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EVST 427E.01: Environmental Ethics II

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Philosophy/Evst 427: Environmental Ethics

Fall 2008

Dr. Deborah Slicer

L.A.

O.H.: tba

Are the moral traditions that were developed to guide human relations also relevant to interspecies relations? If so, to what extent are they relevant? If not, is it because the theories are ultimately anthropocentric, as some critics argue? Or are they problematic for other reasons? If our traditions fail to justify the interspecies obligations we have gut feelings about, then what other moral visions can we appeal to? And, importantly, how is environmental philosophy—all this academic theorizing—relevant to our environmental crisis?

To start, we'll talk about what it means for our environmental crisis to be a *moral* crisis. Then we'll read essays by theorists who attempt to extend traditional moral principles to guide our behavior toward nature. We'll also consider criticisms of these attempts. Deep ecologists, ecofeminists, and social ecologists try to articulate radically nontraditional ways of thinking about our moral relations to nature. We focus on that literature during the second half of the term.

The prerequisite for this course is Philosophy 200, Introductory Ethics, or 202, or 300. This prerequisite will be strictly enforced.

Syllabus

8/26 Hello

28 Case studies (x); Fundamentals of Environmental Philosophy (FEP), chpt 1

9/2 FEP, Hill, p. 338

4 "Elephant Crackup?" (x)

9 Misfits, film

11 Misfits, "The Old Way," Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (x)

16-18 discussion of Misfits, Crackup, The Old Way

9/18 1st paper due in class

23 FEP, Norton, p. 326

25 FEP, Singer, p. 150

30 FEP, Regan, p. 156

10/2 "Of Mice and Men," Catherine MacKinnon (x)

7 Guest speaker from Footloose and case study

10/9 No class, 2nd paper due in my mailbox, L.A. 101, by 5 pm

14 FEP, Paul Taylor, p. 201

16 Taylor, (x)

21 Taylor & Case Studies (x)

23 Inconvenient Truth, Al Gore, film; Mr. Green, Kolbert, (x)

28 Discussion of Truth and Green, 3rd paper due in class

30 FEP, Naess, p. 402

11/4 Election Day, No Class, PLEASE VOTE!
11/6 Naess, Case Study, "The Last Bite," (x)
11/11 Vets' Day, No Class
11/13 FEP, Warren, p. 406
11/18 Warren; "The Last Drop," Specter (x); Guest from Women's Voices of the Earth,
WVE (I hope)
11/25- 12/4 *Ceremony*, Silko
12/4 4th paper due in class

Books

Ceremony, Leslie Silko

The Fundamentals of Environmental Philosophy (FEP), edited by Frederick Kaufman
(x) Xeroxed and on reserve in the philosophy department library, L.A. 101

Requirements

4 short papers on assigned topics, 3-5 pages each 75%

Comprehensive final exam 25%

Attendance and participation will be taken into consideration if it's a close call when I calculate final grades.