

PHI 380: Environmental Ethics

UWSP Fall 2023

Sec. 3 MW 2:00-3:15 SCI D224

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Office Hours: MW 10-12, and by appointment



Course Description

This course will explore a variety of possible ethical relationships humans have to the natural world. For example, should we be concerned about the health of the environment out of concern for human well-being or for its own sake? Do we have ethical commitments to species, particular animals, organisms, or ecosystems? The goal of this course is to familiarize students with many of the major approaches to environmental ethics along with exploring a few particularly interesting environmental issues. Students will appreciate and understand the complexity and intricacy of the arguments involved in adopting one approach or position over another.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Explain the differences between holistic and individualistic ethical systems.
- Describe anthropocentric and biocentric approaches to environmentalism.
- Apply ethical theory to a variety of practical environmental problems.

GEP Learning Outcomes - Humanities

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity).
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than one's own.

GEP Learning Outcomes - Environmental Responsibility

- Identify interactions between human society and the natural environment.
- Analyze the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability.
- Evaluate competing claims that inform environmental debates.

Required Texts:

1. Louis Pojman, *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* 7th Edition. (Text Rental)
2. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (for purchase)
3. Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.

Graded assignments will include:

1. Three Exams (20% each – 60% total)
2. Two Papers (10% each – 20% total)
3. Ten Quizzes (20% total)

Quizzes: Quizzes are unannounced (pop) and can be given anytime during class. The questions for the quizzes will be drawn from the readings and lectures. There are (12) quizzes, but only the best (10) will count.

Papers: Papers will be 750-1000 word essays summarizing a reading or responding to a particular question. Paper prompts will be provided. Papers are to be submitted to Canvas and will be checked for “originality” via “Turnitin.com.” Details and suggestions on writing essays, as well as grading criteria, will be distributed in class.

Exams: There will be three exams to be taken in class. Exams will consist of multiple-choice, true/false questions, and short answer.

Final grades will be determined on the following scale:

100-93 A	<87-83B	<77-73C	<67-60 D
<93-90A-	<83-80B-	<73-70C-	<60 F
<90-87B+	<80-77C+	<70-67 D+	

Late Policy: Quizzes cannot be made-up. Papers will be docked 10% off per class late. Exams cannot be made-up without a university approved absence notification (e.g. a note from a health care provider explaining why the student couldn’t be there). Furthermore, if you miss an exam for a legitimate reason you need to contact me immediately.

Academic Integrity Policy: Plagiarism is a serious academic infraction, and it will be enforced in this class. Information can be found in UWSP Chapter 14, available at: <https://www3.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/UWSP14-Final2019.pdf>. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university. All written assignments will be checked by electronic authenticity checkers, which also check for AI generated content. We will discuss what this means in more detail when papers are assigned, but importantly, if you have any questions, please let me know before turning in the assignment.

Attendance: Attendance is not mandatory and will not be recorded (with the exception of the first few classes, which is mandatory). With that said, if you do not attend class on a regular basis, you will likely do poorly in the class.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement: The ADA is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP’s policies [here](#). If you require *classroom and/or exam accommodations*, please register with the **Disability and Assistive Technology Center** and then contact me at the beginning of the course.

Schedule is subject to change, but any changes will be announced in class and through email. Readings in Pojman's *Environmental Ethics* are listed as (Poj); reading in Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* are listed as (Leo); readings on Canvas (CVS).

Date	Reading
Introduction	
W 9/6	Syllabus and Introduction
M 9/11	Rachels: Cultural Relativism (CVS)
W 9/13	Palmer: Contested Frameworks (Poj#1)
Leopold and the Land Ethics (Environmental Holism)	
M 9/18	Film: <i>Fierce Green Fire</i>
W 9/20	Leopold: Wisconsin (Leo) Leopold: The Land Ethic (Leo)
Deep Ecology	
M 9/25	Naess: Ecosophy T: Deep Versus Shallow Ecology (Poj#23)
W 9/27	De Cruz: Why Seek Self-Realization? (CVS)
Biocentrism	
M 10/2	Taylor: Ethics of Respect for Nature (Poj #18)
W 10/4	Varner: Biocentric Individualism (CVS)
M 10/9	EXAM
Animal Ethics	
W 10/11	Singer: A Utilitarian Defense of Animal Liberation (Poj #9)
M 10/16	Rolston: selections from chap 2 (CVS)
W 10/18	Varner: Can Animal Rights Activists be Environmentalists? (CVS)
M 10/23	Marris: <i>Bloodshed for Diversity</i> and <i>The Friendly Toutouwai</i> (CVS)
W 10/25	Wallach et.al.: Summoning Compassion...(CVS)
M 10/30	Jamieson: Against Zoos (Poj: #12)
Wilderness and Nature	
W 11/1	Cronon: The Trouble with Wilderness (CVS)
M 11/6	Donlan: Rewilding North America (CVS) Nogués-Bravo, et. al.: Rewilding is the New Pandora's Box... (CVS)
W 11/8	Nussbaum: A Peopled Wilderness (CVS)
M 11/13	EXAM
Climate Change and Global Concerns	
W 11/15	Oreskes: The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change (Poj #56)
M 11/20	Shue: Global Environment and International Inequality (Poj #3)
W 11/22	Sinnott-Armstrong: It's Not My Fault (CVS)
M 11/27	Hourdaquin: Climate, Collective Action, and Moral Obligations (CVS)
Food Ethics	
W 11/29	Film: Food Inc.
M 12/4	Pollan: Introduction and The Farm (from Omnivore's Dilemma) (CVS) Pollan: The Feedlot (from Omnivore's Dilemma) (CVS)
W 12/6	Laudan: A Plea for Culinary Modernism (CVS)
M 12/11	Wolfe: Sustainable Agriculture... (CVS)
W 12/13	Continued and Review

Final Exam (Section 3): Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2:45-4:45