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EVST 327E.01: Environmental Ethics

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Philosophy/Evst 327
Fall 2004
Deborah Slicer/ L.A. 148
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O.H.: tba

Do we have moral obligations to nonhumans—to animals, to plants, to ecosystems? If not, why not? If so, what kinds of obligations to we have and how do we justify the view that nonhumans have moral claims on us? Is there some relation between the exploitation of nonhumans and the exploitation of human “out” groups, of for example women, people of color, and the poor? Are the moral traditions that were developed to guide human moral relations (utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, virtue ethics) also relevant to interspecies relations? If so, to what extent are they relevant? If not, why are they irrelevant and what moral outlooks do we replace them with? And, importantly, how are these somewhat abstract issues related to our current, very concrete environmental crisis? We’ll explore all of these issues through philosophy, literature, and film this term. By the end of the session you should have your own considered views on each of these rather large but terribly important and timely moral questions.

Aug. 31 Introductions
Sept. 2 Fun and Games
7 Moral Philosophy and the Natural World, Frederick A. Kaufman
9-16 The Misfits, film
21 The Old Way, Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (x)
23 All Animals are Equal, Peter Singer
The Case for Animal Rights, Tom Regan
28-30 The Ethics of Respect for Nature, Paul Taylor
(1st news analysis due no later than 9/30)
Oct. 5 group day, no class
7-14 Aldo Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*
19 The Wilderness Idea, film
21 Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism, Bryan Norton
26 Ideals of Human Excellence..., Thomas Hill
Oct. 28- The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism, Karen J. Warren
Nov. 4
Nov. 2 VOTE, no class
9 *The Rediscovery of North America*, Barry Lopez
11 Vets’ Day, no class
16-23 *Ceremony*, Leslie Silko
30-Dec. 7 Student Presentations
Dec. 9 Close

Requirements

3 news analyses using class concepts and theories (max. 1 per week/1st is due no later than 9/30) 30%

Presentation 35% (Guidelines forthcoming)

Final Exam 35%

Texts

The Rediscovery of North American, Barry Lopez

Ceremony, Leslie Silko

Foundations of Environmental Philosophy, ed. Frederik A. Kaufman

A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold

All other articles are on reserve (our e-reserve password is Phil 327). These are indicated on the syllabus by an “(x)”