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PHL 112E.80: Introduction to Ethics & Environment

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INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS & THE ENVIRONMENT

PHL 112E-80
Fall 2018
T, TH 9:30 – 10:50 a.m.
DHC 120
CRN: 73533

Dr. Mark Hanson
DHC 004
Office Hours: T, TH 11:00 – 12:00; W 10:00 – 11:00
and by appt.
e-mail: mark.hanson@umontana.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is an introduction to ethics, focusing on issues related to the environment. We will learn about a variety of ethical traditions and terms from the discipline of ethics and apply them to a variety of contemporary environmental issues. We will also become familiar with historical trends in Western thinking that have led to issues that we face today. Issues considered include how we approach environmental ethics, nature and our relationship to it; the moral status of plants, animals, and ecosystems; wilderness preservation and public lands; climate change, and individual and collective responsibilities to the natural world. Through discussions and written responses to essays, students will be encouraged to engage with the texts and with each other to develop their own perspectives on the central issues of the course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students should be familiar with some of the major approaches to environmental ethics.
2. Students should be familiar with some of the major issues in the field of environmental ethics, including their philosophical and ethical dimensions.
3. Students should be able to look at an environmental or conservation issue and see clearly its ethical dimensions.
4. Students should gain skills in reading difficult texts, expressing their views clearly, and arguing complicated points with their peers.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works*, edited by David Schmidtz and Dan C. Shahr, 3rd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).
- Readings on Moodle

ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASSES

<u>Class</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Topic/Author</u>	<u>Assigned Reading</u>
I. Introduction to Ethics			
8/28	Tu	Introduction to Course-Ethics	None
8/30	Th	Introduction to Ethics	EE: Introduction (pp. 2-10)
II. How We Got Here			
9/4	Tu	Western Origins	Genesis 1-3 (Moodle); “Old World Roots of Opinion (Nash, EE: 11-17))
9/6	Th	Historical Trends	“Principles of Conservation” (Pinchot, EE: 28-30); “The Hetch Hetchy Valley” (Muir, EE: 30-32); “The Hetch Hetchy Dam Site” (Pinchot, EE: 32-33)
III. Approaches to Environmental Ethics			
9/11	Tu	The Expansion of Ethics I	“The Land Ethic” (Leopold, EE: 33-38)
9/13	Th	The Expansion of Ethics II	“The Forest Primeval” (Mark, Moodle)
9/18	Tu	Duties to Nature	“Environmental Ethics: Values In and Duties Toward the Natural World” (Rolston III, Moodle)
9/20	Th	Deep Ecology	“Deep Ecology” (Devall and Sessions, EE: 249-54)
9/25	Tu	Feminism & Ecofeminism	“Feminism and Ecofeminism” (Hessler and Willott, EE: 344-45); “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism” (Warren, EE: 346-58)
IV. Animals, Plants, and Food			
9/27	Th	Traditional Perspectives	“Whether It Is Unlawful to Kill Any Living Thing” (Aquinas, EE: 113); “Duties Toward Animals” (Kant, EE: 114); “Can They Suffer?” (Bentham, EE: 115)
10/2	Tu	Contemporary Perspectives I	“The Case for Animal Rights” (Regan, EE: 128-35)
10/4	Th	Contemporary Perspectives II	“Biocentric Individualism” (Varner, EE: 162-72)

10/9	Tu	Eating Animals	“Animal Rights: The Abolitionist Approach” (Francione and Charlton, EE : 441-43); “Is It Wrong to Eat Meat from Factory Farms? If So, Why?” (Budolfson, EE : 444-50)
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10/11	Th	Catch up and Review	None
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10/16	Tu	Midterm Exam	None
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V. Wilderness and Public Lands

10/18	Th	Wildness	“Walking” (Thoreau, Moodle)
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10/23	Tu	Arguments for Wilderness	“Bewildered” (Mark, Moodle)
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10/25	Th	Wilderness and Technology	“The Call of the Wild” (Katz, EE : 215-221)
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10/30	Tu	Critique of Wilderness	“The Trouble with Wilderness” (Cronon, Moodle)
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11/1	Th	Wilderness and Social Media	Guest lecture by Mark Wetherington
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11/6	Tu	Election Day: No Class	None
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VI. Climate Change

11/8	Th	Ethics and Climate Change	“Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming” (Jamieson, EE : 542-551)
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11/13	Tu	Should We Engineer the Climate? Guest lecture by Christopher Preston	“Justice in Climate Change Mitigation Adaptation Policies” (Moellendorf, EE : 556-59)
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11/15	Th	Why the Inaction?	“A Perfect Moral Storm” (Stephen Gardiner)
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11/20	Tu	Why the Disbelief?	“Why Doesn’t Everyone Believe Humans are Causing Climate Change?” (Balukjian, Moodle); “Taking Politics Out of Climate Change” (Couch, Moodle)
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<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/earth/climate-change-acceptance/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/next/earth/depolicizing-climate-change/>

11/23	Th	Thanksgiving Holiday: No Class	
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VII. Environmentalism and Individual Responsibility

11/27	Tu	Public Environmental Ethics?	“Taking Environmental Ethics Public” (Light, EE: 636-46)
11/29	Th	Whither Environmentalism?	“Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist” (Kingsnorth, Moodle)
12/4	Tu	Individual Responsibility	“Forget Shorter Showers” (Jensen, Moodle)
12/6	Th	Dark Ecology	“Dark Ecology” (Kingsnorth, Moodle)
12/11	Tu	Course Conclusion Reflection Paper Due	None

Final Exam **Wednesday, December 12, 10:10 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.**

REQUIREMENTS

- Reading responses/quizzes: 30 percent of grade
 - Midterm exam: 25 percent of grade
 - Regular class attendance and satisfactory participation: 10 percent of grade
 - Reflection paper: 10 percent of grade
 - Final exam: 25 percent of grade
1. Reflection Paper: The reflection paper will be an opportunity to outline a personal, normative on the issues raised by the final section of the course. It should defend one’s position on responsibility toward the environment, either in general or in relation to a particular issue. Details about these papers will be given in class and on the course website. The papers should be about three pages in length.

Late papers will be penalized one half letter grade per day up to 50 percent of the grade total unless prior permission from the instructor is obtained. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, with one to one-and-one-half-inch margins. Use page numbers, and give full citations to all outside sources. Papers should be uploaded to Moodle. Also note that papers with an undue number of errors of punctuation, spelling, or grammar will be returned ungraded for correction *and* marked down as late. Written work will be evaluated in terms of the strength of your critical analysis of the issues and thoughtfulness of reflection.
 2. Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will cover content from the first half of the course.
 3. Reading Responses and Possible Quizzes: Students will be asked to post responses to readings online and occasionally have other short assignments or quizzes. Please check the course page in Moodle or ask if assignments are due if you are unable to attend a class period. Late responses will be penalized one point per day until zero is reached. Responses will be graded on thoughtfulness (i.e., understanding and critical engagement with the central issues) and adequate length and writing mechanics.

4. Final Exam: The final exam will address major themes and ideas from the course. You must write your exam during the final exam period. Failure to do so without instructor's permission will result in a failing grade for the exam. Final exams can only be rescheduled if the student can demonstrate that he or she has two additional exams scheduled for the same day.
5. Attendance and Participation:

All classes are communities of learners, and each voice is valuable and essential to the course narrative. When you are absent you compromise the narrative's plot.

—Robert Klose

Regular attendance and participation in the class is expected and central to learning. Unexcused absences will affect your grade. Up to three absences will result in losing any benefit of the doubt on your final grade. Four to five absences will result in one half-grade level reduction (e.g., A to A-). Six to seven absences will result in a full grade level reduction (e.g., A to B), and eight or more absences will result in a failing course grade (F). Late arrivals in class may count as an absence. If you have a valid reason for missing several classes, such as illness, disability or other conflicting commitments, you still *must* speak with the instructor. (Documentation may be required.)

Participation requires bringing your text to class, taking notes, being attentive, and trying to make thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Please talk to me if you have concerns about participation.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

All work submitted is expected to be the student's own. Any acts of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in failure of the assignment and may result in further academic punishment. If you have any doubts about definitions of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please review the relevant sections of the University Catalog and Student Conduct Code.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In accordance with the University of Montana's mission to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, necessary accommodations for students with disabilities will be made whenever possible. If you require accommodations, please provide written information regarding your disability from the Disability Services as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- Please give the class full attention. Anything other than full attention is disrespectful and will count as an absence.
- Give others a chance to share in class conversations and be respectful of them and their views.
- Use of **any** electronic device is **not** allowed without permission. Readings—including those on Moodle—should be printed and brought to class. Use of an electronic device in class will count as an absence.