss: What the sands, stones, and waters remember as well as what they foretell. An attempt to think about the collaborations that can form solidarity among humans and nonhumans, even in the most unsettled of times. When the very ground beneath our feet starts to erode, we need coalitions more than ever.

Recommended Resources:

Bey, Marquis. *Black trans feminism*. Duke University Press, 2021.

Fujikane, Candace. *Mapping abundance for a planetary future: Kanaka Maoli and critical settler cartographies in Hawai'i*. Duke University Press, 2021.

Montgomery, Lindsay Martel. "The archaeology of settler colonialism in North America." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 51.1 (2022): 475-491.

Leonard, Kelsey, et al. "Water back: A review centering rematriation and Indigenous Water research sovereignty." *Annual Water Alternative Review (AWARE)* 16.2 (2023): 374-428

Liboiron, Max. *Pollution is colonialism*. Duke University Press, 2021.

Stanley, Eric A. *Atmospheres of violence: Structuring antagonism and the trans/queer ungovernable*. Duke University Press, 2021.

Week 15: Multimodal, Multispecies Presentations and Last Class

April 29, 2025

Presentations, sharing of projects, looking back to spring forward! (I don't mean daylight savings time).

This class is also flexible. If folks have readings or materials (podcasts, videos) that they would want to share that inform their final project, this might be a space in which we can have a more open and innovative set of assigned materials.

Final Projects Due by May 8, 2025

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