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FOR 489E.01: Ethics and the Management of Public Lands

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The University of Montana

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Forestry 489 -- Ethics and the Management of Public Lands

Introduction

Ethics relates to separation of *good* from *bad*, encoded into social rules of conduct according to certain principles. There are competing theories of ethics; thus, there is no single, "right" theory. Ethics are a product of culture, and, like culture, they change over time.

The goal of this course is to introduce the student to many of the theories of ethics that are relevant to the management of public lands in the U.S. Since many of the values found on public lands have the nature of "common properties" (air, water, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, biological diversity, gene pools, and others) the course focuses on "environmental ethics." However, these are developed within the Western historical context which first privileges human rights, property rights and utilitarianism.

It is not the intent of this course to teach what is good and what is bad land management practice. Rather, the emphasis is on understanding. By understanding the scope of ethics and possible ethical positions applicable to public land management, both the public citizen and the land manager benefit. In particular, the land manager is better able to understand the various public opinions that he or she hears expressed, and is thereby enabled to communicate with the public more effectively.

Reading

The required text is:

Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce, *The Environmental Ethics & Policy Book* 2nd. ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1998). A recommended companion text: Peter S. Wenz, *Environmental Ethics Today* (New York: Oxford Press, 2001). Additional required readings on class website as will be announced.

Grading

University requirements for a W course are that at least 50% of the grade be based on written work that is graded for writing as well as content.

Paper #1	25
Mid-term test	25
Paper #2	25
Paper #3 (in-class blue book)	25
	<u>100 %</u>

Optional final exam:

1-hour test [50% of final exam]

blue-book paper [50%]

Final exam replaces lowest previous score

Class Meets

Lectures Wed & Fri 10:10 til 11:00 in For 206

Discussion groups Group A: Mon 10:10 til 11:00 in (tba)

Group B: Mon 10:10 til 11:00 in **FOR 206**

Attendance at discussion groups and lectures is required,

Roll may be called at lectures and discussions whenever attendance is below 80%

Office Hours

TA: Peggy Shunick Office: tba
Office hours: to be announced
Tel: tba e-mail: arl3342@blackfoot.net

Instructor: Alan McQuillan Office: F 203, e-mail amcq@forestry.umn.edu
Office hours: M (noon – 1 pm), W (1:00 pm - 2:), F (11:00 – noon)

Writing Assignments

General:

Because Forestry 489 is a designated “Writing Course,” we will grade your papers according to the *quality of your writing* as well as the *quality of your argument*. Each will comprise fifty percent of the grade for each of your three papers. All papers must be typed or word-processed; no hand-written papers will be accepted. Each paper must be your own, original product. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated!** If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive a zero on that paper. Repeated offenses will earn you an F in the class. Quoting passages from published material is perfectly acceptable (even desirable) if you cite the source and put the passage in quotation marks.

Pay attention to the following:

1. The clarity, consistency, and logical rigor of your argument: Your conclusions should follow from your basic premises (hidden or stated), and your examples and evidence should clearly support your argument.
2. The correct use of the course materials (readings, lectures, discussions): You should correctly use specialized terms, and if you associate a term with an author, keep your use consistent with the author's. Likewise, if you cite an author's argument, be accurate, thorough, and consistent with him or her.
3. A clear statement of purpose: You should offer a clear thesis statement. A good thesis statement summarizes your entire argument, preferably in one sentence (especially for a brief argument), and the reader can clearly distinguish it from the rest of the paper. A “forecasting statement” is helpful too; a forecasting statement briefly tells the reader how the author will support the thesis.
4. Coherent organization: Each part (introduction, body, and conclusion) of a good paper will have a clear function and its relationship to other parts will be obvious; the relationship between paragraphs will be clear—for instance the reader will understand why one paragraph follows or precedes another and how it links to the thesis. Transition sentences and topic sentences are important devices for linking parts of a paper. A transition sentence announces the relationship between a preceding and following paragraph, and a topic sentence summarizes the following paragraph. You can combine the two functions into one sentence.

5. Correct writing “mechanics”: A good sentence adheres to several standards: (a) correct grammar—following formal rules of structure within a sentence (for instance, case, verb form and tense, voice, mood, subject-verb agreement, syntax—the arrangement of words, etc.); (b) correct diction (appropriate use of words); (c) correct spelling (There is no excuse for wrong spelling. Use the spell-checker on your computer.); and (d) correct punctuation.

Several **writing handbooks** are available, including *The St. Martin’s Handbook*, Andre Lunsford and Robert Connors, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989. Lunsford and Connors (the *Handbook*) list “the twenty most common errors” (according to their research.

IMPORTANT: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the scheduled day. The latest deadline for acceptance of papers will be provided along with each assignment. Just like arriving late for your airplane flight -- **papers beyond the final deadline will not be accepted. Period.** We have tried other rules, but they just don’t work. Sorry. Other details to be handed out, or see web page.

For 489 Fall 2001 -- Schedule of Classes

9/3	Labor Day	
9/5	Introduction: what is ethics?	
	History review: Greeks to Enlightenment to present	[handouts]
9/7	History review continued	
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9/10	Property rights: Emergence of private property since feudal age; Theory of property, natural rights and <i>John Locke</i> ; libertarianism as an ethical theory	Text CH 46
9/12	Private property in America: Locke, Jefferson, and the American Indians; Hardin’s tragedy of the commons,	Text CHs 44-45
9/14	Nature of rights: positive and negative freedoms; libertarianism vs. planning,	Text CH 48
.....		
9/17	Discussion groups: Property rights and forests,	Text CHs 80-81
9/19	Free markets: Laissez-faireism as an ethical theory: <i>Adam Smith</i> ,	Text CHs 34-35
9/21	Romanticism vs. Utilitarianism; Muir and Pinchot film	
.....		
9/24	Discussion groups: Free markets,	Text CH 36
9/26	Free markets: Market failure and the environment	First paper due
9/28	Free markets: Theory of free trade: <i>David Ricardo</i> ,	Text: see web page
	Last deadline for first paper!	
.....		
10/1	Discussion groups: Ethics, trade, and economic development:	Text 32
10/3	Ethics beyond the individual: Utilitarianism, <i>Jeremy Bentham</i> ,	Text: See web page
10/5	Utilitarianism, cost-benefit analysis,	Text CH 37
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- 10/8 Discussion groups: Rights vs. Efficiency, **Text CH 38-39**
- 10/10 Moral argument: the nature of ethical theory, *David Hume*, **Text CH 1**
- 10/12 Rights, duties, and responsibilities, *Immanuel Kant*, **Text CH 2, and see web page**
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- 10/15 Discussion groups: Teleology vs. Deontology, **Text CH 2**
- 10/17 Review of traditional (Enlightenment) theories of ethics
- 10/19 **Mid-term test**
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- 10/22 Discussion groups: The human or the biotic community? **Text CHs 20s-21**
- 10/24 Opposing views of Leopold: *Charles Darwin*, the “Is/Ought dichotomy,” “The Naturalistic Fallacy,” and Baird Callicott, **Text CH 22**
- 10/26 Opposing views of Leopold: *Bryan Norton v. Baird Callicott*, **Text CH 23, and see web page**
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- 10/29 Discussion groups: Ethics, Science, and Uncertainty, **Text CH 7, , and see web page**
- 10/31 Reconciling science and ethics: Complexity, bio-diversity, and energy, **Text: see web page**
- 11/2 Complexity, bio-diversity, and energy continued, **Text Leopold, , and see web page**
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- 11/5 Discussion groups: Discussion groups: Deep Ecology, **Text CHs 27-28**
- 11/7 Alternatives to Leopold: Deep Ecology, **Text CHs 25-2**
- 11/9 Deep Ecology continued,
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- 11/12 Holiday:
- 11/14 Alternatives to Leopold: Animal Rights, **Text CHs 10-11, second paper due**
- 11/16 Animal Rights continued, **Text: see web page. Last deadline for second paper!**
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- 11/19 Discussion groups: Animal Rights **Text CHs 12-13**
- 11/21 Holiday
- 11/23 Holiday
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- 11/26 Discussion groups: Biological diversity and does it matter? **Text CHs 66-67**
- 11/28 Alternatives to Leopold: Ecofeminism, **Text CHs 29-30**
- 11/30 Ecofeminism continued, **Text CHs 31-32**
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- 12/3 Discussion groups: Ecofeminism, **Text CH 33**
- 12/5 Alternatives to Leopold: Romantic transcendentalism: John Muir, **Text: see web page**
- 12/7 Third Paper: In-class blue book paper
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- 12/10 Discussion groups: Activism, **Text CH 92, and Sustainability, Text CH 49, 54, 78**
- 12/12 Ethics and Science: Language and Objectivity, **Text CH 42**
- 12/14 Conclusion: What does honesty have to do with ethics?
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- 12/19 Final exam at 8:00 am