

ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

INTD 425 (3 hrs), Manchester University, Spring 2017

TR 12:30-1:45 p.m., Academic Center 238

Instructor: Dr. Steve Naragon, Office: Academic Center, #233 (Phone — *office*: 982-5041; *home*: 982-6033)

Required Texts:

- (1) Pojman and Pojman, *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, 5th ed. (Thomson/Wadsworth, 2008).
- (2) Various articles to be downloaded from the web syllabus and printed.

Course Web Syllabus: <http://users.manchester.edu/Facstaff/SSNaragon/Online/425-S17/Welcome.html>

Course Overview. We will explore a number of competing perspectives on how we should distribute benefits (e.g., land, shelter, clean air and water, food, healthcare) and burdens (e.g., polluting factories, incinerators, 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. Closely related to the latter are the questions surrounding **value**: What is it? Where does it come from? Where is it located? What do you value? 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 sharpen 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 protections 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 and Grading

Readings and Attendance. Read the assignments *closely* prior to class, and **always bring the text**. *Class discussions depend upon this.* This course, and your success, 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.

Discussion Forums. There are five discussion forums, each of which will involve **one post** and at least **two comments** from you. The posts should be from 500-600 words, and the comments from 100-150 words (see the web syllabus for more information). These will be completed on Canvas.

Quizzes. About every other 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 a five to six page essay (1500-1800 words), involving at least two drafts, an annotated bibliography (**minimum**: 8 sources, 4 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. Materials will be submitted on Canvas as “discussion posts” so that you can see each other’s work and comment on it. See the web syllabus for due dates and other details. Plan your work schedule and work ahead when you can. The due dates are quite firm.

Exams. There will be 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 keep your phone turned off and stowed, then please find another class to attend. Thank you.

Title IX reporting requirements / Student disability and reasonable accommodation statement / Medical emergency evacuation schedule: See the “Course Requirements” page of the web syllabus.

Cheating and Plagiarism. See the “Course Requirements” page of the web syllabus.

SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION AND READING

Tue, Jan 31

(1) Introduction to the course.

Private Property and the Public Good

Thu, Feb 2

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

Tue, Feb 7

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

Thu, Feb 9

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

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

(6) Patterns of consumption. **Read:** McKibben, "A Special Moment in History: The Challenge of Overpopulation and Overconsumption" (#44).

Tue, Feb 21

(7) Population and vegetarianism. **Read:** Fox, "Vegetarianism and Treading Lightly" (#55).

Thu, Feb 23

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

Tue, Feb 28

Exam #1

On The Moral Standing of Non-Human Animals

Thu, Mar 2

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

Tue, Mar 7

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

Thu, Mar 9

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

Species, Biodiversity, and Valuing Nature

Tue, Mar 14

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

Thu, Mar 16

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

Spring Break

Economics and the Environment

Tue, Mar 28

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

Thu, Mar 30

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

Tue, Apr 4

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

Thu, Apr 6

Exam #2

The Land Ethic and Beyond

Tue, Apr 11

(17) Religion and Ecology. **Read:** White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" (#2).

Thu, Apr 13

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

Tue, Apr 18

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

Thu, Apr 20

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

Environmental Justice

Tue, Apr 25

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

Thu, Apr 27

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

Tue, May 2

(23) The current approach isn't working... **Read:** Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster, "What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know About Capitalism" (pdf)

Solutions

Thu, May 4

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

Tue, May 9 — Thu, May 11

Student Research Presentations

Finals Week

Exam #3