

Environmental Ethics

ENVS 345

Fall Term 2016 – University of Oregon

Instructor: Nicolae Morar

Syllabus

1. Course Description

Why should I really care about the environment? What makes environmental issues genuine moral issues?

Imagine yourself in the following situation: you are in a room where you can press a button that says “If you press it, the Grand Canyon will be blown away”. What philosophical/ethical reasons would you have to refrain from pressing that button? Are there any such reasons? Is it morally wrong to destroy something we (humans) deem beautiful? Some philosophers believe that there is no moral value without a valuator. So, what if you were the last person on Earth and you would not care about the Grand Canyon, would it still be wrong to press the button? And even if you were not the last person, would it suffice to appeal to the idea that you might deprive future generations from experiencing such ineffable scenery? Imagine the button says, “it you press it, the Grand Canyon will be blown away, *but* in doing so, you save x human lives.” How many lives would justify blowing away the Grand Canyon? What if those lives are the lives of some people you will never know/meet with? Does it have to be a human life? What about a non-human animal life? What about an ecosystem?

This course will attempt to answer some of the questions above and to conceptualize central notions in environmental ethics. We will focus on defining what it means to have moral standing or to be a (moral) person. Is this concept coextensive with the set of human beings? How far can/should we extend the borders of our moral community?

2. Learning Objectives:

This course has a number of learning outcomes. The instructors are interested in working with you to develop a series of more general skills that you will need during your college education and even after graduation. These include the ability to:

- Enhance reading skills (from philosophical texts to more science-oriented texts).
- Articulate, evaluate, and engage with (philosophical) arguments.
- Explain and summarize different approaches to environmental ethics.
- Develop communication and argumentation skills; especially, learning the difference between ‘stating an opinion’ and ‘arguing for a conclusion’.
- Develop writing skills and learn how to manage your thinking-process in a limited amount of time.

3. Class Meetings

Class will meet **Monday** and **Wednesday** from **10:00 - 11:20 am** in **105 ESL**.
Discussion sections will meet on **Friday**. Here is the schedule.

CRN	TIME	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR
12178	1000-1050	221 MCK	Best, K.
12179	1100-1150	300 VIL	Best, K.
12180	1200-1250	195 ANS	Best, K.

3. Office Hours and Contact Information

Office: 250 B Susan Campbell Hall
Email: nmorar@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: Thursday 2:00-3:50 PM.

GE: Krysta Best
Office: TBA.
Email: kbest@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM.

4. Course Requirements and Grading

Grades on papers and exams will be given on the standard 0-100 point grading scale:

100-93:	A
92-90:	A-
89-87:	B+
86-83:	B
82-80:	B-
79-77:	C+
76-73:	C
72-70:	C-
69-60:	D
59-0:	F

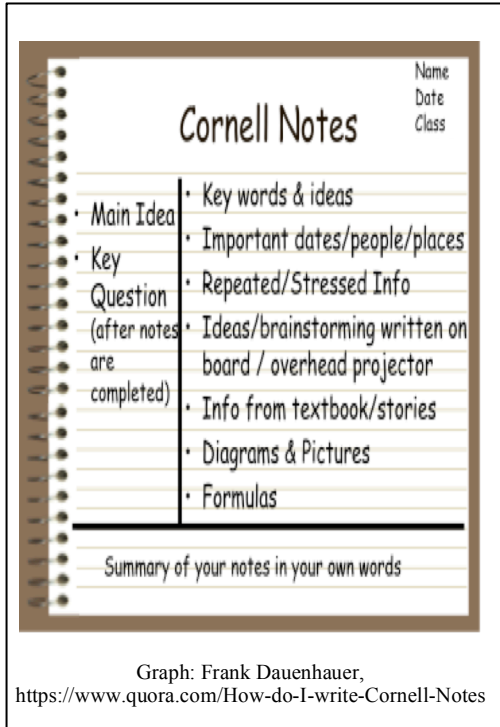
Final grades will be weighted as follows:

A. Class Participation/Attendance	10%
B. Class Notes & Summary (14)	20%
C. Homework (14)	20%
D. Field Trips and Field Trip Reports (2)	10%
E. Midterm Exam (paper)	20%
F. Final Exam (paper)	20%

A. Participation and Attendance. You are expected to participate actively in this class, which includes attending class (both lectures & discussion sections), reading all assigned material prior to class, and participating productively and professionally in discussion sections. Missing more than one discussion section FOR ANY REASON will result in a 1/3 of a full grade reduction (e.g. from A to A-). An additional full grade reduction will be made for each additional missed class after the second (e.g. from A to B). Three late arrivals for class will count as one absence. Discussion is crucial to this class, and all instructors will do their best to make you feel at ease

and welcome to contribute to the class conversations. Please feel free to contribute any question, objection, or other thought about the topic at hand when such occurs to you. Although no relevant remark is out of bounds in this class, you will be expected to treat all members of the class respectfully and professionally. Obviously, failure to attend class will negatively affect your participation grade.

B. Class Notes & Summary (also called Cornell Notes). This assignment provides you with an opportunity to develop a new skill in learning how to systematize, to organize your class notes, and to summarize and evaluate what you are learning in class. Using this method to take notes implies:



- i. You split the main page in 2 parts – left side (1/3 of the page) and right side (2/3 of the page) and you also leave at the bottom enough space so that you can write a summary (3-4 sentences) of the lecture & class discussion in your own words.
- ii. TOP of the PAGE: write your name, date, and class #.
- iii. On the RIGHT SIDE (the large box) you are taking notes from the lecture (ideas, concepts, arguments, etc.) and, you don't need to use complete sentences.
- iv. On the LEFT SIDE - after your notes are completed – you are writing down only the *key points or questions* (the main ideas) of the lecture.
- v. On the bottom SIDE, as soon as possible after class, you review the notes and write a summary in your own words (as clearly as possible).

During the following weeks (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9), you will have to submit - *after class* on Tuesday and Thursday by 9 am - your notes (along with your summary) via Canvas in a picture format (jpg file) or

as a scanned file (pdf file). You will have the option also to type in (*only*) your summary if you decide so (either because it is not sufficiently readable or you would like to alter it from your notepad version).

For additional information on Cornell Notes (examples, strategies), please visit *The Learning Toolbox Home* at <http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>

C. Homework – During the following weeks (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9), before our lecture meetings on Monday and Wednesday (the homework schedule is attached at the end of the syllabus), you will have to submit by 9 am your homework via Canvas. Your homework could consist of:

1. A Series of *Knowledge Based* questions of various formats: multiple choice, short and/or longer answers, etc. on a philosophical issue related to the reading for that day.
2. Key questions key designed to help you improve your understanding of that week's topic. This is an opportunity to think critically and to engage with the material.

D. Field Trips and Field Trip reports: In this class, we will have two-field trips. The course fees cover the travel expenses for this trip.

On **Wednesday – November 2nd**, we will have a field trip to a local conservation and ecology restoration project - Mount Pisgah Arboretum and South Bottomlands. We will take off from

campus by 9:00 am and return to campus by 11:30 am. For this field trip, you have to sign up at the end of week 2 at the latest during your discussion section meeting.

On **Saturday - November 19th**, we will have a second field trip to a local organic farm – Deck Family Farm. We will take off at 8:30 am, from campus, and return to campus by noon.

You will be expected to dress appropriately for walking around the Mount Pisgah Arboretum and around a working farm. We will have a presentation of the restoration ecology project on South Bottomlands and of the organic meet production at the Deck farm. A report is expected from you for each field trip – format: journal description of this experience – one page single-spaced (~ 500 words, normal margins) and the report has to be submitted on Canvas (at the latest) by 5pm on Friday, December 2nd.

Although each field trip is a required part of the course, those who are unable to attend due to some conflicts (schedule, etc.) may complete a substitute assignment, which will consist in doing 2 hours of volunteering (per field trip you cannot attend) plus a report for each activity in the format described above. Each student who is unable to attend is in charge of making the arrangements to complete the alternative assignment. Here below some places that you would benefit visiting and volunteering for:

1. Lane County Youth Farm

Contact: Ted Purdy (Youth Farm Coordinator)
Email: youthfarm@foodforlanecounty.org
Phone: 541-343-2822

2. Grassroots Garden

Contact: Merry Bradley (Garden Coordinator)
Email: merrybradley@foodforlanecounty.org
Phone: 541-343-2822

3. Huerto de la Familia – The Family Garden

Contact: Sarah Cantril (Executive Director)
Email: familygarden@efn.org
Phone: 541-255-6120

4. School Garden Project

Contact: Elizabeth Goward (Volunteer Coordinator/Garden Educator)
Email: elizabeth@schoolgardenproject.org
Phone: 541-284-1001

One Midterm and One Final Paper Exam: Midterm and Final Papers will be 4 – 5 pages (double spaced, Times New Roman 12, standard margins, ~ 1000-1250 words) and paper topics will be posted one week before they are due. ***Midterm and final papers will be submitted electronically via Canvas.*** Papers not turned in the day they are due are LATE, and will lose one letter grade for each calendar day that they are late. If you are absent on an exam day, you must (1) have contacted me in advance to tell me of the absence, and (2) return with a written excuse (i.e. medical), in order to be permitted to make up the exam. ***Failure to complete any of the two exams will result in an automatic failure in the course (grade F).***

Grading rubric for exam essays (midterm and final):

A = Excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

B = Good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

C = Okay. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

D = Poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

F = Failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

6. Course Policies

Incompletes and extensions will be given *only* in the event of documented emergencies.

Emergencies: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances.

Sexual Violence: The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are *required reporters*. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24h hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu

Accessibility: If you have a documented disability, please contact me in advance. If you need accommodations in this class, I will work with the Accessible Education Center to find a solution for you.

Academic Misconduct: With the advent of the Internet, plagiarism has become an increasingly serious problem at universities around the country, particularly in classes like this one, where papers determine a substantial part of the grade.

In order to avoid plagiarizing from a source, both direct quotations and paraphrases or summaries of material found in traditional print media or on the internet must be acknowledged. If you have any questions about how this definition will be interpreted, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me.

Plagiarism and cheating on exams undermines the integrity of the academic community. When undetected, it gives the perpetrator an unfair advantage over students who are graded on the basis of their own work. In this class we will do our best to detect plagiarism and cheating. Students who are aware of violations by others should bring this to my attention. This is the right thing to do. It is also in your own self-interest.

There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course. Plagiarized papers will receive a 0, the student will automatically fail the course, and their name will be given to the university authorities. For more on the University of Oregon policy on plagiarism, see the following website:

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>

External Sources: Using sources not listed on the syllabus in researching and writing your papers is fine, as long as they are both to the point, and are properly cited. And at all times, when in doubt, cite your sources! It is the best way to avoid being accused of plagiarism. This is probably the best place to make this point, too: Wikipedia can be valuable for getting a very broad grasp of positions and debates, but when it gets into details, especially on philosophic topics, it is very often horrible – sketchy, convoluted, misinformed, and often simply wrong. If you wish to consult online resources, I suggest you use some of the other, much better sites. Most prominent is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, but others are useful as well:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
 The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy - <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

6. Website

All the information about this course and other comments or events related to the class will be posted on Canvas: <https://canvas.uoregon.edu>

7. Texts

No textbooks are required for this course. **ALL the required readings** are available on Canvas.

Other useful (recommended) but not required resources include the following:

- Pojman & Pojman, *Environmental Ethics*, 5th Edition (Thomson-Wadsworth, 2008)
- Dale Jamieson, *Ethics and the Environment*, (Cambridge, 2008)
- Robert Elliot, *Environmental Ethics*, (Oxford, 1995)
- Andrew Light & Holmes Rolston III, *Environmental Ethics*, (Wiley Blackwell, 2002)

Supplemental readings will be posted on the course website as the term progresses.

8. Topics and Readings

Here is a tentative schedule of topics and readings. Amendments and alterations will be announced in class as we go and on the webpage. Since reminders and other information will frequently be posted on Canvas, *make sure you check the website on a fairly regular basis.*

Week 1: Moral Reasoning & Environment	<p>Session 1. Introduction to the Course: Syllabus The Fact & Value Distinction / Human Nature Desjardins, “Ethical Theory and the Environment”</p> <p>Session 2. Desjardins, “Science, Ethics, and the Environment” <i>Homework 1</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 1</i> (due on Thursday at 9 am)</p>
Week 2: Animal Ethics	<p>Session 1. Kant, “Rational Beings Alone Have Moral Worth” Wilson, “The Green Kant” (recommended only) <i>Homework 2</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 2</i> (due on Tuesday at 9 am)</p> <p>Session 2. Singer, “Animal Liberation” - Chapter 1 “All Animals are Equal” <i>Homework 3</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 3</i> (due on Thursday at 9 am)</p>

<p>Week 3: Animal Ethics</p>	<p>Session 1. Singer, “Animal Liberation” - Chapter 1 “All Animals are Equal” Steinbock, “Species and the Idea of Equality” <i>Homework 4</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 4</i> (due on Tuesday at 9 am)</p> <p>Session 2. Callicott, “Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair” <i>Homework 5</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 5</i> (due on Thursday at 9 am)</p>
<p>Week 4: Biocentrism</p> <p>Midterm Exam</p>	<p>Session 1. Callicott, “An Introductory Palinode” Goodpaster, “On Being Morally Considerable” <i>Homework 6</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 6</i> (due on Tuesday at 9 am)</p> <p>Session 2. Taylor, “Biocentric Egalitarianism” (recommended only) Stone, “Should Trees have Standing?” <i>Homework 7</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 7</i> (due on Thursday at 9 am)</p> <p>Wednesday 10/19 – Midterm Exam - Questions will be posted on Canvas.</p>
<p>Week 5: Ecocentrism</p> <p>Midterm Exam</p>	<p>Session 1. Leopold, “Ecocentrism: The Land Ethic”</p> <p>Session 2. Sagoff, “Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce”</p> <p>Wednesday 10/26 – Midterm Exam are due before 5:00 pm.</p>
<p>Week 6: Conservation Biology, Ecology & Biodiversity</p> <p>Field Trip #1 (11/2)</p>	<p>Session 1. Conservation and Restoration Leopold, “The Conservation Ethic” Callicott, “Ecology: An Ethical Perspective” <i>Homework 8</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 8</i> (due on Tuesday at 9 am)</p> <p>Session 2. Soulé, “What is conservation biology?” FIELD TRIP # 1 (11/2) to Mount Pisgah Arboretum (9:00 am–11:30 pm)</p>

<p>Week 7 Ecology and Biodiversity</p>	<p>Session 1. Norton, “Biodiversity: Its Meaning and Its Value” <i>Homework 9</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 9</i> (due on Tuesday at 9 am)</p> <p>Session 2. Morar, Toadvine, Bohannan, “Biodiversity at 25: Revolution or Red Herring?” <i>Homework 10</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 10</i> (due on Thursday at 9 am)</p>
<p>Week 8: Biodiversity, Sustainability, and Poverty</p> <p>Field Trip #2 (11/19)</p>	<p>Session 1. Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” <i>Homework 11</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 11</i> (due on Tuesday at 9 am)</p> <p>Session 2. Rolston, “Feeding People vs. Saving Nature?” <i>Homework 12</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 12</i> (due on Thursday at 9 am)</p> <p>No Discussion Session on FR (11/18). FIELD TRIP (SAT, 11/19): Deck Family Farm, Junction City</p>
<p>Week 9: Feeding the Hungry and Biotechnology</p>	<p>Session 1. Rauch, “Can Frankenfood Save the Planet?” Millestein, “GMOs? Not so fast” <i>Homework 13</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 13</i> (due on Tuesday at 9 am)</p> <p>Session 2. Philpott, “Why I’m Still Skeptical of GMOs” Movie: <i>Food Inc.</i> (recommended – on reserve at Knight library) <i>Homework 14</i> (due before class at 9 am) <i>Class Notes & Summary 14</i> (due on Thursday at 9 am)</p>
<p>Week 10: The Politics of Food Production</p>	<p>Session 1. Industrialization vs. Local Food Production Freakonomics, “The Inefficiency of Local Food” Kirschenmann, “Can Organic Agriculture Feed the World? And Is That the Right Question?” W. Berry, “A Defense of Family Farming” (recommended) Pollan, Ch. 3 “The Industrialization of Eating” (recommended) <i>Guest Lecturers:</i> A. Daly & B. Huff (local producers), Ambrosia Farm</p> <p>Session 2. Food Waste and the Environment Martin, “One country’s table scrap, another country’s meal”, <i>NYT</i> Paratore, “Rising to the Food Waste Challenge” <i>Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</i>, “Food Waste,” YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8xwLWb0ILY (recommended)</p> <p><i>Guest Lecturers:</i> Allie Breyer (City of Eugene)</p> <p>Wednesday 11/30 – Final Exam - Questions will be posted on Canvas.</p>
<p>Week 11: Final Exam</p>	<p>Final Exam papers are due on Wednesday 12/7 before 5:00 pm.</p>