

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
UEP 286 Spring 2009

Department of Urban & Environmental Policy & Planning

Thursday 1:30-4 PM
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The course explores the values, rights, responsibilities and status of entities underlying alternative ethical approaches to environmental issues. Subjects include: anthropocentric vs. biocentric frameworks to natural resource protection; precautionary principle; ethics of cost-benefit analysis; equity and risk management; status of “rights” of non-human species and future generations; ethical considerations of sustainable development & energy use; genetically modified crops; transgenic animals; deep vs. narrow ecology; economic and non-economic value of wilderness & sacred lands.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Studies the role of ethical reasoning in framing environmental problems
- Explores the interactions between science, ethics/values, and policy.
- Engages students in an ethical analysis of policy issues.
- Acquaints students with different ethical theories (consequentialist vs non-consequentialist; naturalism, ethical relativism, intuitionism; ecofeminism) applied to environmental problems and moral voices of writers like Leopold, McPhee, Taylor, Shiva, and Wilson.
- Discusses the use of ethical principles and theories guiding environmental decision making (non-anthropocentrism; precautionary principle; utilitarianism; deep ecology).

The course will be run in a quasi-discussion format with active participation from students. Students will be encouraged to clarify and sharpen their ethical perspectives on environment problems and to critically assess other perspectives

Readings:

Books: (available at the book store)

Louis J. Pojman. *Global Environmental Ethics*, Mayfield Pub. Co.

John McPhee. *Encounters with the Archdruid*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Paul W. Taylor. *Respect for Nature*. Princeton Univ. Press/

Vandana Shiva. *Biopiracy*. South End Press

James Gustave Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*. Yale Univ. Press.

James Garvey. *The Ethics of Climate Change*. Continuum International Publishing

Other Readings on Blackboard.

Jan. 23. Introduction: Ethics and Environmental Problems

Wk 1

(Wed)

The role of ethics in popular discourse and policy: 6 dimensions of policy
Distinguishing ethical from non-ethical (policy/scientific debates).
Students' experience with moral arguments.
Popular views about ethics. www.storyofstuff.com

Seminal questions in environmental ethics.

Jan. 28. Ethical Theory in Practice

Wk 2

Different roles of ethics in society.
First principles: naturalism (including natural law ethics); utilitarianism;
deontological ethics; virtue ethics; intrinsic vs. instrumental value;
The dilemmas of ethical reasoning: the rhetorical power of moral
discourse.

Readings

Frederick A. Kaufman. Ch. 1. "Moral Philosophy and the Natural World." In:
Foundations of Environmental Philosophy. McGraw Hill, 2003, pp. 1-21. [B]

Joseph R. Des Jardins. Ch. 1 "Science ethics and the environment." pp. 1-14; Ch. 2.
Ethical theory and the environment, pp. 14-36.. In: *Environmental Ethics*. [B]

John McPhee. *Encounters with the Archdruid*. Part 1, A Mountain, pp. 1-75

**Feb. 4. Sacred Lands vs. Natural Resources: Conservation, Preservation
Development**

Wk 3

How we value natural resources; land ethic; dams and river diversions;
managing forests. Competing values in conflict: preservation vs.
development. Distinction between the built and natural environment; why
humans are considered outside of nature.

Readings

John McPhee. *Encounters with the Archdruid*. Part 2, An Island. Part 3 A River, pp 79-
245.

Aldo Leopold. "The Land Ethic." *A Sand County Almanac*, pp. 237-279. [B]

Debate Analysis: Does wilderness have intrinsic value? In: *Taking Sides*, T.D. Goldfarb,
ed. Pp. 2-23. [B]

Louis P. Pojman. Ecocentric holism: the land ethic. In: *Global Environmental Ethics*, pp. 154-175.

World Commission on Dams. Executive Summary. *Dams and Development*, November 16, 2000, pp. 1-11. [B]

Robert S. Devine. "The Trouble with Dams" *Atlantic Monthly* 276:64-74 (1995). [B]

Feb. 11. Biodiversity, Biopiracy and Globalization

Wk. 4

Biodiversity convention; genetic colonialism; patents on plant; rights of indigenous farmers; biophilia hypothesis

Readings

Vandana Shiva. *BioPiracy*. South End Pres.

Vandana Shiva. Ch. 5. The biodiversity convention: an evaluation from the Third World Perspective. In: *Monocultures of the Mind*, pp. 151-159.

E.O Wilson. Conservation ethic. *Biophilia*, pp. 119-140. [B]

Beth Baker. "Happy by Nature. Fondness for Plants and Animals may be Hard-wired, Health" *Washington Post* June 4, 2002. [B]

Louis Pojman. Ch. 16. Preservation of wilderness and species. *Global Environmental Ethics*, pp. 300-326.

Feb. 18 No Classes

Feb. 21. Ecological Ethics: Transgenic Food Crops

Wk. 5

Monday Schedule Historical background of genetically altered crops; biopollution; GMOs vs chemical pesticides; labeling; GMOs and world hunger.

Readings

Sheldon Krimsky. Ethical issues involving the production, planting, and distribution of genetically modified crops. In: *Engineering the Farm*, B. Bailey and M. Lappé, eds. Pp. 11-26. Island Press, 2002. [B]

Sheldon Krimsky and Roger Wrubel. The cultural and symbolic dimensions of agricultural biotechnology. In: *Agricultural Biotechnology and the Environment*. University of Illinois Press, pp. 212-231. [B]

Peter Rosset. Taking seriously the claim that genetic engineering could end hunger: a critical analysis. In: *Engineering the Farm*, pp. 81-93. [B]

Paul B. Thompson. Why food biotechnology needs an opt out. In: *Engineering the Farm*, pp. 27-43. [B]

Maarten J. Chrispeels. Biotechnology and the poor. *Plant Physiology* 124:3-6 (September 2000). [B]

Feb. 25. Climate Change, Greenhouse Gases and Distributive Justice

Wk. 6

Global responsibility for reducing Greenhouse gases; moral basis of the Kyoto Protocol; US position; allocating CO₂ emission between North and South

Readings

Des Jardins: Ch. 4. Ethics, energy, and responsibilities to future generations, pp. 64-88. [B]

Pojman: Ch. 13, Air pollution, the greenhouse effect, and ozone depletion, pp. 245-259.

Udo E. Simonis. Toward a Houston Protocol: How to allocate CO₂ emissions between North and South. In *Ethics and Environmental Policy*, F. Ferre and P. Hartel, eds. University of Georgia Press, 1994, pp. 106-124. [B]

Taking Sides, Issue #17. Is immediate action necessary to minimize potential catastrophic effects of global warming? pp. 288-307. [B]

J.H. Vogel. Ch. 10. Final payments: Greenhouse Gas Abatement. In *Genes for Sale: Privatization as a Conservation Policy*. Oxford, 1994, pp. 89-102. [B]

Mark Sagoff. Controlling global climate: The debate over pollution trading. *Philosophy & Public Policy* 1(1):1-6(Winter 1999). [B]

Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, Ch. 1-3, pp. 1-86,

Debate: Is a just principle for determining global climate change responsibility “equal share of the world’s allowable emissions”?

Mar. 3 Population Ethics, Pollution, Markets & World Hunger

Wk. 7

Contribution of global population growth to pollution and world hunger; IPAT equation; lifeboat ethics; markets and population growth; demographic transition; free markets & sustainability.

Readings

Pojman, Ch. 11, Population: general considerations. In: *Global Environmental Ethics*. pp. 201-225.

Taking Sides #6 pp. 86-109. [B]

Thomas R. Malthus. An essay on the principle of population as it affects the future improvement of society, pp. 140-148. [B]

Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr. Ch. 12, Population. In: *For the Common Good*. Pp. 236-251. [B]

Peter S. Wenz. Overpopulation, markets and human rights. In. *Environmental Ethics Today*. Oxford, 2001, pp. 19-38. [B]

Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, Ch. 4-9.

Debate: Is population a key factor in preventing environmental deterioration?

Mar. 10. Pesticides, Mosquitoes & Disease

Wk. 8

DDT, POPs treaty, and malaria; spraying pesticides for West Nile Virus; Public health vs. environmentalism; precautionary principle;

Readings

EPA, DDT Regulatory History: A Brief Survey.

<http://www.epa.gov/ngispgm3/nrmp/history/topics/ddt02.htm>

D. R. Roberts, L.L. Laughlin, P. Hsheih et al. DDT, global strategies, and a malaria control crisis in South America. *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 3:1-11(July-September 1997). [B]

Henry I. Miller. "Is there a Place for DDT?" *NY Times* OP ED. August 7, 2003. [B]

Editorial.. "Fighting Malaria." *NY Times* December 23, 2002. [B]

Nicholas D. Kristof. It's time to spray DDT. *New York Times* [Op Ed]. January 8, 2005. [B]

Ted Williams. Out of control. *Audubon* October 2001. [B]

John Tierney. Op Ed. Public perceptions, international policies and killers of mosquitoes. *New York Times*. September 16, 1999. [B]

Sheryl Gay Stolberg. DDT, target of global ban, finds defenders in experts on malaria. *New York Times* August 29, 1999. [B]

Debate: Should DDT be banned internationally under the POPs treaty?

March 17 Spring Break

Mar. 24 Consumerism, Sustainability & Earth Ethics.

Wk. 9

Obligation to consume less; redefining quality of life; responsibility to future generations; North-South wealth disparity; the phenomenon of “affluenza.”

Readings

Lester W. Milbrath. Redefining the good life in a sustainable society. *Environmental Values* 2:261-269 (1993). [B]

Mark Sagoff. Do we consumer too much? *Atlantic Monthly* June 1997, pp. 80-96. [B]

Paul Ehrlich et al. No middle way on the environment. *Atlantic Monthly* December 1997, pp. 98-104. [B]

K.S. Shrader-Frechette. “Voluntary Simplicity and the Duty to Limit Consumption.” In: *Environmental Ethics* by Shrader-Frechette. Boxwood Press, 1981, pp. 169-193. [B]

Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, Ch. 10-12. .

Debate: Do citizens of affluent countries have an obligation to consume less?

March 31 Rights and Considerations of Animals

Wk. 10

Animals as sentient beings; utilitarian vs deontological foundations for animal protection; animals in research; moral basis of vegetarianism. Is the humane exploitation of animals an oxymoron?

Readings

Louis P. Pojman. Ch. 7. Animal rights: sentience as significant. In: *Global Environmental Ethics*, pp. 106-135. [B]

J. R. Des Jardins. Ch. 6. Responsibilities to the natural world: the case for animals. In: *Environmental Ethics*, pp. 112-126. [B]

Peter Singer. All animals are equal. In: *Animal Liberation*. The New York Review, 1976, pp. 1-27. [B]

Eric Katz. Defending the use of animals by business: Animal liberation and environmental ethics. In *Nature as Subject* Rowman & Littlefield, 1997, pp. 79-80. [B]

April 7. Non-Anthropocentric Ethics I

Wk. 12

Human vs. biocentric ethics; intrinsic value of living things;
A non-human centered ethical theory.

Readings

Paul Taylor. *Respect for Nature*, pp. 1-99.

Tim Hayward. Ch. 3. Anthropocentrism: A misunderstood problem. In: *Political Theory and Ecological Values*, pp. 42-57. St.Martin's Press, 1998. [B]

Louis P. Pojman. Ch. 10. Contemporary environmental philosophy: biocentric egalitarianism. In: *Global Environmental Ethics*, pp. 176-200.

April 14 Non-Anthropocentric Ethics II

Wk 13

Taylor's theory of non-anthropocentric ethics; conflicts between humans and non-human living things; basic and non-basic rights/needs of species.

Readings

Paul Taylor. *Respect for Nature*, pp. 100-218.

April 21. Patriot's Day—No Classes

April 28. Critique of *Respect for Nature*:

Wk. 14. Rethinking anthropocentrism as a basis for environmental ethics

Readings

Paul Taylor. *Respect for Nature*, pp. 219-313.

Don E. Marietta, Jr. In *For People and the Planet*. Temple Univ. Press, 1994, Anthropocentrism and Environmental Ethics, pp. 69-80; The status of values in nature, pp. 119-139; Contextual environmental ethics, pp. 141-153. [B]

Mary Midgley. The end of anthropocentrism? In: *Philosophy and the Natural Environment*, Ed. By Robin Attfield and Andrew Belsey. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994, pp. 103-112. [B]

Environmental Ethics

Assignments

Class presentations on designated readings.....	20pts
Essay 1 (3-5 pages).....	10pts
Debate Brief (3-5 pages)	20 pts
Peer Review (2-3 pages)	10pts
Semester Final Paper (at least 12 pages + ref.....)	<u>40pts</u>
	100 pts