Philosophy 375

Environmental Ethics

Instructor: Paul Semm

Phone: 619-286-5254

Texts:

VanDeVeer, Donald. The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book.

Films/Documentaries:

*The Ad and the Ego Never Cry Wolf*

*Cadillac Desert Paha Sapa*

*Earth on Edge* *Walkabout*

Course Description:

Ethics is a branch of philosophy along with metaphysics, epistemology, and logic. Traditionally ethics has been concerned with morality, questions of value, right and wrong, and good and bad. Ethical theories have attempted to answer these questions on two levels: the personal, how ought a human being act towards other human beings, and the societal, how ought society be organized so that it reflects the deep moral commitments of its members.

The environmental crisis that we now face-- massive species extinction, the 'Greenhouse effect,' ozone depletion, air and water pollution, increasing toxic and hazardous waste, massive factory farming, and animal experimentation -- has raised a new set of moral questions about the relationship between human beings and the natural world. The discipline that has emerged is called environmental ethics. And it sees its task as articulating an ethical theory that explains our moral obligations and responsibilities to the natural world.

Course Goals:

1. By the end of the course, the student should have an understanding of the discipline of environmental ethics, its theoretical sources and arguments.

2. The student should also have a broader understanding of western society and its relationship to and impact on the natural world.

3. The student should also have an understanding of the discipline of philosophy and its function in shaping worldviews.

Course Evaluation:

There will be a total of two hundred (200) points in this class. Two exams with be worth sixty (60) points each. There will be a journal that will be worth sixty (60) points. The journal will include personal reflections on the ethical issues raised in the readings, lectures, and discussions. There should be a reflection on one of the assigned readings for each class session. Also I will give other assignments during the course for the journal. When the journal is submitted at the final class session, it should be typewritten, double-spaced, and a minimum of ten pages in length**.** The final twenty (20) points will be based on class participation, relevant questions and comments. Students will be required to share selections from their journal reflections on the last Thursday of class.

Course Schedule:

Date Topic Assignment

3/5 Tu Introduction: Ethics and the Prologue,

Environment in Western Thought II. Preview, White,Jr

View: *Cadillac Desert I* Vc. Rio Declaration

3/7 Th Environmental Crisis VIa. Preview, Wilson

View: *Earth on Edge* b.Myers d.Carson, Flavin

3/12 Tu Extensionism: Animal Rights III. Preview, Singer,

View: *Never Cry Wolf* Regan, Wilson

3/14 Th The Land Ethic IVa Leopold, Callicot

View: *Cadillac Desert IV*

3/16 Sa Other Cultures: Taoism and Dine

View: *Paha Sapa*

**Exam #1**

3/19 Tu Deep Ecology IVb Preview, Naess

View: *Walkabout*  Duvall and Sessions

3/21 Th Environmental Racism IVc. Preview, Shiva

View: *Trading Democracy* Plumwood VIc. Grossman

3/26 Tu Capitalism and the Environment VIc Daly, Camacho

View: *Ad and the Ego* Vb. Kelman, c. Sagoff

3/28 Th Resistance VII. Foreman, Scarce

View: *Showdown in Seattle* Claxton

\*Journal Reflections

3/30 **Journal due and Exam #2**

\*On the last Thursday of class, we will share our journal reflections.