

PHI 380: Environmental Ethics

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, Spring 2020

Sec. 1 M/T/R 2:00-2:50 SCI A121

Sec. 2 M/T/R 3:00-3:50 SCI A121

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Office: 422 CCC **Office Hours:** T/R 11-12, and by appointment



Aldo Leopold's "shack" from *A Sand County Almanac*

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.

Essential Questions

- Can ecology inform our ethical systems?
- What kind of moral obligations, if any, do we have to the natural world?
- What is the difference between valuing species, animals, organisms, and ecosystems?

Enduring Understandings

You will come to understand that:

- There are objective criteria to evaluate philosophical arguments.
- Opinions differ from beliefs.
- There are a variety of ethical perspectives.

Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

You should be able to:

- Recognize critical thinking as a process of identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and constructing reasoning in deciding what conclusions to draw or actions to take.
- Understand a variety of philosophical concepts, questions, and positions.
- Defend your own philosophical positions against criticisms.
- Read and comprehend challenging philosophical works.
- Appreciate and respect differing points of views.

Required Texts:

1. Louis Pojman, *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* 4th Edition. (Text Rental)
2. Holmes Rolston, III, *Environmental Ethics: Duties and Values in the Natural World*. (Text Rental)
3. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*
4. Additional readings will be posted on our D2L site.

Graded assignments will include:

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

Quizzes: Quizzes will be “pop” and can occur anytime during class. I promise to give at least (12) quizzes or assignments and only the best (10) will count. As a result of this policy, quizzes cannot be made-up for any reason (including sickness, etc.). Please do not ask if there will be a quiz on any particular day.

Short Essays: Short essays will be 750-1000 word essays summarizing a reading or responding to a particular question. Essay prompts will be given in class. Essays are to be turned in both electronically and in class. The electronic versions 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. Exams will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions. Exams will be, to a limited extent, cumulative. Exam dates are listed on the schedule.

Final grades will be determined on the following scale:

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

Late Policy: Quizzes cannot be made-up. Short assignments 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, you need to contact me immediately in order to reschedule the exam as early as possible. If this condition is not met, you may not be able to re-take the exam.

Academic Honesty: If you commit any acts of academic dishonesty (such as plagiarism on written work or cheating on an exam) you will earn a zero for that work (and possibly other disciplinary actions). Please refer to the Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures for more information (<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf#page=11>).

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 do poorly. Furthermore, quizzes and assignments will be administered on a regular basis and schedule changes will be announced in 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, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>.

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. For more information, please visit the Disability Center's office, located at 604 LRC or their webpage at: <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>.

Risk Management:

"In the event of a medical emergency, call 911 or use red emergency phone. Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide emergency responders to victim.

In the event of a tornado warning, proceed to the lowest level interior room without window exposure. See www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures/other/floor-plans for floor plans showing severe weather shelters on campus. Avoid wide-span rooms and buildings.

In the event of a fire alarm, evacuate the building in a calm manner. Notify instructor or emergency command personnel of any missing individuals.

Active Shooter – Run/Escape, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Follow instructions of emergency responders. See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Management Plan at www.uwsp.edu/rmgt for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point.

Schedule: Schedule is subject to change. Readings in Pojman's *Environmental Ethics* are listed as (Poj); readings in Rolston's *Environmental Ethics* are listed as (Rol); reading in Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* are listed as (Leo); readings on Canvas (CVS).

T Jan 21 R Jan 23	Syllabus and Introduction Rachels: A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy (CVS)
M Jan 27 T Jan 28 R Jan 30	Continued Palmer: Contested Frameworks in Environmental Ethics (CVS) Class Cancelled (View the film <i>Fierce Green Fire</i>) http://docuseek2.com/cart/product/791
M Feb 3 T Feb 4 R Feb 6	<u>Leopold's Land Ethic</u> Leopold: Wisconsin (Leo) Leopold: The Land Ethic (Leo) Leopold: Thinking Like a Mountain (Leo)
M Feb 10 T Feb 11 R Feb 13	Norton: The Constancy of Leopold's Land Ethic (CVS) Continued <u>Deep Ecology</u> Naess: Ecosophy T: Deep Versus Shallow Ecology (Poj: #23)
M Feb 17 T Feb 18 R Feb 20	Simaika: Biophilia as a Universal Ethic for Conserving Biodiversity (CVS) Continued and Review EXAM
M Feb 24 T Feb 25 R Feb 27	<u>Animal Ethics</u> Singer: A Utilitarian Defense of Animal Liberation (Poj: #7) Continued Rolston: selections from chap 2 (Rol: 78-93)
M Mar 2 T Mar 3 R Mar 5	Varner: Can Animal Rights Activists be Environmentalists? (CVS) Continued Jamieson: Against Zoos (Poj: #10)
M Mar 9 T Mar 10 R Mar 12	<u>Biocentric Ethics</u> Taylor: Biocentric Egalitarianism (Poj: #15) Continued Rolston: selections from chap 3 (Rol: 97-101, 119-125)
	Spring Break!
M Mar 23 T Mar 24 R Mar 26	<u>Wilderness (and What is Natural?)</u> Cronon: The Trouble with Wilderness (CVS) Marris: Designer Ecosystems (CVS) Marris: Conservation Everywhere (CVS)
M Mar 30 T Mar 31 R Apr 2	<u>Critiques of Environmental Ethics</u> Tierney: Betting on the Planet (CVS) Gould: The Golden Rule (Poj: #31) and Review EXAM

M Apr 6 T Apr 7 R Apr 9	<u>Food Ethics</u> View the film <i>Food Inc.</i> Continued Berry: The Pleasures of Eating (CVS)
M Apr 13 T Apr 14 R Apr 16	Bittman: Rethinking the Meat Guzzler (CVS) Monbiot: We Can't Keep Eating as We Are (CVS) Laudan: A Plea for Culinary Modernism (CVS)
M Apr 20 T Apr 21 R Apr 23	<u>Population and World Hunger</u> Thompson: The Fundamental Problem with Food Ethics (CVS) Continued Rolston: Feeding People versus Saving Nature? (CVS)
M Apr 27 T Apr 28 R Apr 30	<u>Climate Change and Global Concerns</u> Oreskes: The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change (CVS) Continued Shue: Global Environment and International Inequality (CVS)
M May 4 T May 5 R May 7	Guha: Radical American Environmentalism (Poj: 312-319) Continued Review

Final Exam (Section 1): Thursday, May 14, 8-10

Final Exam (Section 2): Monday, May 11, 10:15-12:15