

## **Environmental Ethics**

FES 80063/REL 870

Tuesday/Thursday 9-10.15am

380 Edwards St. classroom (near the intersection of Prospect & Edwards)

### Description

This introduction to environmental ethics surveys frameworks of response to environmental problems, and explores the central moral questions raised by those problems. We consider attempts to expand standard ethical models to deal with ecological problems, as well as proposals for new models and narratives aimed to evoke alternative moral imaginations.

Topics include: intrinsic value, anthropocentrism, animal ethics, the role of markets, ecofeminism, wilderness, climate change, place ethics, deep ecology, environmental justice, virtue ethics, ecological restoration, and sustainability. The range of the course offers a pluralist approach to environmental ethics (rather than a single cohesive environmental philosophy). We discuss the challenges of a practical pluralism, as well as the roles for ethics in social change.

No previous experience in ethics or philosophy is required (background traditions will be noted and sketched along the way). The course helps participants recognize contemporary moral strategies in environmental ethics and build conceptual facility for engaging social and political deliberations over a wide range of ecological issues.

### Course requirements:

The design of this course relies on each participant's own inquiry. Your primary requirement therefore is to read carefully and come to discussion with critical questions.

To prepare for class discussion, please post a reading response to the "discussion" page of the course website before each class. These should include at least one quotation from the reading and should not exceed 250 words. Try to identify the most important (or troubling, opaque, compelling) idea for your own reflection. Responses are not individually graded, so long as they continue to represent thoughtful reading.

Responses are due by 10pm the day before class. Your responses are a record of your participation, so you may not post for a class you will not attend. Everyone may miss two responses for any reason (no need to tell me).

Participants also write a final paper of no more than 5000 words, on a topic of your choosing. Submit an abstract by April 6<sup>th</sup>. You may alternatively pursue an independent project that somehow integrates ethical reflection and practical experience, in which case a shorter report, proposal, or essay may be appropriate.

Projects may include community involvement, civic/professional work, personal experience, previous research, or community involvement. Projects must be approved beforehand.

Papers are due on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Grading: 50% participation (including responses) and 50% final paper or project.

Texts available for purchase in the Divinity School bookstore:

*Environmental Ethics* (Light and Rolston, ed.s)

*Sand County Almanac* (Aldo Leopold)

*Rediscovery of North America* (Barry Lopez)

Other texts will be on e-reserve or hyperlinked in the syllabus. (For e-texts, bring laptop, printout, or good notes).

### **Jan 13 introduction**

Muir, Pinchot, & Leopold: environmental legacies?

### **Jan 15 moral standing for non-humans**

Stone "Should Trees Have Standing?" (189-201)

Singer "Not For Humans Only" (EE 55-64)

Birch "Moral Considerability and Universal Consideration" (313-32)

### **Jan 20 non/anthropocentrism**

Callicott "Non-Anthropocentric Value Theory" (48-55)

Murdy "Anthropocentrism" (80-87)

Norton "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism" (EE, 163-74)

### **Jan 22 basic frameworks**

Minteer & Collins "Ecological Ethics: Building a New Toolkit" [pdf]\*

Palmer "introduction" (EE)

### **Jan 27 intrinsic value**

Rolston "Value in Nature" (EE 143-53)

Rolston *Environmental Ethics* (97-104, 112-7, 186-9, 197-208, 230-2)

### **Jan 29 market value**

Kelman "Cost Benefit Analysis" (260-75)

Keohane/Olmstead *Markets and Environment* (11-53)

### **Feb 3 animals**

Singer "Animal Liberation" (135-42)

Regan "Animal Rights" (EE 65-73)

Katz "Is There a Place for Animals?" (EE 85-94)

[see also Dale Jamieson "Right of Animals and Demands of Nature"]

in *Environmental Values*, 2008]

**Feb 5 environmental justice**

Bullard “Environmental Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (19-42)

Weaver “Notes from a Miner’s Canary” (1-28)

Alier *The Environmentalism of the Poor* 1-15

Nickel & Viola “Integrating Environmentalism” (EE 472-7)

**[no class Feb 10, 12 – YDS reading week]**

**Feb 17 ecofeminism**

V. Shiva “Staying Alive” (1-13)

Warren “Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism” (125-46)

D. Taylor “Women of Color, Environmental Justice and Ecofeminism” (38-81)

**Feb 19 deep ecology**

Naess “The Deep Ecological Movement” (EE 262-74))

Fox “Deep Ecology” (EE 252-61)

Plumwood *Environmental Culture* (167-95)

**Feb 24 virtue & biophilia**

Sandler, Cafaro, Van Wensveen *Environmental Virtue Ethics* 1-7, 15-44

Kellert “Biological Basis for Human Values in Nature” (42-66)

W. Berry “A Native Hill” (3-31)

Recommended: O’Neill “The Varieties of Intrinsic Value” (EE 131-42)

**[Feb 26 no class]**

**Mar 3 restoration ecology & built environments**

Jordan *Sunflower Forest* 1-7 10-27

Light [“The Urban Blind Spot in Environmental Ethics”](#)

Hughes *Human-Built World* (153-73)

**Mar 5 pluralism & pragmatism**

Stone “Moral Pluralism and the Course of Environmental Ethics (EE 193-202)

Minteer & Manning “Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics” (EE 319-30)

Schmitz *Ecology and Ecosystem Conservation* (126-38)

**[spring break** (bring Lopez and Leopold books with you for some lovely break reading!)]

**Mar 24 narrative**

Lopez *Rediscovery of North America*

Leopold *A Sand County Almanac*

**Mar 26 religious ethics (and stewardship)**

[White “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis”](#)

Emmerich “Tangier Watermen’s Covenant”

Palmer “Stewardship”

Berry “Spirituality of the Earth”

**Mar 31 ecological spiritualities**

Catholic Bishops [“Columbia River Watershed”](#)

Muir [“A Wind-Storm in the Forests”](#)

Macy [Council of All Beings](#)

Abrams *Spell of the Sensuous*, 3-39

**Apr 2 wilderness**

[Stegner “Wilderness Letter”](#)

Birch “The Incarceration of Wilderness” (packet, 443-70)

Cronon “The Trouble With Wilderness” (69-90)

recommended: Nelson “Amalgamation of Wilderness Arguments” (EE 413-35)

**\*Leopold conference**

**\* [need to do special session on environmental theologies]**

**Apr 7 place ethics**

Berry “People, Land, and Community” (182-94)

Sagoff “Civic Engagement as Environmental Problem Solving” (201-31)

Norton & Hannon “Democracy and Sense of Place” (EE 500-15)

**Apr 9 biodiversity & responsibilities to the future**

Barry “Sustainability and Intergenerational Justice” (EE 487-99)

Rolston *Conserving Natural Value* 34-67

**Apr 14 sustainability**

[Hardin “Tragedy of the Commons”](#)

Solow “Sustainability: An Economist’s Perspective”, 503-13.

Norton *Searching for Sustainability* (168-80)

**Apr 16 climate change**

[Gardiner “Ethics and Global Climate Change”](#)

Northcott TBA

**Apr 21 sustainability and cultural change**

S. M. Taylor *Green Sisters*

Jenkins TBA

**Apr 23 moral strategies**