

ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 425 (3 hrs), Manchester College, Spring 2009

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

Required Text: Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce, eds., *The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book*, 3rd ed. (Wadsworth Publ. Co., 2003).

Course Overview. We will explore a number of competing traditions that answer the question of 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 exploring 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 breadth and width 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 include: (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.

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

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. [**Makeup:** Missed quizzes can be made up in my office up until 5pm of the following day; making arrangements for this is your responsibility.]

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. The essay will focus on a consumer good of your choosing. You are to investigate the environmental and social effects of its manufacture, distribution, and consumption. *Please discuss your topic with me before you begin work.* At the end of the semester, you will be given a 15 minute period for presenting your research to your fellow students. Your one-page “summary sheet” should be distributed to the rest of the class prior to your oral presentation. See Angel for specifics on how this will be evaluated.

Due dates:

Thesis paragraph and preliminary sources (Thu, Feb 19).

Annotated bibliography (Thu, Mar 19).

First draft (Tue, Apr 21).

Summary sheet and final draft (Tue, May 12).

Class Discussion. While everyone is responsible to be prepared each day to discuss the assigned topic and reading, students will take turns presenting the reading for the day (supplementing this with appropriate additional material). The presenting student should know the assigned reading thoroughly and also prepare additional supplementary materials that either support or criticize the original reading. A detailed outline of the reading and supplementary materials should be given to the instructor at least one day before the presentation. Everyone will need to make two such presentations during the semester.

Grading.

Exams (3 x 20% = 60% of the course grade)

Quizzes (20%)

Class discussion (2%)

Research essay and presentation (18% = bibliography [1%], first draft [1%], summary sheet [1%] presentation [5%], 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).

Cheating and Plagiarism. Everyone knows what cheating is, and knows how to avoid it; plagiarism, on the other hand, is a little trickier. *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. For more information, see the college *Catalog* or your *Spartan Cue*.

SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION AND READING

Thu, Feb 5

(1) Introduction to the course.

Private Property and the Environment

Tue, Feb 10

(2) Where does private property come from? **Read:** Preview (#46), Locke (#49), Shrader-Frechette (#50).

Thu, Feb 12

(3) Is the privatization of common resources the best way to preserve them? **Read:** Hardin (#47), Monbiot (#48).

Tue, Feb 17

(4) When environmental regulations reduce the value of private property. **Read:** Sagoff (#51).

Population and Food Ethics

Thu, Feb 19

(5) Should the rich help the poor? **Read:** Preview (#52), Malthus (#53), Hardin (#55).

Tue, Feb 24

(6) Private property and the right to life **Read:** Amartya Sen (handout), Michael Massing (handout).

On The Moral Standing of Non-Human Animals

Thu, Feb 26

(7) Animal liberation. **Read:** Preview (#13), Singer (#15), Varner (#18).

Tue, Mar 3

(8) How wide is the moral community? **Read:** Goodpaster (#22).

<u>Thu, Mar 5</u>	<i>Exam #1</i>
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Biodiversity

Tue, Mar 10

(9) Why do species matter? **Read:** Preview (#63), Russow (#66), Wilson (#19, #64).

Economics and the Environment

Thu, Mar 12

(10) Are environmental problems also economic problems? **Read:** Preview (#38), Freeman (#39).

Tue, Mar 17

(11) Are cost-benefit analyses the best way to decide environmental policy? **Read:** Preview (#41), Kelman (#42); Leonard & Zeckhauser (#43).

Thu, Mar 19

(12) Being a citizen and being a consumer. **Read:** Sagoff (#40).

— **Spring Break** —

Tue, Mar 31

(13) Sustainable development. **Read:** Preview (#58), Solow (#61), Repetto (#45).

Thu, Apr 2

(14) Development: a feminist critique. **Read:** Preview (#34), Shiva (#36).

Corporate Behavior

Tue, Apr 7

(15) Environmental Racism. **Read:** Preview (#80), Stone (#85), Grossman (#81).

Thu, Apr 9

(16) Cutting Trees. **Read:** Preview (#75), Knize (#78); Newton (#84).

<u>Tue, Apr 14</u>	<i>Exam #2</i>
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Constructing an Environmental Ethic

Thu, Apr 16

(17) Leopold's land ethic. **Read:** Preview (#21), Leopold (#25), Callicott (#26).

Tue, Apr 21

(18) Deep ecology. **Read:** Preview (#29), Devall/Sessions (#30); Naess (#31).

Thu, Apr 23

(19) Deep ecology and the 3rd World. **Read:** Guha (#76).

Tue, Apr 28

(20) Social ecology. **Read:** Bookchin (#32).

Thu, Apr 30

(21) Western religions and the environment **Read:** Preview (#3), White (#4), Gordis (#6).

Environmental Activism

Tue, May 5

(22) Sustainable agriculture. **Read:** Preview (#68), Jackson (#73).

Thu, May 7

(23) Environmental activism. **Read:** Preview (#94), Foreman (#95); Scarce (#96); Shrader-Frechette (#97).

Tue, May 12 — Thu, May 14

• Research Presentations

<u>Finals Week</u>	<i>Exam</i>
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