

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

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Environmental ethics is the study of ethics in the context of the natural world, on both individual and societal levels. More precisely, environmental ethics is that part of ethics which deals with human choices about the environment. This includes the study of human beings, the study of nature, and the study of relationships between the two. Thus, several central questions arise:

- What are human beings?
- What is nature?
- How are humans related to nature?
- How *should* humans be related to nature?

Answering these questions requires answering other questions: Are humans separate from and superior to nature? Or are humans part of nature? Should natural resources be used for economic value? Or should some wilderness be left undisturbed?

Thinking about these issues leads to Religion, Literature, Natural Science, Social and Political Science, Psychology, Economics, Women's Studies, Environmental Technology, Education, and many other areas. Environmental Ethics is truly multi-disciplinary, and the purpose of this course is to weave many disciplines together in our attempt to finding answers to the above questions.

Studying environmental ethics is of little use unless it has a bearing on your life. I think studying environmental ethics can be useful, and even *enjoyable!* It is my hope that this course accomplishes both tasks.

Students are encouraged to enroll in Philosophy Forum (PHIL 120R), a student-driven discussion course.

I. PREREQUISITE: Philosophy 2050 or Philosophy 2050H.

II. TEXTS:

Note: These texts are on two-hour reserve at the UVSC Library Reserve Desk. When requesting, specify my name, this course number, and the title.

A. Required text (available at UVSC bookstore):

Pojman, Louis P. *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*. Fourth Edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2005.

B. Other texts (available at UVSC Library reserve desk):

Keller, David R. et al. (eds.). *Ethics and Values: Basic Readings in Theory and Practice*. Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Simon & Schuster Custom Publishing.

Pojman, Louis P. *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*. Third Edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2001.

VanDeVeer, Donald, and Christine Pierce. *The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book: Philosophy, Ecology, Economics*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994.

Zimmerman, Michael et al. (eds.). *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Second Edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998.

III. GRADING STANDARDS:

A = Excellent work

B = Good work

C = Average work

D = Poor work

E = Failing work

A	= 94 - 100%	C	= 73 - <77%
A-	= 90 - <94%	C-	= 70 - <73%
B+	= 87 - <90%	D+	= 67 - <70%
B	= 83 - <87%	D	= 63 - <67%
B-	= 80 - <83%	D-	= 60 - <63%
C+	= 77 - <80%	E	= <60%

Cheating policy: Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated. Students are expected to adhere to the academic standards outlined in the *Student Rights and Responsibilities Code*, especially Article II, Section B. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) disclosing or obtaining exam content information from other students, using notes during exams, signing another student's name or having another student sign your name, and all forms of plagiarism including downloading papers from the Internet (for example www.cheathouse.com).

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Participation
Quizzes

Required
100 points [10%]

Précis (3 @ 75 points each)	225 points [22.5%]
Exams (2 @ 100 points each)	200 points [20%]
Anthropocentrism Critique Paper	75 points [7.5%]
Semester Paper	200 points [20%]
Final Exam	200 points [20%]
TOTAL	1,000 points [100%]
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Extra credit	20 points [2%]
TOTAL POSSIBLE	1,020 points [102%]

A. Attendance and Participation.

Attendance is required.

Active participation is essential. Students are required to complete reading selections for the day they are assigned.

Outstanding attendance, preparation, and participation will be taken into consideration in grading borderline cases.

B. Quizzes.

Ten quizzes will occur throughout the semester, covering reading assignments and lectures. Quiz 1 will be on the grading standards and course requirements outlined in this syllabus. Each student is expected to sign Quiz 1 certifying that the student has read and understands the grading standards and course requirements.

Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

C. Writing Assignments.

All writing assignments must conform to the guidelines outlined in this syllabus.

Late penalty: Assignments turned in after they are collected at the beginning of class on the specified due date will be lowered ten percent per twenty-four hours.

1. Précis.

A précis is a concise summary of a daily reading assignment. Do not give your own subjective opinion on the theory or issue; simply describe the logic (argument) of the theory.

Each précis is to be 300 words in length.

2. Anthropocentrism Critique Paper.

In the Anthropocentrism Critique paper you should argue whether or not anthropocentrism is a tenable theory.

The Anthropocentrism Critique paper is to be 600 words in length.

3. Semester Paper.

The semester paper is to be 1500 words. In the paper you should develop and defend your own environmental ethic. (Your ethical theory should be based on any theory or theories we study in this course.)

The semester paper is to be 1500 words in length.

D. Exams.

Exams are based on lectures and reading assignments. Each exam is multiple choice.

Exams 1 and 2 will be administered at the UVSC Testing Center from opening time on Wednesday to closing time on Thursday. The Final Exam is comprehensive and will be administered in our classroom on the assigned final exam day.

Please Note: Missed exams can only be made up for medical problems or personal crises, and are excused only by a letter from a licensed physician or from the Humanities and Philosophy Department Academic Appeals Committee.

E. Extra Credit.

Extra credit can be earned by attending various on-campus lectures and events relating to ethics occurring throughout the semester. Each event counts as 5 points; up to 4 events may be attended for extra credit.

For a complete schedule of possible extra credit events, see <http://ethicscenter.info/>.

ATTENTION STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you have any disability which may impair your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the Accessibility Services Department (room BU-145). Academic accommodations are granted for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the Accessibility Services Department.

V. COURSE CALENDAR:

N.B. Page numbers of required text are shown in parentheses

- H Course introduction; What is Environmental Ethics?
Review of syllabus

I. The Human Place in Nature: Global Perspectives

- T Non-Western Views
H Western Views: *Genesis* 1-3 (16-18)

II. Anthropocentrism

- T Aquinas, excerpts from *Summa Contra Gentiles*;
Descartes, excerpts from *Discourse on the Method* and *Correspondence*;
Locke, excerpts from "Of Property," *Second Treatise of Government*
- H 1/18 Mill, "Three Essays on Religion" (103-110);
Kant, excerpts from *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and
Lectures on Ethics (54-56);
Newton, excerpts from *The Mathematical Principles of Natural
Philosophy* and *Opticks*

III. Critique of Anthropocentrism

- T 1/23 Assisi, excerpts from *The Canticle of Brother Sun*;
Schweitzer, Excerpts from *Civilization and Ethics*
Carson, excerpts from *Silent Spring*
- H 1/25 Sylvan, "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?"
(*Environmental Philosophy* 17-25, reserve);
Merchant, "The Death of Nature" (*Environmental Philosophy* 277-290,
reserve)
- T 1/30 Précis #1 due;
Rolston, Are Values in Nature Objective or Subjective? (88-100)

IV. Defense of Anthropocentrism

- H 2/1 Watson, "A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Biocentrism" (205-212)
Hargrove, "Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value"

V. Constructing an Environmental Ethic: Preliminary Considerations**A. Is 'Nature' Socially Constructed?**

- T 2/6 Gifford, "The Social Construction of Nature";
Roger King, "How to Construe Nature"

B. Monism versus Pluralism

- H 2/8 Stone, "Moral Pluralism and the Course of Environmental Ethics";
Callicott, "The Case Against Moral Pluralism"
- T 2/13 Exam #1 Review
- H 2/15 Exam #1

VI. What is the Proper Scope of Moral Considerability?

A. Individualism

1. Animal Liberation/Animal Rights

- T 2/20 Singer, Animal Liberation (pp. 57-65);
Regan, Animal Rights (pp. 65-72);
Callicott, "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair" (Pojman, Third
Edition, pp. 51-61, reserve)

2. Biocentricism

- H 2/22 Taylor (117-131)

B. Holism

- T 2/27 Précis #2 due;

1. Deep Ecology

Fox, "Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy of Our Time?";
Keller, "Gleaning Lessons From Deep Ecology" (*Ethics and Values: Basic
Readings in Theory and Practice*, pp. 367-375, reserve);

2. Ecocentrism

- H 3/1 Leopold, excerpts from *A Sand County Almanac* (pp. 139-148);
Callicott, "Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic" (pp. 149-160)

C. Hierarchical Biocentrism

- T 3/6 Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable" (pp. 131-139);
Ferré, "Persons in Nature"

D. Environmental Virtue Ethics

- H 3/8 Frasz, “Environmental Virtue Ethics”;
Cafaro, “Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson: Toward an Environmental Virtue Ethics”

VII. Political Ecology**A. Social Ecology**

- T 3/13 Bookchin, “What is Social Ecology?” (*Environmental Philosophy*, pp. 436-54.)
O’Connor, “Socialism and Ecology”

B. Direct Action/Ecotage

Foreman, “Strategic Monkeywrenching” (*The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book*, pp. 542-545);
Hargrove, “Ecological Sabotage: Pranks or Terrorism?”;
Abbey, “Earth First! and the Monkey Wrench Gang”;
Foreman, “Earth First! and The Monkey Wrench Gang”

- H 3/15 No class—Spring Break

C. Ecofeminism

- T 3/20 Warren, “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism” (Pojman, Third Edition, pp. 189-199, reserve)
Plumwood: “Nature, Self, and Gender” (*Environmental Philosophy*, pp. 291-314, reserve)

D. Environmental Political Economy

- H 3/22 Sagoff, “At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, or Why Political Questions Are Not All Economic” (pp. 560-568)
Daly, “Consumption” (pp. 553-560)
Hawken, “A Declaration of Sustainability”

- T 3/27 Précis #3 due;
Exam #2 Review

- H 3/29 Exam #2

E. Environmental Racism

- T 4/3 “A Sierra Roundtable on Race, Justice, and the Environment”;

Wenz, "Just Garbage" (pp. 596-604)
 Bullard, "Decision Making"

VIII. What are Practical Issues Facing the Next Several Generations?

A. Industrial Agriculture

- H 4/5 Paper thesis statement due;
 Jackson, "Natural Systems Agriculture: More on The Marriage of
 Agriculture and Ecology";
 Keller and Brummer, "Putting Food Production in Context: Toward a
 Postmechanistic Agricultural Ethic"

B. Human Population Growth

- T 4/10 Malthus, excerpts from *An Essay on the Principle of Population*;
 Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" (pp. 364-378);
 Simon, *The Ultimate Resource (The Environmental Ethics and Policy
 Book*, pp. 401-408)
- H 4/12 McKibben "A Special Moment in History" (pp. 354-364);
 Wolf, "Population and the Environment" (pp. 402-410)
- T 4/17 Semester Paper due;
 Open discussion
- pp.
 H 4/19 Final Exam Review
- T 4/24 Final Exam, 9-11 a.m.

Please note: Assignments not retrieved within two weeks after the end of the semester
 will be donated to the paper recycling bin.

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Writing Assignment Guidelines

- (1) All writing assignments should be written in conventional, correct American English, and should be free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- (2) All writing assignments must be submitted as hard copies in class on the due date. No e-mails.
- (3) Header: The student's name, the assignment, course title and number, our names, the date, and the word count (text only—not heading or title) should be placed in the *upper left corner* of the first page. For example:

Susan Q. Smart
Précis #3
Ethics and Values (PHIL 2050)
Dr. David Keller
March 1, 2007
Words: 304

- (4) Formatting: All writing assignments are to be typed using 12-point font, double-spaced, have numbered pages, with 1.25 inch side margins and 1 inch top and bottom margins. Do not use right justification. It is not necessary to have a page number on the first page.
- (5) Citations: The semester paper must include a bibliography (works cited page) following the citation guidelines outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Internet citations: If a website is referenced, the author, the author's credentials, and the original publication must be included. If the author, the author's credentials, and the original publication are not reported, then *the citation is incomplete*.
- (6) Binding: Multiple-page assignments should be stapled once in the upper left-hand corner. Do not use plastic binders or covers of any sort.
- (7) Instructors' comments follow the fifteenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* proofreading notation (§3.20-3.36, pp. 97-102).
- (8) A great recourse for help with citations is available at <http://citationmachine.net>.
- (9) Plagiarism, the cardinal academic sin, will result in grade E for the course. Plagiarism is the act of using and passing off the ideas or writings of another as one's own.