

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS SEMINAR 2017

COURSE GOALS:

This seminar meets on Tuesdays during the spring 2018 semester from 3:35-5:15. My phone extension is 1293. My office is Debevoise 316.

The seminar will stimulate critical thinking about the moral implications of environmental issues for the purpose of assisting students to analyze and resolve issues relevant to public policy. Participants should learn to identify and evaluate the ethical assumptions of environmental laws and policies. The foundations of environmental ethics will be covered in the first part of the course so that students will be exposed to various ethical approaches to environmental analysis. In the second part, we will examine in depth some particular policy issues in applied environmental ethics. An overall aim of this seminar is to equip students to become more sensitive, thoughtful, and collaborative as environmental professionals, and in making personal choices about the environment. In this spirit, the third part of the course allows students to present original work-in-progress on a topic of personal interest, and to receive feedback from their peers. I encourage students to collaborate in their oral presentations, which may be presented in pairs or teams of three. Student papers are individual products, however.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students may elect to take this seminar for two or three credits. (You must let me know by the end of the Add-Drop period if you elect the three-credit option.) All enrolled students will write a paper and present your work in progress on the paper to the class. I will ask every student to submit a **written Paper Proposal on Tuesday Jan. 30, 2018** in class. (I will post guidelines for Proposals on TWEN, but the purpose is to engage you in early thought and preliminary research on your topics.)

TWO CREDITS (*default registration, no action needed*): All two-credit students must write a paper (approximately 17- 20 pages) and orally present their work-in-progress when scheduled (oral presentation required of all students). Students taking the course for two credits do not have to submit drafts but may do so for feedback. (If you wish to submit a draft, please establish a due date with the teacher.)

THREE CREDITS (*registration change necessary by end of add-drop period*): Students taking the course for three credits will write a more substantial paper in two drafts (approximately 25 pages), and the ambitiousness of the topic should vary accordingly. Three credit students will also meet with me after I comment on the first draft about the paper. Like all students, those enrolled for three credits will also present their work in progress orally as scheduled. Three credit students will also have greater responsibilities to lead class discussions on readings, and to lead, organize, and report on some group

assignments outside of class. These additional 3 credit duties will be assigned as we proceed. All three credit and AWR students must submit a **first draft by Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2018 in class. Please submit E-copies in Word, and I will comment using Track Changes. A first draft is not a “rough” draft. It involves careful organization, argumentation, and citation to sources.** All Final papers (except AWR) are due in the last class, Tuesday, April 17, 2018.

AWR: Students (J.D.) may complete their Advanced Writing Requirement (AWR) through this seminar and should expect to prepare a paper of about 30 pages in *three drafts*, with conferences following. Specific AWR projects require teacher approval. Students should plan a topic early and see me about the AWR. **AWR students must submit two drafts in addition to a final paper, 3 versions total. The AWR first draft is due on Feb. 27, 2018 in class and E-Copy as stated above. The AWR (only) Second Draft is due on Tues., March 20, 2018, in class and Word E-Copy. AWR final papers are due on Thurs. April 26, 2018 (first day of exam period) and should be submitted by 3:00 p.m. by E-Copy in Word.** AWR students should consider enrolling for 3 credits, because you will be meeting many of the additional requirements anyway, but you are not required to enroll for an extra credit. Draft papers will not be graded and are designed to provide constructive feedback on ideas and writing. Many students report that my feedback helps them with their writing generally.

Your active participation in class is essential to achieving seminar goals. Attendance is very important in a class that meets once a week. Individual students or small groups sometimes will be assigned primary responsibility for leading the discussion of some readings. *Students taking the seminar for three credits will have greater responsibility for such class assignments.* Most readings are challenging and require careful thought. Some terminology may be unfamiliar, but we will grapple with the ideas on a common sense level. Students need not have a prior background in philosophy because our purpose is to discuss how the ideas affect thinking about environmental issues, not to become conversant with the history and technical aspects of environmental philosophy. It is likely that I will modify reading assignments as we go, because of new material and our progress in class. In the beginning of each class I will note the next assignment on the board and mention any changes. Often students will receive a “Problem for Discussion” during or before class that will be the basis of class discussion. **I use TWEN regularly for communications and postings, so please sign up.**

GRADING: Students will receive a semester grade based on the following: general course participation (25%), oral presentation of the student’s seminar paper (25%), and the seminar paper (50%). All written and oral work will be evaluated for quality of reasoning, clarity, organization, understanding and application of readings, and originality. I hope that you will choose a project topic that has personal meaning to your life and/or career aspirations. Many of you have had interesting experiences doing environmental work, and I encourage you to share those with the class. I hope that the seminar helps you to sharpen your thinking about environmental issues, and I look forward to our lively discussions ahead!

IMPORTANT PAPER DUE DATES SUMMARY

- **All Students: Paper Proposals Due, Tues. Jan. 30, 2018, in class (information and posting on TWEN to follow)**
- **3 Credit and AWR Students: First Drafts Due Tues. Feb. 27, 2018, in class and E-Copy, Word**
- **AWR only: Second Drafts Due Tues. March 20, 2018**
- **All Students except AWR: Final Papers due in last class of seminar: Tues. April 17, 2018**
- **AWR only: Final Papers Due: Thurs. April 26, 2018, first day of examination period, (by 3:00 p.m.)**

ALL PAPERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY ATTACHMENT TO MY EMAIL IN WORD (NOT PDF).

REQUIRED BOOKS AND SOURCES

Louis P. Pojman, Paul Pojman, & Katie McShane, Eds., ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: READINGS IN THEORY AND APPLICATION 7th Ed. (Cengage Learning, 2017).

Steven C. Rockefeller and John C. Elder, SPIRIT AND NATURE: WHY THE ENVIRONMENT IS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE (Beacon Press, Boston, Massachusetts, 1992) (used copies available).

Reed Elizabeth Loder, ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS SEMINAR, Course Materials, Spring 2018

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS SYLLABUS, Spring 2018

NOTE: Readings may carry over to the next class. Modifications are possible and will be posted on the board or TWEN for the next class. Each Topic will roughly consume a class period, but some topics will carry over into a following class because of their larger scope. If this happens, you should review any material from the last assignment yet to be covered.

PART I OF SEMINAR: FOUNDATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Topic One:

Introduction to Course; Introduction to Ethics and Environmental Ethics:

Pojman, Pojman & McShane:

Introduction, pp. 1-11

TWEN Materials:

Course Description, Syllabus, and Possible Paper Topics

NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS

Loder Course Materials:

Loren Eiseley, p. 3

Robert Elliot, pp. 4-10

Rachel Carson, 207-208

Topic Two:

Concepts of Nature: From Scientific Fact to Social Construction (discussion may extend into next class):

Students bring to class item representing idea of “nature, instructions to follow.

Pojman, Pojman & McShane: p. 129

J.S. Mill, pp. 147-154

Loder Materials:

Joshua Halberstam, pp. 11

Bill McKibben, pp. 12-16

William Cronon, pp. 17-25

Topic Three:

INSTRUMENTAL, INTRINSIC VALUE, AND ECOLOGICAL ETHICS (next three classes):

Introduction to Teleology and Deontology:

Loder Materials:
William Frankena, pp. 30-34
Mark Sagoff, pp. 180-191

Instrumental Value Perspective: Teleological Reasoning:

TWEN: J.S. Mill, "Utilitarianism"
Pojman, Pojman & McShane:
Peter Singer, pp. 96-105

Background Information on Species Reintroduction Information:

Note: As we address the differing approaches to environmental ethical reasoning over this and the next two classes, we will use the context of species restoration as a Problem for Discussion. This will allow us to examine the differing practical implications of various perspectives environmental law and policy. Specifically, we may consider reintroductions of wolves, bighorn sheep, and/or lynx.

TWEN:
Fish & Wildlife Service
Bill McKibben (*Human Restoration*)
Loder Materials:
Farley Mowat, pp. 36-39

Topic Four:

Deontology and Intrinsic Value of Individuals, and Virtue Ethics (Application to Species Restoration):

Deontological Perspective: Intrinsic Value of Individuals:

Pojman, Pojman & McShane:
Paul Taylor, pp. 177-193
Tom Regan, pp. 106-114
Albert Schweitzer, pp. 168-176
TWEN:
Kant posting

Virtue Ethics:

Pojman, Pojman & McShane:
Thomas Hill, pp. 26-36
TWEN:
Camilla Fox & Marc Bekoff (posting on restoring species)

Topic Five:

Ecological Ethics; Environmental Holism (Application to Ecological Law Movement):

- Pojman, Pojman & McShane:
 - Holmes Rolston, III, pp. 130-143
 - Aldo Leopold (*Land Ethic*), pp. 222-231
- Loder Materials:
 - Leopold (*Thinking Like a Mountain*), pp. 40-41

Topic Six:

Deep Ecology and Social Ecology (Ecological Ethics: Species and Ecosystems):

- Pojman, Pojman & McShane: pp. 216-218
 - Arne Naess, pp. 218-231
- Loder Materials:
 - Arne Naess, pp. 192-197
- TWEN:
 - Web Link: Joanna Macy (systems theory)
 - Murray Bookchin posting

Topic Seven:

Ecofeminism: Logic and Culture of Oppression (social ecology; feminism):

- Pojman, Pojman & McShane:
 - Karen Warren, pp. 389-406
- Loder Materials:
 - Carolyn Merchant, pp. 26-29
- Rockefeller & Elder:
 - Sallie McFague, pp. 41-58

Topic Eight:

Spirituality and the Environment:

- TWEN:
 - Genesis
- Loder Materials:
 - Lynn White, pp. 198-206
- Rockefeller & Elder: Intro., pp. 1-14
 - Audrey Shenandoah, 17-23
 - Ismar Schorsch, pp.27-38
 - Hossein Nasr, pp. 87-108
 - Dalai Lama, pp. 113-123

PART II OF SEMINAR: APPLIED ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Topic Nine:

Ethics of Ecosystem Restoration: Elwha Dam Case study

Pojman, Pojman & McShane:

Christopher Stone. Pp. 294-305

Harley Cahen, pp. 276-286

TWEN:

Robert Elliot, "Faking Nature"

John Cairns, "'Ethical Issues in Ecological Restoration"

TWEN:

ELWHA Restoration link to video

Topic Ten:

Climate Change, Future Generations, Lifestyle Choices, Collective Responsibility:

Pojman, Pojman & McShane: pp. 605-607

Annette Baier, pp. 60-69

Stephen Gardiner, pp. 674-689

Ashley Dawson, pp. 650-666

TWEN:

Steven Vanderheiden

IPCC Report

Topic Eleven: Topic to be Determined

International Environmental Justice: Forest Biodiversity and Developing Countries:

Pojman, Pojman & McShane:

Ramachandra Guha, pp. 307-314

Vandana Shiva, pp. 383-389

Loder Materials:

Alasdair Gunn, pp. 55-73

Eric Katz & Lauren Oechsli, pp. 74-84

Matt Ridley & Bobbi Low, pp. 42-54

OR:

Cultural Justice and Land Use: "Devils Tower" Monument Simulation:

Loder Materials:

pp. 85-175, Group Instructions and Specific Reading TBA

PART III OF SEMINAR: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (Last 4-5 Classes; Reading Assignments from Presenters)

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APPENDIX: LEARNING OUTCOMES SUMMARY

- The student should be able to explain the main conceptual approaches to contemporary environmental ethics.
- The student should be able to identify strengths and flaws in the main conceptual approaches to environmental ethics.
- The student should recognize ethical assumptions and reasoning in legal and policy arguments about environmental matters.
- The student should be able to apply ethical concepts to factual environmental situations.
- The student should be able to discuss possible legal and policy reforms using ethical reasoning about the environment.
- The student should identify ethically relevant factors in environmental case studies.
- The student should be able to identify different courses of action for resolving environmental case studies.
- The student should be able to identify how environmental justice affects human and nonhuman quality of life.
- The student should understand some ethical implications of scientific and economic explanations of environmental issues.
- The student should be able to describe and differentiate views on the value(s) of nonhuman nature.
- The student should be able to imagine and evaluate different systems of environmental policy and law.
- The student should make progress in developing his or her personal and professional environmental ethics.