

# ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

INTD 425 (3 hrs), Manchester University, Spring 2018

TR 12:30-1:45 p.m., TBD

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**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-S18/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: “How should we determine this distribution?” and “How should we determine 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?

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## 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). Turn in on Canvas.

**Tuesday One-Page Essays.** These brief essays (300-400 words) should be written only after you have studied and reflected upon the readings for the day. See the rubric on the web syllabus. Turn in 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. [**Makeup**: See the web syllabus]

**Mini Research Project.** In coordination with an early Earth Day event on campus, each student will research some environmentally beneficial practice, service, or product, resulting in a two page (+ bibliography) essay and a poster that presents your findings.

**Exams.** There will be three non-cumulative essay exams on the class discussions, readings, and material presented in class.

**Grading.** Exams (3 x 15% = 45% of the course grade), Tuesday essays (15%), quizzes (15%), discussion forums (20%), research essay and poster (5%).

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.

**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

### Thu, Feb 1

(1) Introduction to the course.

### *Private Property and the Public Good*

#### Tue, Feb 6

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

#### Thu, Feb 8

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

#### Tue, Feb 13

(4) Justice and Future Generations. **Read:** Solow, "Sustainability" (pdf).

#### Thu, Feb 15

(5) Distributive Justice as Fairness. **Read:** Nussbaum, "The Enduring Significance of John Rawls" (pdf).

### *Population, Consumption, and Food Ethics*

#### Tue, Feb 20

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

#### Thu, Feb 22

(7) Patterns of consumption. **Read:** McKibben, "A Special Moment in History: The Challenge of Overpopulation and Overconsumption" (#44); Gardner, "The State of Consumption" (pdf)

#### Tue, Feb 27

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

#### Thu, Mar 1

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

#### Tue, Mar 6

*Exam #1*

### *On The Moral Standing of Non-Human Animals*

#### Thu, Mar 8

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

#### Tue, Mar 13

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

#### Thu, Mar 15

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

--- Spring Break ---

### *Species, Biodiversity, and Valuing Nature*

#### Tue, Mar 27

(13) Valuing Species. **Read:** Meadow, "Biodiversity" (#30); Russow, "Why do species matter?" (#31).

#### Thu, Mar 29

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

### *Economics and the Environment*

#### Tue, Apr 3

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

#### Thu, Apr 5

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

#### Sat, Apr 7

Poster Session on Small Solutions

#### Tue, Apr 10

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

#### Thu, Apr 12

*Exam #2*

### *The Land Ethic and Beyond*

#### Tue, Apr 17

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

#### Thu, Apr 19

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

#### Tue, Apr 24

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

#### Thu, Apr 26

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

### *Environmental Justice*

#### Tue, May 1

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

#### Thu, May 3

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

#### Tue, May 8

(24) Capitalism and Conservation. **Read:** Newton, "Chainsaws of Greed" (pdf)

#### Thu, May 10

(25) Resisting the Machines. **Read:** Foreman, "Strategic Monkeywrenching" (#81); Martin, "Ecosabotage" (#80).

#### Finals Week

*Exam #3*