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PHIL 427.01: Ethics and Environment II

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Philosophy/Evst 427

Sample syllabus

Professor Deborah Slicer

L.A. 148/ 243-2527/ds7p@selway.umt.edu (I only check cyberspace twice a week.)

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 pin-headish theorizing--relevant to our environmental crisis?

We begin by discussing some of the facts--the state of our water, air, soils, animals, wild places, and the poor who are most directly impacted by environmental pollution. Then we'll talk about what it means for our environmental crisis to be a *moral* crisis. By week two we'll be reading 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 semester. Leslie Silko's novel *Ceremony* is a narrative account of a comprehensive environmental ethic. We'll close the reading portion of the semester with that novel and talk about the benefits of narrative, versus analytic, accounts of ethics. The last three weeks or so of class feature group presentations of local environmental issues. Guidelines are forthcoming. Presentations include the groups' efforts to justify policy recommendations using class materials. This is when we test the theories against the "real world."

Syllabus

9/3 Hello, Business, Introductory remarks

9/5 Lion of the Ridge, Miriam Woodruff (x)

Missoulian article (x)

The Case that the World has Reached Limits, Robert Goodland (x)

9/10 Moral Argument and Ethical Theory (x) (2 days)

9/12 Animal Liberation, Peter Singer (x)

9/17 The Case for Animal Rights, Tom Regan (x) (case studies)

- 9/19 **paper 1 due in class, group work**
 9/24- Respect for Nature, Paul Taylor (x)
 10/8 (case studies)
 10/10 **paper 2 due in class, group work**
 10/15 *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold
 The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethics, J. Baird Callicott (x)
 10/17 film
 10/22 Leopold and Callicott continued
 The Old Ways, Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (x)
 10/24 Self-Realization, Arne Naess (x) (case studies)
 10/29- The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism, Karen J. Warren (x)
 11/7 Environmental Racism, Karl Grossman (x) (case studies)
 11/12- *Ceremony*, Leslie Silko
 11/26 Landscape, History, and Pueblo Imagination, Silko (x) (read 11/12)
 12/3 **paper 3 due in class, presentations begin**
 12/18 **3:20-5:20, finals day, presentation paper due in class (no final exam)**

Texts:

A Respect for Nature, Paul Taylor

Ceremony, Leslie Silko

(x)--these articles are on e-reserve. Hard copies on reserve at the Mansfield library desk.

Requirements:

Paper 1--15 %

Paper 2--25%

Paper 3--25% (revise paper 1 or 2 and integrate new materials)

Presentation, activist concept and follow-through--20%

Presentation paper--12 %

Attendance and participation--3% Note: Attendance is mandatory as this is largely a discussion class. Three unexcused absences result in the loss of 1/2 letter grade.