Course Description
Ecofeminism is a movement that draws linkages between environmental issues and feminist concerns; in the words of Vandana Shiva, it seeks to create a “democracy of all life.” In this course we will study ecofeminist perspectives to gain familiarity with some of its varied principles in areas including: perceptions of nature, interconnections between gender and nature, responses to Western science and philosophy, Indigenous perspectives, connections between health and the environment, perspectives on human-animal relations, the impacts of globalization, and opportunities for life-affirming forms of activism and ways of thinking, acting, and being. Through readings, lectures, class discussions, and individual and group assignments, we will work toward understanding and increasing our appreciation for ecofeminist perspectives and positions, as well as activism in our own lives.

Guiding Questions
Some of the guiding questions we will explore in this course include:
- What is ecofeminism? What is its history? What are some of its varying themes, positions, and perspectives?
- How do patriarchal paradigms devalue and oppress both women and “nature”? 
- What are some the dominant ways in which women and “nature” have been socially constructed in Western culture? What are the consequences of these constructions?
- How can we interrupt the privileging of “male – reason – human,” and value equally the principles of “female – emotion – nature”? 
- Why do ecological problems require feminist analyses, and vice-versa?
- How can we intervene and interrupt the dominant order, for an ecologically and socially just future?
**Required Readings**

All course readings are available on our Desire2Learn (D2L) site. The website can be accessed at [https://mycourselink.lakehead.ca/](https://mycourselink.lakehead.ca/).

**Note:** Because this course is largely discussion-based, it is essential that we all pre-read the articles and come to class ready to discuss them. Please see the Course Schedule/Readings by Week (pp. 5-7) for the dates associated with each reading.

**Grading Scheme**

The grading scheme for this course will be based on the following breakdown of assignments. See below for a description of each.

- **Class Participation – ongoing** 15%
- **Seminar Facilitation** 15%
- **Individual Assignment #1** (your choice) – due February 10 35%
- **Individual Assignment #2** (your choice) – due March 21 35%

**Overview of Assignments**

**Class Participation (15%)**

This is a course with a discussion format and a focus on unpacking the ideas in the literature. The learning is dependent on participation and therefore, attending class, completing the readings, and participating in class is crucial. The class participation mark will be based on your attendance, your engagement in class discussions, and your completion of various in-class activities, quizzes, and group work. You will have an opportunity to self-evaluate on the final day of the class, and your feedback will be taken into consideration for your mark.

**Note:** Everyone (minus the instructor!) is allowed to miss two classes during the term without penalty. If you will be missing more than two classes during the term, please provide appropriate documentation so that your participation mark is not compromised.

**Seminar Facilitation (15%)**

In Weeks 3-11, we will address a variety of themes; choose one where the content particularly interests you and, in groups of 2-3, facilitate a 45-minute session in our class. This assignment provides you with an opportunity to explore an area of interest to you as well as to try out the role of group leader. We will decide in Week 2 how the presentation weeks will be allocated.
For the seminar, group members are expected to:
(1) summarize the main ideas, themes, and/or questions raised in the readings of the week, and consider how the ideas are interconnected;
(2) provide a critical response to the readings, including insights, arguments, disagreements, questions and further analysis; and
(3) develop a minimum of three creative, thought-provoking questions based on the readings.
As a general guideline, the presentation portion (points 1 and 2 above) should be no longer than 20 minutes, leaving the remainder of the time for class discussion.

**Individual Assignments (2 x 35%) - Choose TWO of the following:**

1. **Journal (minimum 3; maximum 5 entries: 8-10 double-spaced pages in total)**
The purpose of the journal is to document your responses to the readings. You are encouraged to describe reactions to the literature’s key ideas, including insights, arguments, disagreements, questions or further analysis. You might also comment on how the readings connect (or do not connect) with your own thoughts, experiences, or knowledge from other sources.

Select a minimum of three course themes (i.e., weekly themes from our course syllabus), and a maximum of five course themes. Weekly course themes include, for example: “Introduction to Ecofeminism,” “Narratives about Nature” and “Our Bodies, Our Health” (see pp. 5-7 for the complete list of themes by week). For each theme you choose, write a journal entry that addresses TWO readings/texts from that week. The choice is yours: you can complete three journal entries (6 readings discussed), four journal entries (8 readings discussed), or five journal entries (10 readings discussed). Note that the suggested page length remains the same, regardless of how many journal entries you do.

Two aspects of the journal that will be evaluated are: (1) is it convincing that the readings were done? and (2) has considered thought, rather than superficial thought, been applied? (For example, superficial thought = “I really enjoyed reading about globalization” or “I learned a lot from the article.” Considered thought goes into more reflective detail, grappling with key ideas in the text and with argument and/or evaluation and/or interpretation of the discussion.) Please include a References/Works Cited page.

2. **Ecofeminist Autobiography (6-8 double-spaced pages)**
This is a written essay describing your ontogenetic (meaning over your lifetime) development of feminist and environmentalist awareness. In other words, it is intended to be a record of your personal ecological/feminist biography. Questions you might address include: What is the meaning of nature in my life, and how has it changed over my life? What is the role of feminism in my life? What situations (personal, community, national, or global) have influenced my awareness of oppression, including environmental oppression? What are my values with respect to nature and oppression? Aim to incorporate three references from our readings in your autobiographical writing. Include a References/Works Cited page.
3. Research Paper (6-8 double-spaced pages) and Presentation (5-10 minutes):
An Ecofeminist “Shero”
This assignment includes both a research paper (6-8 pages, double-spaced) and a brief class presentation (5-10 minutes) about an ecofeminist “shero” and her contributions. Choose an ecofeminist “shero” to begin, and research the contributions she has made to environmental awareness/activism/theory. For example, you might choose Dr. Vandana Shiva (Indian scholar, environmental activist and anti-globalization author), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (author, lecturer, involved in the Idle No More movement), Rachel Carson (American biologist and conservationist), Dianne Wilson (a fisherwoman and social justice activist), or any other individual, past or present, who has made a significant environmental contribution. Please speak to me about your plans for this assignment before you begin.

Your research paper should outline a brief biography of the “shero” and a description/discussion of the notable contributions she has made. You should read some of the writing the “shero” has done, and view videos as applicable, to learn about them. It is expected that three references external to the course readings be used to support your discussion, plus references to course reading(s) as appropriate. A References/Works Cited page should be included with your research paper.

Your class presentation should be a brief (5-10 minute) overview of your paper, in which you share what you have learned with the class, so that we may learn too.

4. Ecofeminist Art
Submit a piece of artwork (visual, musical, or other) that you have produced. The artwork must connect to ecofeminism. A 2-page written analysis of the artwork is to accompany its submission. The written analysis should explain the meaning of the work, and how it relates to ecofeminism. Include references to course reading(s) as appropriate.

Other Important Course Information

Assignment due dates: All assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class on the due dates. If you have trouble meeting a due date, please discuss it with me at least one week prior to your due date and, if accepted, we will negotiate a new contract for a due date. Missing due dates without prior approval will result in a deduction of 5% per day.

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Presenting an idea, words, or an exact phrase of another author as your own work constitutes plagiarism. All students are required to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism you can consult the Lakehead University calendar available online at http://vpacademic.lakeheadu.ca/?display=page&pageid=46, or speak with the professor. All cases of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures approved by Senate and the Board of Governors. Other instances of Academic Dishonesty, including but not limited to double submission, purchasing
of assignments (either online or from another student on campus), or copying of assignments will also dealt with in accordance to the University regulations on Academic Dishonesty. **Please do your own work.**

**Respectful conduct:** All students are expected to foster an atmosphere of respect which includes, but is not limited to, open-mindedness, listening attentively, not speaking over or for others, and avoiding all forms of harassment and discrimination. Please note that the material covered in this class may not always be “comfortable,” so we must be prepared to challenge and be challenged, to be critical and to be critiqued, and to support and to be supported. We may not always agree with each other. However, it is essential that we enter our conversations with generosity of spirit, good humour, and high regard for each other.

**Reduce, re-use, recycle:** Cover pages are not necessary in this course – simply write your name and the date on the top of the first page. If you can print your assignments double-sided without too much hassle, please do.

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**Course Schedule / Readings by Week**

Note: All readings (and full bibliographic citations) are posted on our D2L site

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<th>Week 1 (January 4, 6): Introduction to Ecofeminism</th>
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<th>Week 2 (January 11, 13): Ecofeminism in Theory and Practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Karen Warren (2000). Excerpts from “Key Features of an Ecofeminist Ethic”</td>
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<td>• Glen Martin (1999). “Tree-Sitter Recounts Life in the Clouds”</td>
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<td>• <em>Fury for the Sound</em> (film) – in-class viewing</td>
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<th>Week 3 (January 18, 20): Nature, Sex, and Gender: Exploring the Links</th>
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<td>• <em>OPTIONAL.</em> Sherry Ortner (1972). Excerpts from “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>OPTIONAL.</em> Terri Field (2000). “Is the Body Essential for Ecofeminism?”</td>
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Week 4 (January 25, 27): Narratives about Nature

Week 5 (February 1, 3): Indigenous Knowledge and the Environment
- Chief Dan George (2004). “My Face is the Land”

Week 6 (February 8, 10): A Critique of Western Reductionism and Rationalism
- OPTIONAL. Helen Forsey (2002). “GMOs: Globalizing Male Omnipotence”

***NO CLASSES FEBRUARY 15-19 (Reading Week Break)***

Week 7 (February 22, 24): Our Bodies, Our Health

Week 8 (February 29, March 2): Ecofeminism and Human-Animal Relations
Week 9 (March 7, 9): Ecofeminism and the Eating of Animals
- OPTIONAL. Joni Seager (2010). “Pepperoni or Broccoli: On the Cutting Wedge of Environmental Feminism”

Week 10 (March 14, 16): Queerying Ecofeminism
- Katie Hogan (2010). Excerpts from “Undoing Nature: Coalition-Building as Queer Environmentalism”

Week 11 (March 21, 23): Problems and Solutions in an Interconnected Ecology

***NO CLASS MARCH 28 (Easter)***

Week 12 (March 30): Potluck and Participation Marks