

ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

INTD 425 (3 hrs), Manchester College, TR 12:30-1:45 PM, Spring 2012

Instructor: Dr. Steve Naragon, Office: Ad Bldg., #231c (Phone — *office:* 982-5041; *home:* 982-6033)

Required Text: Pojman and Pojman, *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, 5th ed. (Thomson/Wadsworth, 2008).

Course Overview. We will explore a number of competing perspectives on how we should distribute benefits (e.g., land, clean air and water, food, healthcare, iPods) and burdens (e.g., polluting factories, incinerators, toxic dump sites) among all those who enjoy moral standing. This will involve examining two fundamental questions: “What determines this distribution?” and “What determines moral standing?” Almost every issue in environmental philosophy turns on these questions of distributive justice and the limits of our moral community. The “schedule of discussion and readings” (reverse side) offers a closer account of the specific topics.

Some Course Objectives. My intention for this class is that — through reading, study, and conversation — we increase our knowledge of factual information regarding environmental matters, and that we fine-tune our understanding of the relevant moral principles and their application. More specific goals are that we: (1) Become aware of the implications of environmental problems and investigate various likely causes of these problems. (2) Gain facility in distinguishing empirical claims from moral claims. (3) Search for a moral theory that offers adequate protection to the non-human world. (4) Develop skills for critically evaluating arguments and beliefs. (5) Have the opportunity to reflect on two basic questions confronting each of us: What is my proper relationship to other humans? What is my proper relationship with the rest of nature?

Requirements

Readings. Work through the assignments *prior* to class, and **always bring the text.** *Class discussions depend upon this.*

Attendance. This course is heavily dependent on discussion. “Taking the course” requires more than simply doing the written work. Thus the following policy: Five absences (excused or otherwise) are allowed. After that, each additional absence (of any kind) results in a 1% drop in course grade.

Groups. The students in the class will be divided into groups of seven or eight, viz., the John Muir Group, Aldo Leopold Group, and Rachel Carson Group. These groups will function primarily for the purpose of in-class and online discussion.

Discussion Forum. There are six discussion forums, each of which will require **one post** and **two comments** from you. The posts should be from 500-600 words, and the comments from 100-150 words (see ANGEL for further instruction). These will be completed on ANGEL.

Quizzes. About every class will begin with a brief quiz on the reading or topic for the day. These brief exercises help keep me informed of your comprehension of the material, and should help you keep up with the reading during the semester. The quizzes are worth a significant portion of the course grade, because every student coming to class prepared to discuss the material is a significant part of the course. [**Makeup:** Missed quizzes can be made up in my office before the next class meeting; arrangements for this is your responsibility.]

Short Research Essay. You will need to write one six to seven page essay (1800-2100 words), involving at least two drafts, an annotated bibliography (**minimum:** 10 sources, 5 non-internet), and a summary sheet. *Please discuss your topic with me before you begin work.* The last week of the semester will be devoted to everyone presenting their research to the class. All materials will be submitted on ANGEL as “discussion forum posts” — that way you can see each other’s work, and comment on it. See ANGEL for specifics on how this will be evaluated. Plan your work schedule, and work ahead when you can. These due dates are quite firm.

Due dates: (see the web syllabus) Thesis paragraph and introduction, with preliminary sources (Tue, Feb 22); Annotated bibliography (Tue, Mar 15); First draft (Tue, Apr 19); Summary sheet and final draft (Tue, May 10).

Exams. Three non-cumulative essay exams on the class discussions, readings, and material presented in class.

Grading. Exams (3 x 20% = 60% of the course grade), quizzes (10%), discussion forums (15%), research essay and presentation (15% ; thesis/intro, bibliography, first draft, summary sheet, and presentation [*@1%*], and final draft [*10%*]).

Letter grade conversion: A (94-100), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D-(60-62), F (0-59).

Cell Phones. Please don’t bring these to class. If you bring a cell phone, it needs to be turned off and put away, preferably at the bottom of a very deep pocket or book bag. If you are unable to part company with your cell phone, or are unable to keep it turned off and stowed, then please find another class to attend. Thank you.

Students with Disabilities. Manchester College, in compliance with federal guidelines, is committed to providing students with disabilities an access to programs and activities that are equal to the access provided to students without disabilities. If you believe that you need an accommodation due to a disability, please contact Bonnie O’Connell, the director of services for students with disabilities (Success Center, second floor of the Union); please telephone 982-5076 to schedule an appointment.

Cheating and Plagiarism. Plagiarism consists of submitting the statements, ideas, opinions, or findings of another *as if they were your own*. It is *not* plagiarism to copy from or paraphrase a source as long as this is acknowledged and the source is cited. Cheating and deliberate plagiarism will result in automatically failing the class. For more information, see the college *Catalog*.

SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION AND READING

Tue, Jan 31

(1) Introduction to the course.

Private Property and the Public Good

Thu, Feb 2

(2) Where does private property come from? **Read:** Locke, "Of Property" (ANGEL); Chief Seattle, "If we sell you our land..." (ANGEL).

Tue, Feb 7

(3) Is the privatization of common resources the best way to preserve them? **Read:** Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" (#45).

Thu, Feb 9

(4) Overview of Distributive Justice. **Read:** Nozick, "Distributive Justice" (ANGEL).

Population, Consumption, and Food Ethics

Tue, Feb 14

(5) Are we living on a lifeboat? **Read:** Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics" (#49); Murdoch/Oaten, "Critique of Lifeboat Ethics" (#50).

Thu, Feb 16 — No Class

Tue, Feb 21

(6) Patterns of consumption. **Read:** Gardner, *et al.*, "The State of Consumption Today" (#47).

Thu, Feb 23

(7) Population and vegetarianism. **Read:** Wolf, "Population and the Environment" (#48); Fox, "Vegetarianism and Treading Lightly" (#55).

Tue, Feb 28

(8) When our neighbors starve. **Read:** Engel, "Hunger, Duty, and Ecology" (#51); Amartya Sen, "Property and Hunger" (ANGEL).

Thu, Mar 1

Exam #1

On The Moral Standing of Non-Human Animals

Tue, Mar 6

(9) Animal welfare. **Read:** Singer, "Animal Liberation" (#9).

Thu, Mar 8

(10) Animal rights. **Read:** Regan, "The Radical Egalitarian Case" (#10); Warren, "A Critique of Regan" (#11).

Tue, Mar 13

(11) How wide is our moral community? **Read:** Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable" (#18).

Species, Biodiversity, and Valuing Nature

Thu, Mar 15

(12) What is the source of value? **Read:** Meadow, "Biodiversity" (#30); Russow, "Why do species matter?" (#31).

— — — Spring Break — — —

Tue, Mar 27

(13) Extending legal rights. **Read:** Stone, "Should trees have standing?" (#34).

Economics and the Environment

Thu, Mar 29

(14) Optimal Pollution. **Read:** Baxter, "People or Penguins" (#58).

Tue, Apr 3

(15) Citizens and consumers. **Read:** Sagoff, "At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima" (#68).

Thu, Apr 5

(16) Can we value anything? **Read:** Krieger, "What's wrong with plastic trees?" (#32).

Tue, Apr 10

Exam #2

The Land Ethic and Beyond

Thu, Apr 12

(17) Leopold's land ethic. **Read:** Leopold, "The Land Ethic" (#19); Callicott, "Conceptual Foundations" (#20).

Tue, Apr 17

(18) Deep ecology. **Read:** Naess, "Shallow and Deep Ecology" (#24); Naess, "Ecosophy T" (#25), Devall/Sessions (#26).

Thu, Apr 19

(19) Social ecology. **Read:** Bookchin, "Social Ecology vs Deep Ecology" (#28).

Environmental Justice

Tue, Apr 24

(20) Environmental racism. **Read:** Bullard, "Overcoming Racism" (#70); Wenz, "Just Garbage" (#72).

Thu, Apr 26

(21) Third world critiques. **Read:** Guha, "Radical Environmentalism" (#39); Mies, "Deceiving the Third World" (#73).

Getting There

Tue, May 1

(22) Getting in the way. **Read:** Foreman, "Strategic Monkeywrenching" (#81); Martin, "Ecosabotage" (#80).

Thu, May 3

(23) What we need. **Read:** Saunders, "Community Design" (#78); Brown, *et al.*, "Sustainable World" (#82).

Tue, May 8 — Thu, May 10

Student Research Presentations

Finals Week

Exam #3