

## **PHI 380: Environmental Ethics**

UWSP, Spring 2023

Sec. 1 M/T/R 3:00-3:50 CCC 101

Sec. 2 M/T/R 4:00-4:50 CCC 101

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**Office Hours:** M 1-3, and by appointment



Aldo Leopold's "shack"

### **Course Description**

This course will explore a variety of possible ethical relationships humans have to the natural world. For example, should we be concerned about the health of the environment out of concern for human well-being or for its own sake? Do we have ethical commitments to species, particular animals, organisms, or ecosystems? The goal of this course is to familiarize students with many of the major approaches to environmental ethics along with exploring a few particularly interesting environmental issues. Students will appreciate and understand the complexity and intricacy of the arguments involved in adopting one approach or position over another.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

- Explain the differences between holistic and individualistic ethical systems.
- Describe anthropocentric and biocentric approaches to environmentalism.
- Apply ethical theory to a variety of practical environmental problems.

### **GEP Learning Outcomes - Humanities**

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity).
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than one's own.

### **GEP Learning Outcomes - Environmental Responsibility**

- Identify interactions between human society and the natural environment.
- Analyze the individual, social, cultural, and ecological factors that influence environmental sustainability.
- Evaluate competing claims that inform environmental debates.

### **Required Texts:**

1. Louis Pojman, *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application* 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. (Text Rental)
2. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (for purchase)
3. Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.

**Graded assignments will include:**

1. Three Exams (20% each – 60% total)
2. Two Papers (10% each – 20% total)
3. Ten Quizzes (20% total)

**Quizzes:** Quizzes will be taken online through our Canvas page. Quizzes will be timed, and no notes or outside materials are allowed. The questions for the quizzes will be drawn from the readings and lectures of that week. You may take the quiz anytime during the week, but they are due by midnight on Friday (for weeks that we have quizzes). There are (12) quizzes, but only the best (10) will count.

**Papers:** Papers will be 750-1000 word essays summarizing a reading or responding to a particular question. Paper prompts will be provided. Papers are to be submitted to Canvas and will be checked for “originality” via “Turnitin.com.” Details and suggestions on writing essays, as well as grading criteria, will be distributed in class.

**Exams:** There will be three exams to be taken in class. Exams will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions.

**Final grades will be determined on the following scale:**

100-93 A	<87-83B	<77-73C	<67-60 D
<93-90A-	<83-80B-	<73-70C-	<60 F
<90-87B+	<80-77C+	<70-67 D+	

**Late Policy:** Quizzes cannot be made-up. Papers will be docked 10% off per class late. Exams cannot be made-up without a university approved absence notification (e.g. a note from a health care provider explaining why the student couldn’t be there). Furthermore, if you miss an exam for a legitimate reason you need to contact me immediately in order to reschedule the exam as early as possible. If this condition is not met, you may not be able to re-take the exam.

**Academic Honesty:** If you commit any acts of academic dishonesty (such as plagiarism on written work or cheating on an exam) you will earn a zero for that work (and possibly other disciplinary actions). Please refer to the Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures for more information (<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf#page=11>).

**Attendance:** Attendance is not mandatory and will not be recorded (with the exception of the first few classes, which is mandatory). With that said, if you do not attend class on a regular basis, you will likely do poorly in the class.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:** The ADA is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP’s policies [here](#). If you require *classroom and/or exam accommodations*, please register with the **Disability and Assistive Technology Center** and then contact me at the beginning of the course.

**Schedule:** Schedule is subject to change, but any changes will be announced in class and through email. Readings in Pojman's *Environmental Ethics* are listed as (Po); reading in Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* are listed as (Leo); readings on Canvas (CVS).

Date	Reading
Introduction	
M 1/23	Syllabus and Introduction
T 1/24	Rachels: A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy (Canvas)
R 1/26	Palmer: Contested Frameworks in Environmental Ethics (Po) #1
Causes of Environmental Problems	
M 1/30	White: The Historical Roots of Our Environmental Crises (CVS)
T 1/31	Penn: The Evolutionary Roots of Our Environmental Crises (CVS)
R 2/2	Continued
Leopold and the Land Ethics (Environmental Holism)	
M 2/6	Leopold: Wisconsin (Leo)
T 2/7	No in-person class - View the film <i>Fierce Green Fire</i> <a href="https://docuseek2-com.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/cart/product/791">https://docuseek2-com.ezproxy.uwsp.edu/cart/product/791</a>
R 2/9	Leopold: The Land Ethic (Leo) Leopold: Thinking Like a Mountain (Leo)
Deep Ecology	
M 2/13	Naess: Ecosophy T: Deep Versus Shallow Ecology (Po) #23
T 2/14	Continued
R 2/16	Diehm: Connection to Nature and the Case for Deep Ecology (CVS)
Ecofeminism	
M 2/20	Warren: The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism (Po) #37
T 2/21	Continued and Exam Review
R 2/23	EXAM
Animal Ethics	
M 2/27	Singer: A Utilitarian Defense of Animal Liberation (Po) #9
T 2/28	Continued
R 3/2	Rolston: selections from chap 2 (CVS)
M 3/6	Varner: Can Animal Rights Activists be Environmentalists? (CVS)
T 3/7	Continued
R 3/9	Jamieson: Against Zoos (Po) #12
Biocentric Ethics	
M 3/13	Taylor: Biocentric Egalitarianism (Po) #18
T 3/14	Continued
R 3/16	Varner: Biocentric Individualism (CVS)
Spring Break	
Wilderness and Nature	
M 3/27	Cronon: The Trouble with Wilderness (CVS)
T 3/28	Marris: Designer Ecosystems (CVS)
R 3/30	Marris: Conservation Everywhere (CVS)
M 4/3	Lean: Invasive Species (CVS)

T 4/4	Continued and Review for Exam
R 4/6	EXAM
Pandemics and Environmental Ethics	
M 4/10	Jabr: How Humanity Unleashed a Flood of New Diseases (CVS)
T 4/11	Foer: Eating Animals (excerpt) (CVS)
Food Ethics	
R 4/13	Berry: The Pleasures of Eating (CVS)
M 4/17	View the film <i>Food Inc.</i>
T 4/18	Pollan: Omnivores Dilemma (excerpts) (CVS)
R 4/20	Laudan: A Plea for Culinary Modernism (CVS)
Population, the Environment and World Hunger	
M 4/24	Thompson: The Fundamental Problem with Food Ethics (CVS)
T 4/25	Film: <i>Darwin's Nightmare</i>
R 4/27	Rolston: Feeding People versus Saving Nature? (CVS)
Climate Change and Global Concerns	
M 5/1	Oreskes: The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change (Poj #56)
T 5/2	Continued
R 5/4	Shue: Global Environment and International Inequality (Poj #3)
M 5/8	Guha: Radical American Environmentalism (Poj #30)
T 5/9	Purdy: The New Nature (CVS)
R 5/11	Continued and Review

**Final Exam (Section 1):** Wednesday, May 17, 10:15-11:30 am

**Final Exam (Section 2):** Thursday, May 18, 5:00-7:00 pm