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PHIL 504.01: Philosophy of Ecology

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Philosophy/Evst 504/Philosophy of Ecology

Professor Deborah Slicer

L.A. 148/243-2527/ds7p@selway.umn.edu (I only enter cyberspace twice a week, so I may not get back to you right away.)

O.H.: tba

Several recent environmental philosophers have insisted that because our traditional moral frameworks are inherently anthropocentric and can never be genuinely respectful of nature, the only way we can avert environmental disaster is to slowly, thoroughly, holistically reimagine what it is to be "human," what we mean when we talk about "nature," and the kind of relationship(s) we want to have with nature. This is doing "ontology," and ontology must precede or at least must go hand in glove with ethics. O.K., sounds real fine. But how does the imagination begin to reconstruct an entire worldview? Does analytic argument have a role in this reconstruction or is analytic reason part of the problem? Is this a job for literary prose? If so, why? What devices does literary prose have at its disposal that are not available to analytic philosophy? How do these devices work their magic? And, importantly, how does all this relate to activism? For the most part, we will read, deliberately and lovingly, three works of environmental imagination that represent three different genres--fiction (*Ceremony*), creative nonfiction (*Walden*), and prose poetry (*Woman and Nature*)--to see what insights we can glean from these texts. We will read some critical theory in order to better frame our questions. But mostly I want to linger over these subtle and rich works of environmental imagination, to tease out and appreciate their content as well as the craft that made possible the communication of the content.

9/3 Hello, business, brief intro.

9/5 Buell, Introduction
Warren, (Handout)

9/10 Buell, chpts. 1-3

9/12 Oliver, preferably all, required p. 1-34, 52-57, 60-108. Please define terms on your glossary (x) as you read Oliver.

Poems, (Handouts) Be prepared to discuss these in the minutest detail.

9/17 More poems

9/19 Buell, chpt. 4

Martin Bickman (x)

- 9/24 Economy, Thoreau
Buell, chpt. 5
- 9/26 Economy
- 10/1 Where I Lived..., Reading, Sounds
Buell, chpt. 8
- 10/3 Solitude
- 10/8 Visitors, The Bean Field
- 10/10 The Ponds
Buell, chpt. 6
- 10/15 ~~Baker Farm, Higher Laws, Brute Neighbors~~
- 10/17 Baker Farm, Higher Laws, Brute Neighbors
- 10/22 Housewarming, ~~Former Inhabitants~~, Winter Animals *Sen*
Buell, chpt. 7
- 10/24 The Pond in Winter, Spring
- 10/29 Conclusion
- 10/31 **mid-term paper due, bring short xeroxed summary of your topic for all**
- 11/7 Flawed Crystals, Martha Nussbaum (x)
Finely Aware and Richly Responsible, Nussbaum (x)
- 11/12 Landscape, History, and Pueblo Imagination, Leslie Silko (x)
Buell, chpt. 9
complete first reading of *Ceremony* at this time. Begin rereading.
- 11/14-11/26 *Ceremony*
- 12/3-12/12 *Woman and Nature*, Susan Griffin
- 12/20 **finalsday, 10:10-12:10, final papers due. We may want to reschedule this for another day during finals week.**

Texts

The Environmental Imagination, Lawrence Buell

Walden, Thoreau

Ceremony, Leslie Silko

Woman and Nature, Susan Griffin

(x)--articles on e-reserve and hard copies at Mansfield desk. Secret password: Phil 504.

Requirements

Mid-term paper (6-8 pages)--40%

Final paper (15-20 pages)--50% You may revise and expand the first paper.

Presentation--10%