

RHODES COLLEGE
COURSE SYLLABUS
PHILOSOPHY 302:01
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

FALL 2006
CLOUGH 302
TUESDAY-THURSDAY 12:30-1:45 pm

Instructor: Dr. Ross Reed, Interdisciplinary Humanities and Philosophy
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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To read, discuss, and critically evaluate some of the basic writings in environmental ethics, with a view to discerning basic issues and trends in this developing field of philosophy.
2. To give you a basic philosophical framework for the evaluation of various moral claims within the field of environmental ethics.
3. To assist you in being able to express – both verbally and in written form – critical insights generated by the reading of texts in environmental philosophy.
4. To give you some specific intellectual material to help you grapple with the ambiguity, anxiety, and freedom that are indelible aspects of the human condition.
5. To engage in philosophizing in a way that allows you to maintain/achieve/regain a childlike wonder and sense of play in the face of the vast and mysterious universe.

TEXTS:

1. Environmental Ethics Today. Peter S. Wenz. Oxford University Press, 2001.
2. Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy, 4th ed. Joseph R. DesJardins. Thomson Wadsworth, 2006.
3. Watersheds 4: 10 Cases in Environmental Ethics, 4th ed. Newton, Dillingham, Choly. Thomson Wadsworth, 2006.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Four components:

1. **CRITICAL PAPER ONE** (1000-1250 WORDS).

DUE THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2006. Critical philosophical papers include explication and analysis of a thinker/text/issue that has already been discussed in class. Your paper should focus on a specific reading or passage and should either advance a focused thesis or address a question. Your thesis statement or question should appear in the first paragraph of your paper and the remainder of your paper should relate directly to the thesis or question as stated in paragraph one.

2. **CRITICAL PAPER TWO** (1000-1250 WORDS).

DUE THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2006.

3. **NEW ARTICLE ANALYSIS**.

Each Thursday, beginning Thursday, 31 August 2006, you should bring in two news articles related to the topic of environmental ethics. Along with the articles, you should write a brief (100-250 words per article) statement, containing the following:

- (1) What is the issue(s) under discussion?
- (2) How does this issue relate to environmental ethics, that is, in what sense is it an ethical issue at all?
- (3) Delineate the moral component and give a brief philosophical analysis of the issue(s) at hand.

(4) Provide a "solution" to the stated environmental problems, or critique the "solution(s)" proposed by the article itself.

4. PARTICIPATION.

- (1) ATTENDANCE: All students are expected to attend class, to have read the assigned material, and to be prepared to discuss it. Failure to prepare for class, even if you attend, constitutes an absence. This means that you should always bring the necessary reading materials for the day's class.
- (2) GROUP PRESENTATION: You should be prepared to give a presentation with three or four colleagues on 14, 16, 21, 28, 30 November 2006. Presentations should be about 15 minutes in length and should provide the last research on your selected topic. Topics include: U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, EPA, USGS, FDA, NAFTA, CAFTA, GATT, The Kyoto Treaty, global warming, nonanthropomorphic environmental ethics, etc.

All assignments must be turned in on the due date to receive full credit. Late assignments will be marked down 5% per class unless accompanied by a valid medical excuse.

All four of the above components are of equal weight. That is to say, each is 25% of the total final grade. Grading will follow the Rhodes College scale. It goes without saying that the meaning, function, and intent of the Rhodes Honor Code should be kept in mind throughout this course.

"1. The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life-expectancy of those who live in 'advanced' countries, but they have destabilized society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world. The continued development of technology will worsen the situation. It will certainly subject human beings to greater indignities and inflict greater damage on the natural world, it will probably lead to greater social disruption and psychological suffering, and it may lead to increased physical suffering even in 'advanced' countries."

Author?

DR. REED'S PHIL 302-01 Syllabus (4)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

All dates are subject to change. Unless notified, please read the assigned material and be prepared to discuss it on the date specified, as follows:

1. Thursday, 24 August 2006
Introduction to ethics and environmental ethics
2. Tuesday, 29 August 2006
Continuation of basic ethical theories.
EE: "Science, Ethics, and the Environment", pp. 3-16.
EET: Introduction, pp. 1-16.
3. Thursday, 31 August 2006
EE: "Ethical Theory and the Environment", pp. 17-29.
EET: "Overpopulation, Markets, and Human Rights", pp. 19-28.
First news analysis due.
4. Tuesday, 5 September 2006
EE: "Ethical Theory and the Environment", pp. 30-41.
EET: "Overpopulation, Markets, and Human Rights", pp. 28-38.
Watersheds: "Of Greenhouses and Freezers", pp. 1-15.
5. Thursday, 7 September 2006
EE: "Ethics and Economics: Managing Public Lands", pp. 45-55.
EET: "Energy, Economics, and Future Generations", pp. 39-46.
6. Tuesday, 12 September 2006
EE: "Ethics and Economics: Managing Public Lands", pp. 55-69.
EET: "Energy, Economics, and Future Generations", pp. 47-58.
Watersheds: "Genetically Modified Organisms", pp. 16-36.
7. Thursday, 14 September 2006
EE: "Responsibilities to Future Generations: Sustainable Development", pp. 70-78.
EET: "Competing Human-Centered Values", pp. 59-78.
8. Tuesday, 19 September 2006
Guest Lecture by Bill McKibben during class?
7:00pm BCLC Bill McKibben on *The End of Nature*.
EE: "Responsibilities to Future Generations...", pp. 78-93.
9. Thursday, 21 September 2006
EE: "Responsibilities to the Natural World: From Anthropocentric to Nonanthropocentric Ethics", pp. 94-122

10. Tuesday, 26 September 26
EET: "Animal Liberation and Utilitarianism", pp. 81- 103.
Watersheds: "Skunked", pp. 37-54.
11. Thursday, 28 September 2006
EET: "Animal Rights and Medical Research", pp. 104-124.
CRITICAL PAPER ONE DUE
12. Tuesday, 3 October 2006
EE: "Biocentric Ethics and the Inherent Value of Life", pp. 125-147.
Watersheds: "The Ingenuity of Bugs", pp. 55-77
13. Thursday, 5 October 2006
EET: "Species Diversity and Gaia", pp. 125-145.
14. Tuesday, 10 October 2006
EE: "Wilderness, Ecology, and Ethics", pp. 148-175.
Watersheds: "Oil on the Rocks", pp. 78-97.
15. Thursday, 12 October 2006
EET: "The Land Ethic", pp. 146-164.
16. Thursday, 19 October 2006
EE: "The Land Ethic", pp. 176-201.
17. Tuesday, 24 October 2006
EET: "Human Rights, Agriculture, and Biodiversity", pp. 167- 187.
Watersheds: "The Extended Family", pp. 98-115.
18. Thursday, 26 October 2006
EET: "Ecofeminism and Environmental Justice", pp. 188-209.
19. Tuesday, 31 October 2006
EE: "Deep Ecology", pp. 202-223.
Watersheds: "Chlorine Sunrise", pp. 116-140
20. Thursday, 2 November 2006
EET: "Religion and Nature", pp. 210-233.
21. Tuesday, 7 November 2006
EE: "Environmental Justice and Social Ecology", pp. 224-242.
Watersheds: "Are We the Problem?", pp. 141-156.
22. Thursday, 9 November 2006
EE: "Ecofeminism", pp. 243-257.
CRITICAL PAPER TWO DUE
23. Tuesday, 14 November 2006
EET: "Personal Choices, Consumerism, and Human Nature", pp. 237-256.

- Group Presentations
24. Thursday, 16 November 2006
EE: “Pluralism, Pragmatism, and Sustainability”, pp. 258-271.
Group Presentations
25. Tuesday, 21 November 2006
EET: “Public Policies, Efficiency, and Globalization”, pp. 257-279.
Group Presentations
26. Tuesday, 28 November 2006
EET: “Is Optimism Justified?”, pp. 280-290.
Group Presentations
27. Thursday, 30 November 2006
Watersheds: “Fueling the World”, pp. 157-172.
Group Presentations
28. Tuesday, 5 December 2006
Watersheds: “Biological Diversity”, pp. 173-194.
FINAL EXAMINATION – Tuesday, 12 December 2006, 5:30pm.
Please book your flights **after** the final exam time!

“...we could limit ourselves voluntarily, *choose* to remain God’s creatures instead of making ourselves gods. What a towering achievement that would be...”

Bill McKibben, *The End Of Nature* (1989), p. 182.