

Mary E. Odem
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Statement for Piedmont Project

I revised a course I have taught for the past two years for the Women's Studies Department: The Senior Seminar in Women's Studies (WS495). The seminar is a discussion-based, intensive reading and writing course for WS majors and minors. In the first part of the course students read, discuss, and analyze current scholarship in Women's Studies. In the second part students design and complete a research project on a subject of their choice. I will teach this course again in Fall 2003 and have included a unit on feminist scholarship on the environment or ecofeminism which is a relatively new and vibrant area of feminist inquiry and one of considerable interest to our students. The Piedmont Project offered me an opportunity to expand my limited knowledge of environmental studies and ecofeminism and to think about ways of integrating them into the Senior Seminar.

During and after the workshop I spent time exploring the literature on women and the environment and chose as the main reading for the unit, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment*, a collection of essays by Carolyn Merchant who is a leading figure in the field. I am particularly interested in her work because she pays serious attention to history and political economy in writing about women and the environment. In addition to introducing students to literature about the environment, I also want them to learn about and engage with their own natural environment. Participation in the Piedmont Project convinced me of the pedagogical value of having students leave the classroom to observe and experience the natural world around them. The project also provided me with the resources to carry this out. During the unit on Women and the Environment, the class will go outside on two occasions. First we will take a 30 minute walk on campus visiting sites 1 & 2 (Baker Woodland & Peavine Creek) on the Emory walking tour, *Reconciling the Natural World & Human Choices*. Second, we will take a longer 1-1 2 hour walk in Lullwater Forest with a naturalist guide, which I am in the process of arranging with the assistance of the wonderful Eloise Carter. I see the nature walks as a form of experiential learning, one that supports a key tenet of ecofeminism-- developing a greater understanding of one's relation to and impact on the natural world. Students will also spend time reviewing the website for Emory's Ad hoc Committee on Environmental Stewardship: www.environment.emory.edu/index.shtml, esp. sections on Ecology at Emory and What you can do.

The written assignment for this unit calls on students to integrate the scholarly reading with their understanding of the natural environment in which they live. Students are to write a 5 page paper in which they apply Carolyn Merchant's concept of a partnership ethic of earthcare to an environmental issue/conflict on the Emory campus.

I'm looking forward to teaching this unit in the Fall, especially to getting outside with the students!

WS495: SENIOR SEMINAR IN WOMEN' S STUDIES

WS495 Senior Seminar in Women' s Studies
 Fall 2003, Wednesdays 4-6 pm.
 Class meetings: Callaway S306

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 Office hrs: Bowden 203

Course Description

Welcome to the Women' s Studies Senior Seminar! The senior seminar is a discussion-based, intensive reading and writing course. It consists of 2 parts. **Part I:** In the first part of the course students will read, discuss, and analyze current scholarship in Women' s Studies in 3 areas: the environment, international politics, and sexuality. We will read several books and attend 3 Women' s Studies colloquia that address these themes. Class discussions and assignments will call on students to think and write critically about this scholarship and to reflect on their own personal engagement with the issues raised in the readings. **Part II:** In the second part of the course students will design and complete a Women' s Studies research project on a subject of their choice. Topics may draw on, but are not confined to material covered in course readings and colloquia. In several class meetings we will focus on the various stages of the research and writing process: selecting a topic, finding sources, critical analysis of sources, developing a thesis, presentation of ideas, etc. I look forward to working with you this semester!

Readings

Carolyn Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (Routledge, NY, 1995)
 Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*
 (UC Press: Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1990)
 Lisa Duggan, *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity*, selection
 Mark Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism*, selection

There is a **learn link site** for the course which teachers and students can use for posting messages and questions related to the course. The site also contains folders for course materials and for the posting of various assignments.

Research Guides for Course

Women' s Studies Research Guide:

<http://web.library.emory.edu/subjects/studies/womens/>

AHow to prepare an Annotated Bibliography@

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill28.htm>

Course Requirements & Grading

1. Class Participation (30%):

a. Since this is a discussion-based course, your regular attendance and active participation are essential to insuring a productive learning environment. Contributing thoughtfully to class discussions and raising insightful questions shows that you have engaged the material and allows your peers to hear ideas that may differ from their own. All reading assignments should be read and analyzed by the time we meet for class. Remember to bring the readings to class on the day we discuss them. **Attendance Policy:** Since this class meets only once a week, regular attendance is crucial. ***If you have more than one unexcused absence (an excused absence requires a note from the dean) or are repeatedly late for class, your participation grade will automatically drop one full grade for each day missed and for repeated tardiness.

b. Learnlink responses: In preparation for a number of class discussions during the semester (a total of 6) students are to post on Learnlink a critical response to the reading or colloquium talk we will be discussing. The response should include: 1)a substantive question about the reading & 2)a short paragraph explaining what you think was a compelling idea in the reading and why **or** what you found problematic in the reading and why.

2. **Two 5-page essays (30%):** One is due on September 24 and the other on October 22.

3. **Research project & presentation (40%).** Due Dec. 10. Students will design and complete a research project in Women's Studies on a subject of their choice, choosing from one of the 3 options listed below. Topics may draw from, but are not confined to, themes discussed in course readings and colloquium talks. Choose something that you care about and that really interests you. Several class meetings and assignments will focus on the various stages of this process: defining a topic, finding and evaluating sources, developing a thesis, presentation of ideas, etc.

Research project options:

1. Research paper (10-12 pages) Analytical paper based on secondary sources and primary sources/data (Oral history, interview, archival materials, survey, literary text).

2. Alternative Format Project (web site, video, etc.) Presentation of ideas and research in a format different from the standard research paper. Students should have some background in making web sites, videos, etc. because this course does not provide training in those skills.

3. Theory-Practice project: integrates research & writing with interning for an organization or agency that addresses gender issues. Students will turn in a 8-10 page paper that draws on women's studies scholarship and addresses a problem/issue in their internship.

Late Assignment/Paper Policy: On all un-excused late papers and assignments, the grade will be lowered by 2 letter grade per day the paper/assignment is late.

Course Schedule

I. Women and the Environment

Sept 3: Introduction to Course

1) Discuss goals of course, syllabus, requirements & grading. 2) Visit sites 1 & 2 (Baker Woodland & Peavine Creek) on Emory walking tour, *Reconciling the Natural World & Human Choices*

Sept 10: Merchant, *Earthcare: Women and the Environment*, intro, chs. 4, 5;
Review website for Emory's Ad hoc Committee on Environmental Stewardship:
www.environment.emory.edu/index.shtml, esp. sections on Ecology at Emory
and What you can do
Due: Learnlink response for Merchant reading

Sept 17: Walk through Lullwater Forest with naturalist guide (1 hour); bring journal
Merchant, *Earthcare*, skim 6, read 7 & conclusion
Due: Learnlink Response

Sept 24: Discussion of Merchant
Due: 5 page essay that addresses: Merchant proposes the concept of
Apartnership ethic of earthcare as the best approach to human-environment
relations. In your essay, first, explain what she means by partnership ethics and
how it differs from other approaches to the environment. Second, explain how
you would apply the partnership ethic to a current environmental issue/conflict on
the Emory campus.

Oct 1: WS Colloquium: Professor Lisa Duggan; Meet in White Hall
Duggan Reading, *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity*, selection
Due (day after colloquium): Learnlink Response

II. Gender & International Politics

Oct 8 : Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*, chs. 1-3
Discuss Duggan Colloquium Talk & Reading in 1st part of class
Due: Learnlink response on Enloe reading

Fall Break (Oct 13-14)

Oct 15: Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*, chs. 4, 6, 7, 9
Film: AGlobal Assembly Line (60 min.)
Due: Learnlink response

Oct 22: Finish Discussion of Enloe
Due: 5 page essay in which you use the feminist analytical framework developed
in *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* to interpret a specific international event or issue,
political or cultural, that has taken place within the last 3 years.

III. Class Projects

Oct 29: Defining Your Project

Due: 1) paragraph (2 typed page) on idea for research project; 2) locate, read & briefly summarize one source (academic article, book, website) related to topic. Post on Learnlink and bring copy to class.

Library Workshop, 5-6pm, with reference librarians Marie Nitchke and Sandra Still: how to locate sources for your project. We will work with the website, [AWomen's Studies Research Guide](#)

Nov 5: WS Colloquium: Professor Mark Jordan; Meet in White Hall

Read: 1) Jordan, *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism*, selection; and 2) materials in website [How to prepare an Annotated Bibliography](#)

Due (day after colloquium): Learnlink response

Nov 12: Evaluating Sources & Research Methods

Due: Critical analysis of 2 sources for project based on [How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography](#) & statement of research process (how you located these sources). Post on Learnlink and bring copy to class.

Discuss Jordan Reading; Sign up for office hours during week of Nov. 19

Nov 13, 6pm: WS Speaker: Professor Patricia Hill Collins on Black Sexual Politics

Nov 19: Instead of meeting as a class, students will meet with me individually to discuss projects.

Due before we meet on **Nov 18 by 5pm** (post on learnlink): Brief statement of 1) the central thesis or idea of your project (Refer to handout, [Developing a Thesis](#)) and 2) something you want to discuss in the meeting (this could be an issue/problem you're struggling with in the project).

Nov 26: CLASS CANCELLED- Thanksgiving break, Nov 27-30

Dec 3: Student presentations of Projects in Class. Each student will have a total of 10 minutes for the presentation. Presentations should include explanation of the central thesis or idea of the project; why you think the project is important; the most important thing you learned from doing this project. I encourage you to be creative in your presentations using visual images, hand-outs, writing on the blackboard, etc. anything that will help you get across your ideas in a clear, engaging, and interesting way.

Dec 3, 6pm: Rosalyn Carter Lecture: Mary Robinson

Dec 10: Final Project Due. Leave in box outside of my office, 203 Bowden Hall.

(Last Day of Class: Dec. 9; Final Exam period: Dec. 11-17)