

# ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 425 (3 hrs), Manchester College, Spring 2005

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**Instructor:** Dr. Steve Naragon, Office: Ad Bldg., #35b (Phone — *office:* 982-5041; *home:* 982-6033)

**Required Text:** Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce, eds., *The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book*, 3rd ed. (Wadsworth Publ. Co., 2003).

**Course Overview.** We will explore a number of competing traditions that answer the question of how we should distribute benefits (e.g., land, clean air and water, food, healthcare, televisions — in general, the satisfaction of one's desires) and burdens (e.g., polluting factories, incinerators, toxic dump sites, i.e., the dissatisfaction of desire) among all those who enjoy moral standing. This will involve our exploring two fundamental questions: "What determines the distribution?" and "What determines moral standing?" Almost everything turns on these two points of distributive justice and the breadth and width of our moral community. My hope is that we increase (through reading, study, and sharing) our own wealth of factual information regarding environmental matters, as well as fine-tune our understanding of moral principles and their application. The "schedule of discussion and readings" (reverse side) offers a closer account of the specific topics.

**Some Course Objectives.** (1) Become aware of the implications of environmental problems and investigate various likely causes of these problems. (2) Gain facility in distinguishing questions involving technical competence from those involving ethical issues. (3) Search for a moral theory that offers adequate protection to the non-human world. (4) Develop skills for critically evaluating arguments and beliefs. (5) Have the opportunity to reflect on two basic questions confronting each of us: What is my proper relationship to other humans? What is my proper relationship with the rest of nature?

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## Requirements

**Readings.** Work through the assignments *prior* to class, and **always bring the text**. *Class discussions depend upon this.*

**Attendance.** This course is heavily dependent on discussion. "Taking the course" requires more than simply doing the written work. Thus the following policy: Six absences (excused or otherwise) are allowed. After that, each additional absence (of any kind) results in a 1% drop in course grade.

**Exams.** There will be three non-cumulative exams on the class discussions, readings, and material presented in class.

**Quizzes.** At the beginning of each class you will complete a brief quiz on the topic for the day (possibly also including material from the previous class sessions). These exercises help keep me informed of your comprehension of the material, and should also help motivate you to read the material when it is due. The quizzes will consist of either 3-4 objective questions (multiple choice, true/false) or else a "short answer" question. [Makeup: Missed quizzes can be made up in my office the following day or at the very beginning of the next class session; this is your responsibility.]

**Research Essay.** You will need to write one five page essay (about 1500 words), involving at least two drafts. The essay will be about some consumer good, and the environmental and social effects of its manufacture, distribution, and consumption. *Please discuss your topic with me before you begin work.* In preparing your essays, you need also to develop a one-page "summary sheet" to be distributed to the rest of the class during your oral presentation at the end of the semester; this is your opportunity to share your findings with the class. These summary sheets need to be clear and concise, with all factual claims carefully documented and a concise bibliography. See Bb for specifics on how this will be evaluated. The first draft is due **Monday, April 4**; the final draft (and summary sheet) is due **Monday, April 25**.

**Class Discussion.** While everyone is responsible to be prepared each day to discuss the assigned topic and reading, students will take turns presenting the reading for the day (supplementing this with appropriate additional material). The presenting student should know the assigned reading thoroughly and also prepare additional supplementary materials that either support or criticize the original reading. A detailed outline of the reading and supplementary materials should be given to the instructor at least one day before the presentation. Everyone will need to make two such presentations during the semester.

**Grading.** Exams (3 x 22% = 66% of the course grade) + Quizzes (10%) + Research Essay (15%) + Summary Sheet (1%) + Class Discussion (2 x 4% = 8%). Letter grade conversion: A (94-100), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), F (0-59).

**Cheating and Plagiarism.** Everyone knows what cheating is, and knows how to avoid it; plagiarism, on the other hand, is a little trickier. *Plagiarism* consists of submitting the statements, ideas, opinions, or findings of another *as if they were your own*. It is *not* plagiarism to copy from or paraphrase a source as long as this is acknowledged and the source is cited. For more information, see the college *Catalog* or your *Spartan Cue*.

## SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION AND READING

### Wed, Feb 2

(1) Introduction to the course.

### Fri, Feb 4

(2) Reviewing moral theories. **Read:** pp. 1-42.

### *Private Property and the Environment*

### Mon, Feb 7

(3) Is the privatization of common resources the best way to preserve them? **Read:** Hardin (#47); Monbiot (#48).

### Wed, Feb 9

(4) Where does private property come from? **Read:** Locke (#49), Shrader-Frechette (#50).

### Fri, Feb 11

(5) Rawls and Nozick on Justice. **Read:** (handout)

### Mon, Feb 14

(6) When environmental regulations reduce the value of private property. **Read:** Sagoff (#51).

### *Economics and the Environment*

### Wed, Feb 16

(7) Are environmental problems also economic problems? **Read:** Freeman (#39).

### Fri, Feb 18

(8) Being a citizen and being a consumer. **Read:** Sagoff (#40).

### Mon, Feb 21

(9) Are cost-benefit analyses the best way to decide environmental policy? **Read:** Kelman (#42); Leonard & Zeckhauser (#43).

### Wed, Feb 23

(10) Sustainable development. **Read:** Solow (#61); Sylvan & Plumwood (#60).

### Fri, Feb 25

(11) Calculating the wealth of nations. **Read:** Repetto (#45).

### *Corporate Behavior*

### Mon, Feb 28

(12) Should corporations be socially responsible? **Read:** Stone (#85), Grossman (#81).

### Wed, Mar 2

(13) Cutting Trees. **Read:** Knize (#78); Newton (#84).

### Fri, Mar 4

*Exam #1*

### *On The Moral Standing of Non-Human Animals*

### Mon, Mar 7

(14) Animal liberation. **Read:** Singer (#15).

### Wed, Mar 9 [disc day]

### Fri, Mar 11

(15) How wide is the moral community? **Read:** Goodpaster (#22).

### Mon, Mar 14

(16) Do animals have moral rights? **Read:** Varner (#18).

### Wed, Mar 16

(17) Deciding between interests. **Read:** VanDeVeer (#17).

### *Biodiversity*

### Fri, Mar 18

(18) Why do species matter? **Read:** Russow (#66).

### Mon, Mar 21

(19) Why should we care about biodiversity? **Read:** Wilson (#19, 64); Myers (#77).

### Wed, Mar 23

(20) Diversity through genetic engineering. **Read:** Palambi (#71)

### ----Spring Break----

### *Religion and the Environment*

### Mon, Apr 4

(21) Is Christianity anti-environmental? **Read:** White (#4).

### Wed, Apr 6

(22) Judaism and the Environment. **Read:** Gordis (#6).

### Fri, Apr 8

(23) Biocentric theology. **Read:** McDaniel (#9).

### *Population and Famine Relief*

### Mon, Apr 11

(24) Should the rich help the poor? **Read:** Malthus (#53); Hardin (#55).

### Wed, Apr 13

(25) Does your right to private property override my right to life? **Read:** Amartya Sen (handout).

### Fri, Apr 15

(26) Sustainable agriculture. **Read:** Jackson (#73).

### Mon, Apr 18

*Exam #2*

### *Constructing an Environmental Ethic*

### Wed, Apr 20

(27) What is the land ethic? **Read:** Leopold (#25).

### Fri, Apr 22

(28) Conceptual foundations. **Read:** Callicott (#26).

### Mon, Apr 25

(29) Deep ecology. **Read:** Devall/Sessions (#30); Naess (#31).

### Wed, Apr 27

(30) A 3<sup>rd</sup> world critique of deep ecology. **Read:** Guha (#76).

### Fri, Apr 29

(31) Social ecology. **Read:** Bookchin (#32).

### Mon, May 2

(32) Ecofeminism and development. **Read:** Shiva (#36).

### Wed, May 4

(33) Is ecofeminism feminist? **Read:** Davion (#37).

### *Environmental Activism*

### Fri, May 6

(34) Environmental activism. **Read:** Foreman (#95); Scarce (#96); Shrader-Frechette (#97).

### Mon, May 9

(35) Are environmental problems grounded in personal behavior? **Read:** Claxton (#98).

**Wed, May 11 — Fri, May 13**

- Research Presentations

***Finals Week***

***Exam***