

Syllabus

I. Instructor, Description, and Requirements

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Office hours: Wed 1-2pm, Fri 11am-12pm (subject to revision)

Class Meetings

MWF 10:10 – 11am, Gardner (GA) 106

Course Description

This course will explore the nature of environmental values as well as some topics in moral philosophy that are related to environmental ethics. The questions we will discuss include: Does nature or the environment have value beyond being a resource for humans to use? What is the moral status of animals, species, and ecosystems? What are the important ethical issues involved in climate change?

There are no prerequisites for this course, but one PHIL course or one ENEC course is recommended before enrolling.

Requirements

Students enrolled in this course are required to attend classes prepared to discuss the readings and the topics. Assigned readings must be completed prior to the class in which they will be discussed.

There are weekly discussion forums through the recitation sections. You are required to participate in the forums, and your forum contributions will be evaluated and factored into the participation component of the final grade.

Other graded assignments and their weight in determining the final grade are as follows:

- Attendance 5%
- Participation 15%
- Midterm Exam 10%
- Two 4-6 page papers [25% each] 50%
- Final exam 20%

II. Readings and Class Schedule

Readings

One book is required for this course:

David Schmidtz and Dan C. Shaha, eds. *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works*. Third Edition: 2019. Oxford University Press. (Readings from this text are labelled “EE” in the reading schedule below.)

Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*. 2006. Harvard University Press.

All other readings are available on Sakai.

Readings and Class Schedule

WEEK 1: Introduction

Wed. Aug 22: Syllabus, Introduction to Course

Fri. Aug 24: Icebreakers, Virtues of Conversation

WEEK 2: Conservationism, Preservationism, and Anthropocentrism

Mon. Aug 27: D. Pitcher and J. Welchman, “Can an Environmental Paradise be Regained?”
(EE, pp. 221 - 228)

Gifford Pinchot, “Principles of Conservation” (EE, pp. 28-30)

John Muir, “The Hetch Hetchy Valley” (EE, pp. 30 - 32)

Wed. Aug 29: Selections from *Genesis*, Aristotle, Locke, Darwin, and Muir (on Sakai)

Fri. Aug 31: Discussion

WEEK 3: Anthropocentrism and Eco-Economics

Mon. Sep 3: NO CLASS – Labor Day

Wed. Sep 5: A. Myrick Freeman III, “The Ethical Basis of the Economic View...” (on Sakai)

Fri. Sep 7: Douglas McCauley, “Selling out on Nature” (on Sakai)

WEEK 4: What we Owe to Fellow Human Beings

Mon. Sep 10: Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (EE, pp. 67 - 74)

Wed. Sep 12: ~~Garrett Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat" (EE, pp. 74 - 81)~~

Fri. Sep 14: **FIRST EXAM CLASS CANCELLED – HURRICANE FLORENCE**

WEEK 5: Exam and Review

Mon. Sep 17: **CLASS CANCELLED – HURRICANE FLORENCE**

Wed. Sep 19: Exam Review

Fri. Sep 21: **FIRST EXAM**

WEEK 6: The Ethics of Eating Animals

Mon. Sep 24: David Foster Wallace, "Consider the Lobster" (on Sakai)

Wed. Sep 26: Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal" (EE, pp. pp. 118 - 128)

Fri. Sep 28: Discussion

WEEK 7: The Ethics of Eating Animals, cont.

Mon. Oct 1: Bonnie Steinbock, "Speciesism and the Idea of Equality" (EE, pp. 135 - 141)

Wed. Oct 3: Cora Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People" (EE, pp. 450 - 457)

Fri. Oct 5: Discussion, First Paper Prompt

WEEK 8: Respect for Nature and Biocentrism

Mon. Oct 8: Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" (EE, pp. 33 - 38)

Wed. Oct 10: Kenneth Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable" (on Sakai)

Fri. Oct 12: NO CLASS – University Day

WEEK 9: Natural Value as Aesthetic Value

Mon. Oct 15: Elliot Sober, “Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism” (EE, pp. 469 - 481)

Wed. Oct 17: Allen Carlson, “Appreciation and the Natural Environment” (on Sakai)

Fri. Oct 19: NO CLASS – Fall Weekend

FIRST PAPER DUE

WEEK 10: Nature and Human Virtue

Mon. Oct 22: Thomas E. Hill, Jr. “Ideals of Human Excellence...” (EE, pp. 91 - 101)
 Thomas E. Hill, Jr. “Finding Value in Nature” (EE, pp. 108 - 113)

Wed. Oct 24: Val Plumwood, “Being Prey” (EE, p. 241)

Fri. Oct 26: Discussion

WEEK 11: Feminism and Ecofeminism

Mon. Oct 29: Daniel Silvermint, “Three Models of Oppression” (EE, pp. 335 - 337)
 K. Hessler and E. Willot, “Feminism and Ecofeminism” (EE, pp. 344 - 346)

Wed. Oct 31: Karen Warren, “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism” (EE, pp. 346 - 359)

Fri. Nov 2: Discussion

WEEK 12: Climate Change: The Big Picture

Mon. Nov 5: Summary of IPCC Report for Policymakers (on Sakai)
 Dale Jamieson, “Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming” (EE, pp. 542 - 551)

Wed. Nov 7: Philip Kitcher, “The Climate Challenge” (EE, pp. 551 - 556)

Fri. Nov 9: Discussion

WEEK 13: Climate Change: Personal Responsibility

Mon. Nov 12: Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, “It’s not my Fault...” (on Sakai)

Wed. Nov 14: Kate Rawles, “The Missing Shade of Green” (EE, pp. 626 - 636)

Fri. Nov 16: Guest Speaker! Dan Shahar, “Treading Lightly on the Climate...”
(EE, pp. 531 - 542)

WEEK 14: Climate Change: Personal Responsibility, cont.

Mon. Nov 19: Discussion of Final Paper Assignment

Wed. Nov 21: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Recess

Fri. Nov 23: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Recess

WEEK 15: Hope in the face of change

Mon. Nov 26: *Radical Hope*, Part I

Wed. Nov 28: *Radical Hope*, Part II

Fri. Nov 30: *Radical Hope*, Part III

WEEK 16: Final Thoughts and Review

Mon. Dec 3: Review for Final Exam

SECOND PAPER DUE

Wed. Dec 5: Final Thoughts

FINAL EXAM: Friday, Dec 14th at 8am

III. Policies and Additional Information

- **Course Goals:** This course has two goals. The first is to introduce students to concepts, articles, and books important to understanding environmental philosophy and ethics. The second is to help develop critical reading, thinking and writing skills through analyzing, criticizing, and developing argument, and learning to present them clearly.
- **Target Audience:** This course is open to all undergraduates, particularly those who have an interest in ethics, the environment, or both. There are no prerequisites, but I strongly recommend that you complete at least one PHIL course or one ENEC course before enrolling in this course.
- **Lectures, discussions, and readings:** The lectures and discussions may include material not included in the readings. The lectures and discussions also may not cover all the material in the readings. Students are responsible for understanding the material in the readings and understanding the material presented in class.

- **Sakai:** Any changes in readings, assignments, due dates, and other announcements will be posted on Sakai. Students are expected to check the Sakai site for this class regularly. I will email you only with urgent announcements, such as last minute cancellation of a class.

- **Honor System:**

For more than one hundred years, the University of North Carolina has operated a system of self-discipline shaped around the Honor Code. It is the responsibility of every student at the University to obey and support the enforcement of the Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing. It is the further responsibility of every student to conduct oneself so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.

We will strictly abide by and enforce the honor code. Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the details of the honor system, which are explained at:

<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/>. (Please pay special attention to “The Instrument,” at:

<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf>, especially Section II, subsections A and B.)

You are encouraged to study and discuss the material in this course with other students. You are also encouraged to discuss your ideas for papers with other students and your instructor. If you present an idea in a paper that is not your own, you must give a proper citation.

If you have questions about any aspect of the Honor Code or what count as honor code offenses, please discuss them with your instructor.

- **Papers and Exams:** In order to pass this course, all graded work must be handed in. Late papers will be penalized unless the student receives prior permission to hand in a paper after the due date. Quizzes and exams must be taken at the assigned dates and times unless a student has a university-recognized excuse and has made prior arrangements to take a quiz or exam at some other time.
- **Papers written for this course:**
Any paper written for another course cannot be used in this course.
You must keep electronic copies of your papers.
- **Forums:** We will use the “Forum” feature in Sakai. You are required to participate in forums each week, and your contribution will count as part of your participation grade. Here are some guidelines for Forum contributions:
 - Forum entries should be well thought out and well written comments, roughly 100-200 words in length. They may be original entries or comments on other original entries.
 - Original entries should either (a) address the question of the week, or (b) ask and answer a different question or make a different argument or comment directly related to the week’s topics.

- At least one-third of your entries should be original; no more than two-thirds should be comments on other posts.
- Entries are due before class on Wednesday of each week. But I encourage you to post as early as possible.
- I encourage debate, criticism, and controversy, but your entries and comments should always be respectful.

The instructors will keep track of your Forum contributions and will take note of especially good ones.

- **Participation grade:** The participation grade will take into consideration: class attendance, the completion of all non-graded assignments (such as Forum posts), the quality of your contribution to discussions, your class presentations, and your non-graded written assignments, and any discussions with your instructor outside of class (for instance, via email or during office hours). **No electronic devices are allowed to be used during class sessions, unless approved by the instructor.**

- **Converting number grades to letter grades:**

You will receive letter grades on papers and number grades to quizzes and exams. To compute your final grade, we convert letter grades to numbers, and then add the weighted numbers to get a final number. This final number is then converted to a letter grade. Here is the scale we use for converting letter grades to numbers:

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| ○ A+ = 100 | C+ = 78 |
| A = 96 | C = 76 |
| A- = 92 | C- = 72 |
| A-/B+ = 90 | C-/D+ = 70 |
| B+ = 88 | D+ = 68 |
| B = 86 | D = 66 |
| B- = 82 | D- = 62 |
| B-/C+ = 80 | F = 56 |

The final number is converted to a letter grade as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| ○ 99-100 = A+ | 78-79.99 = C+ |
| 94-98.99 = A | 74-77.99 = C |
| 90-93.99 = A- | 70-73.99 = C- |
| 88-89.99 = B+ | 67-69.99 = D+ |
| 84-87.99 = B | 64-67.99 = D |
| 80-83.99 = B- | 60-63.99 = D- |

- **Syllabus changes:** The instructor may make changes to the syllabus during the term, including changes in the assigned readings and due dates for exams (excluding the final exam) and papers. These changes will be announced as early as possible.