

Dr. Jea Sophia Oh, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at West Chester University of Pennsylvania

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Locations and Time: TBA



“Come to this class with an open mind, compassion, respect, and a willingness to see the world through others’ eyes. Kindness is the rule, and truth is the key.”

Course Description

Ecofeminism explores the ways that the oppression of women, nature, and other subordinated groups are linked, arguing that in order to be truly effective, feminism and environmentalism each must incorporate the perspectives and commitments of the other. Although the term feminism cannot be identified solely with white feminism, it has historically been predominantly a white-dominated discourse throughout the three long waves of feminist movements. Focusing on Asian women’s distinctive cultural elements and narratives in relation to nature and environmental movements by observing their sustainable life examples, as an alternative discourse this course challenges the Eurocentric dominance of the area of ecofeminism and environmental ethics. We will also explore the interconnections between ecology and Asian women, the interconnections between the domination of women and nature, and how culture and religions interplay with this planetary entanglement from multicultural/postcolonial perspectives.

Course Objectives

This course aims at developing in the students the ability to think philosophically with imagination, openness, and analytical insight. This course attempts to accomplish that by helping the students engage Western philosophical traditions and feminism critically and creatively in dialogue with the plurality and diversity of Asian ecofeminism. As an alternative feminist epistemology, this course explores and interprets Asian women’s narratives with cultural sensitivity, ethical awareness, and a critical understanding of their diverse histories, interpretations, and lived practices in relation to our planetary living.

After their successful completion of the course, the students will be able

- to articulate the conceptual and material relations that link the social, political, and economic subordination of women and people of color with ecological degradation
- to examine the role of women and the effect of gender within ecological philosophy/theology
- to ask what might constitute a productive and effective relationship between theory and practice in the context of environmental movements, the greening of religion, and the postcolonial struggles of women, people of color, and indigenous peoples in the U.S. and world wide.

Course Requirements

*Class participation and attendance:

The first and most basic requirement of the course is regular reading, attendance, and participation in the class discussions. Each student should each class session come prepared to analyze the assigned texts in her/his own terms, and to cite a key moment of overflow from theory into a constructive idea. Try to do the recommended readings, and to seek out added secondary or contiguous readings to bring into the discussion and into her/his own research. Underline and highlight her/his intriguing quotes and share her/his analysis and questions (bring at least two philosophical/ethical questions) in each class. Absences will be taken seriously and will affect her/his grade. (-2 points/abs) -30%

* Presentations:

Each student will be responsible for two oral presentations to the class. This will enable us to partake of a wider range of pertinent texts, theoretical and hermeneutical. Members of the class will serve as co-discussion leaders with the instructor, preparing a two-page presentation, single-spaced, summing up the issues and raising 3–4 questions for discussion for each presentation. The written presentation is to be pre-distributed to the class and the instructor minimum one day before the day of oral presentation via electronic means. Reviews should be shorter than 20 minutes (2 pages approx). Each student will be expected to lead class discussions. - 30% (Presentation I 15%+ Presentation II 15%=30%)

*Final Paper (25%+Abstract 5%+ Peer Reviewing 10%=40%):

After the half-way point of the term students will bring a hard copy of one-page proposal (a final paper title, a paragraph abstract outline (150-200 words), and a working bibliography) for the final term paper on **July 11th**. Present your abstract orally in class. -5%

Each student needs to bring a printed hard copy of her/his rough draft of her/his final paper which ***must be peer reviewed to get credits*** (10%) and a final version of the paper (25%). A rough draft must show a significant progress from her/his abstract and must be at least 75% completion of her/his final paper. The revision process will be guided by peer-editing, and feedback from your instructor in class. The due dates for these assignments appear in the course schedule. Peer review and feedback will be provided by small groups created by the professor. **Due on July 18th**.

There will be a final essay “relating some set of course readings” to further research of your own.

This research should move in the direction of your own scholarly discipline and passion (cf. a comparative philosophy, an environmental ethic, a feminist research, an Asian study, etc.). The final paper is to be an open-ended inquiry in which you think through some of the critical issues raised in the course. Your paper must engage at least two of the texts/figures/schools/movements examined in the course. Your final paper would run about 1500-2000 words. The final due is the last day of class, **July 23rd**.

Important Policies

In general, written work will be evaluated in terms of command of material, clarity and organization of ideas, creativity of thought, complexity of thinking, and fluidity, coherence and persuasiveness of argument. Punctuation, spelling, and grammar are also important. In all cases where you rely on other people's work, proper documentation of sources is an absolute necessity. For citation, please follow MLA styles or Chicago Manual of Styles.

Plagiarism:

The institutional honor code will be strictly followed. **Do not plagiarize** (copy another's work without giving the due credit, whether paraphrased or directly quoted).

Required Textbooks:

Vandana Shiva, *Talking Environment*, Oxford, ISBN 9780198091776

Jea Sophia Oh, *A Postcolonial Theology of Life: Planetarity East and West*, Sopher Press, ISBN: 978-1-935946-01-4

Wan-Li Ho, *Ecofamilism: Women, Religion and Environmental Protection in Taiwan*, Three Pines Press, ISBN 978-1-931483-33-9

Recommended:

J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames eds., *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, SUNY, ISBN: 978-0887069512.

Vandana Shiva, *Making Peace with the Earth*, Pluto Press, 2013, ISBN: 978-1-55266-566-4

Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies eds., *Ecofeminism*, Zed Books, ISBN 9781780325637

Schedule of Classes

Week 1- 6/27-Course Introductions, Presentation Assignments

Week 2- 7/1- 7/2- 7/3- 7/4, Shiva

Week 3- 7/8- 7/9- 7/10, Oh

7/11, Abstract Due

Week 4- 7/15- 7/16- 7/17, Ho

7/18- Peer Reviewing and A Rough Draft Due

Week 5- 7/22- 7/23-Final Due

*** This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class.