

ENVS 345

Environmental Ethics

Instructor: Paul Guernsey
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Office: 240 Columbia
Office Hours: 12-2pm, MW

CRN: 40878
Summer 2013
MTWRF 2-3:50 pm
Room: Columbia 142

Course Description:

Are ethical relationships with the non-human natural world formed by a straightforward application of scientific facts to our social practices? How are environmental values developed and sustained? This course will address issues at the core of the human-nature relationship including animal liberation, biodiversity, agriculture, ecological restoration, climate change, and environmental justice.

Course Readings:

All readings will be available on Blackboard. Please show your appreciation for the cost-free nature of this availability by taking the steps necessary for having readings with you in class in whatever form is easiest for you to achieve. If you do not consistently bring the readings with you, this will be reflected in your participation grade. If you want a bound copy of some readings, about half of them are available in the following volume: Pojman & Pojman, *Environmental Ethics*, 5th Edition (Thomson-Wadsworth, 2008)

Course Requirements:

1. Participation/Attendance	10%
2. Reading Responses (4)	40%
3. Midterm Paper	20%
4. Final Paper	30%

- **Participation/Attendance:** You are expected to participate actively in this class, which includes attending class, reading all assigned material prior to class, and participating productively and professionally in class discussions. Missing THREE classes FOR ANY REASON will result in a full grade reduction. An additional full grade reduction will be made for each additional missed class after the third. Three late arrivals for class will count as one absence. Discussion is crucial to this class, and I will do my best to make you feel at ease and welcome to contribute to the class conversation. 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. The quality and quantity of your participation in the class discussion will be evaluated in assigning 10% of your final grade. Obviously, failure to attend class will negatively affect your participation grade.

- **Weekly Reading Responses:** You are expected to submit one and only one response per week on a day of your choosing. Responses must be between one and one and a half pages single-spaced and address one of the readings assigned for the day they are submitted. You may include discussion of more than one reading if you wish but this is not required. If you receive a 7 or lower, you may re-submit a response for the next class meeting only. You should spend at least half of the response *summarizing* the key arguments of the text. There should also be a *critical* component where you give *reasons* for agreeing or disagreeing with the author on *specific points*.
- **Midterm and Final Papers:** Papers will be due at the end of the 2nd and 4th weeks. The mid-term will be 3-4 pages and the final will be 4-5 pages double-spaced. Make sure you write *at least the minimum length but no more than the maximum length*. Paper topics will be posted one week before they are due. The mid-term is due on Friday, July 5th, and the final is due on Friday, July 19th.
- **Fieldtrip:** I will make a good-faith effort to arrange a guided tour of Mt. Pisgah to be scheduled in the final week of class. Attendance of this trip will count for 20% of your participation grade. Make-up activities may be proposed if there are documented conflicts.

Course Policies:

- **Late Work:** Any late work will be marked down unless documentation of an emergency is provided. No late reading responses will be accepted.
- **Electronics:** The use of any device for purposes not *IMMEDIATELY RELEVANT* to the class discussion will result in expulsion from the class meeting and an absence for the day. Unless you are an on-call EMT or surgeon, *cell phone* volume will be turned off and cell phones will be kept *put away*. You may check your phone during the break. If you need to have your phone on for some reason, check in with me before class starts.
- **Plagiarism:** There is no point. I will recognize it immediately and you will fail the course. Please read the following if you are unfamiliar with what constitutes plagiarism: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>

Week 1: Defining the Moral Community

Monday: What is Environmental Ethics?

Aristotle, selection from *Politics*

Kant, "Rational Beings Alone Have Moral Worth"

Descartes, selections

Tuesday: Animal Rights

Singer, "A Utilitarian Defense of Animal Liberation"

Steinbock, "Speciesism and the Idea of Equality"

Wednesday: Biocentrism

Taylor, "Biocentric Egalitarianism"
Stone, "Should Trees Have Standing?"

Thursday: Ecocentrism

Leopold, "The Land Ethic"
Sagoff, "Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce"

Friday: Ecocentrism

Rolston, "Naturalizing Values"

Week 2: Biodiversity, Agriculture

Monday: Biodiversity

Maclaurin & Sterelny, *What is Biodiversity?* Chapter 1
Rolston, "Biodiversity"

Tuesday: Biodiversity

Norton, "Biodiversity: Its Meaning and Its Value"
Griffith, "A Conservation Movement for Microbes"
Cockell and Jones, "Advancing the Case for Microbial Conservation"

Wednesday: Industrial Agriculture

Marx, selections from *Capital*
Altieri, "Ecological Impacts of Industrial Agriculture and the Possibilities for Truly Sustainable Farming" from *Hungry for Profit*
Levins and Lewontin, "The Pesticide System" from *The Dialectical Biologist*

Thursday: NO CLASS.

Friday: Sustainable Agriculture, Biotechnology

Rauch, "Can Frankenfood Save the Planet?"
Pretty, "Can Ecological Agriculture Feed Nine Billion People?"

MID-TERM PAPERS DUE ON FRIDAY IN LECTURE

Week 3: Restoration, Climate Change

Monday: Restoration

Readings TBA

Tuesday: Restoration

Readings TBA

Wednesday: Restoration

Readings TBA

Thursday: Climate Change

Foster, "James Hansen and the Climate-Change Exit Strategy"

Friday: The Ethics of Climate Change

Shue, "Deadly Delays, Saving Opportunities"

Shue, "Climate Hope: Implementing the Climate Strategy"

Week 4: Environmental Justice

Monday: Environmental Racism and a Revolutionary Approach to Health

Cole and Foster, "Environmental Racism" in *From the Ground Up*

Levins and Lewontin, "Latin Community Health" and selections

Tuesday: Feminist Perspectives

Carolyn Merchant, "Dominion over Nature"

Wednesday: Feminist Perspectives

Waring, "A Woman's Reckoning"

Thursday: Native American Perspectives

LaDuke, "Buffalo Nations, Buffalo Peoples"

Friday: Field Trip to Mt. Pisgah