Central European University, Department of Gender Studies

Queer Ecologies: Gender, Sexuality, and the Environment

MA Level Course (2 credits)
Fall Term 2017

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Office hours: TBA
Office: Zrínyi

Class time: TBA
Place: TBA

Course description
What do major environmental crises, like pollution, extinction, climate change or depletion of natural recourses have to do with the embodied notions of sexuality, gender, and race? What is the role of discourses on Nature in shaping the situated and site-specific understandings of sexuality/gender/race, and how have feminist and queer academics approached these issues? What can these theoretical accounts offer for environmental justice activism? Stemming from these questions, this course introduces the nascent field of queer ecology, which combines eco-critique and queer theory to emphasize the interconnectedness between the discourses on nature and the embodied politics of sexuality/gender/race. The course is designed to provide a framework for addressing these questions by building on ecofeminist traditions, queer and critical race studies interventions, and imagining posthumanist futures to challenge the deadlock in the conventional environmental politics debates. Through readings, class discussions, and practical assignments we will explore and map out queer ecology’s major concerns in relation to various threads of scholarly inquiry along which this field has emerged – queer theory, ecofeminism, human and animal geographies, posthumanism and animal studies, postcolonial theory, and feminist new materialism. During the seminar sessions we will probe the idea of queer ecology as a method rooted in activism (ranging from pink to green politics), art, and running through various academic disciplines.

Learning goals and outcomes
At the end of this course students should be able to:

• Identify and efficiently locate key concepts and main arguments within eco-criticism, queer theory, and feminist new materialisms;
• Have a broader understanding of major debates within environmental and queer politics and theories;
• Critically assess, compare, and link class readings according to their theoretical arguments and methods;
• Demonstrate public speaking and debating abilities through engaging in class discussions;
• Methodology: develop a basic ethnographic toolbox through practical tasks: fieldwork observation and writing a report.
• Practice creative writing skills during a class workshop and academic writing assignments.
• Identify and research a topic of theoretical relevance to the themes addressed in the course material and find additional scholarship;
• Prepare an academic essay that reflects critical engagement with the relevant literature and student’s original insights.

Course requirements

1. Attendance
This is a discussion-based course and therefore, students are required to attend all sessions. In class you are expected to be able to critically engage with the assigned readings: express your opinions, ask questions, analyze and debate the issues posed in the texts. You can miss one class, but with every other missed class you will be required to send a reaction paper on the assigned readings in this session.

2. Class Presentation
After Week 1, each student will choose a reading from the assigned material and in the beginning of the given class will summarize the main argument of the text and raise 2-3 questions for discussion. The presentation should take approx. 10 minutes. Students are encouraged to use various mediums (videos, music, performance and visual arts, etc.) and creative forms of expression.

3. Fieldtrip report
In week 5 the class will be held at the Hungarian Natural History Museum as part of the fieldtrip. Students are required to read the assigned texts prior to the class! We will have a discussion engaging with the texts at the Museum. Students are asked to take field notes during this session. They will later use them to write a short field report based on their observations, the subject literature, and any other references they find relevant (pop-cultural, activist, auto-biographical, archival materials, etc.). The reports should be 500-700 words long, and are due Week 7.

4. Final Paper
The final paper should be 1500-2500 words long. The paper is expected to critically engage with one or two of the several themes developed in the class. It has to be based on required and suggested readings from the syllabus, as well as additional sources and literature. Students are encouraged to bring in their own examples, analyze original case studies, and engage with matters that they are directly affected by. By week 10 students are required to send an outline of the research paper (preliminary title, 3 bibliography titles, and a short abstract). I am available for consultations during office hours. Papers are due in print one week after the term ends. No late papers will be accepted.

Grading
Active participation in class discussions 30%
Class Presentation 20%
Fieldtrip report 20%
Final Paper 30%
Class schedule

PART I Feminist Ecologies

Week 1: Introducing Queer Ecologies


Further reading:

Week 2: Ecofeminism and Eco-critique


Further reading:


Week 3: Queering EcoPolitics


Further reading:

PART II Erotic Landscapes

Week 4: Mapping Desire: Beyond Rural Lesbians and Gay Gentrifiers


**Further reading:**


**Week 5: Exhibiting Sexuality**

**Fieldtrip to the Natural History Museum in Budapest (Ludovika tér 2-6)**


**Further reading:**

**PART III Larger-Than-Human Worlds**

**Week 6: Queer Non-Humans**


**Further reading:**

**Week 7: Transanimalities (Fieldtrip report due!)**

Further reading:


**Week 8: Toxic Embodiments**


Ah-King, Malin, and Eva Hayward. “Toxic Sexes: Perverting Pollution and Queering Hormone Disruption.” *O-zone: A Journal of Object Oriented Studies* 1 (2013), available online [http://static1.squarespace.com/static/50b4d1ae4b0214dc1f68c69/t/535f8235e4b09e1f27e83bd4/1398768181558/01_Ah-King_Hayward_Toxic+Sexes_OZone_Vol1.pdf](http://static1.squarespace.com/static/50b4d1ae4b0214dc1f68c69/t/535f8235e4b09e1f27e83bd4/1398768181558/01_Ah-King_Hayward_Toxic+Sexes_OZone_Vol1.pdf) (12 pages)

**Additional reading:**


**PART III Pink-Green Political Ecology**

**Week 9: Environmental Justice and Indigenous Rights**


**Further reading:**
Week 10: Greenwashing and Pinkwashing (Final paper outline due!)


Further reading:

PART IV No Future! Queer Politics of Extinction

Week 11: Queering the Anthropocene


Further reading:


Week 12: Climate Change through Feminist New Materialist Lenses


Further reading: