

Chesapeake Project 2011  
Women in the Media, Jour 452/WMST452  
Fall 2011  
Professor Carol L. Rogers ([crogers@jmail.umd.edu](mailto:crogers@jmail.umd.edu))

I have always included the environment, including issues of sustainability, as a key component of my science journalism courses. Even so, I saw the Chesapeake Workshop as an opportunity to participate in a learning environment with colleagues across campus to more creatively incorporate it into that class but more importantly to come up with a strategy to incorporate it into my Women in the Media class as well. The summer 2011 workshop provided not only that underpinning but also the incentive to rethink the course, which I have been teaching for several years.

For fall semester, I am structuring part of the Women in the Media class around topic areas, with one day devoted to examination of women journalists who cover that topic and another day devoted to coverage of women involved with that topic. Specifically as it relates to sustainability in particular and the environment more generally, the fall syllabus includes a day on Women as Environmental Journalists and a day on Coverage of Women and the Environment. I am making extensive use of online resources, some of which I will have linked on the syllabus but all of which will be on our class Blackboard site.

Among the resources I will be including on the first day on that topic are the web sites for the Society of Environmental Journalists, [www.sej.org](http://www.sej.org), and links to the article *Environment Reporters and U.S. Journalists: A Comparative Analysis*. In addition, I will include articles by major environmental journalists, including the *Washington Post*'s Juliet Eilperin and Beth Daley of the *Boston Globe*.

For our discussion of coverage of women and the environment, I am including links to biographies as well as coverage of such environmental leaders as Rachel Carson, best known for *Silent Spring*; Dr. Theo Colborn, often called the "Rachel Carson of the 90s"; Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, who chaired the UN Commission on Environment and Development, which produced the report *Our Common Future* in 1987, which focused on sustainable development; Dr. Jane Lubchenco, currently administrator of NOAA who also is the founder of the Aldo Leopold Leadership Program; and Dr. Wangari Maathi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 "for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy, and peace."

One of the three brief analysis papers I require for the course will include an option for the students to explore this topic in greater depth (I always give students 2-3 options from which to choose for each of their analysis papers.). The question will read:

"In two of our class sessions, we have focused on the role women have played in environmental issues, in particular the roles of women as environmental journalists and media portrayals of women environmental leaders. Reflect on the activities of these women and the contributions they have made to the field. Then select one of the women environmental journalists or

environmental leaders and provide a rather brief (2-3 page) summary and analysis of her work, including her contributions, challenges she encountered and strategies she used to deal with those challenges. Use the resources provided in class as well as additional resources online or from other sources.”

In addition to the question on one of the analysis papers, I will invite students to use this topic as the basis for their final research project and paper, which might be particularly attractive to students who already have an interest in the life sciences in general and the environment in particular.

To make all of us more environmentally aware, I also plan to greatly decrease the amount of paper I generate for the class by putting most of the class resources online in lieu of hard copies (except for the syllabus, which I will continue to make available both in hard copy and online). I will have students submit all of their assignments online as well.