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### EVST 427E.01: Environmental Ethics

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ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS  
Phil/Evst 427E

Professor: Christopher J. Preston  
Classroom: LA 338  
Class time: Tuesday and Thursday, 9.40am. – 11.00am  
Office: LA 148  
Office hours: Tuesday 4-5pm, Wednesday 12-1pm, 2-3pm.  
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1. Course Introduction:

Environmental ethics is a relatively new branch of philosophy. The initial goals of the discipline were to provide a thorough examination of the ethical relationships between humans, non-human animals, plants, and abiotic nature. As it has matured, the field has started to address questions in metaphysics, aesthetics, theology, and political theory. While there are clearly a number of practical issues that environmental philosophers address, the discipline is also a serious theoretical endeavor in its own right. Our study will chart the main theoretical breakthroughs that have occurred in the 30 years that environmental philosophy has been taught in universities. We will also be considering the application of these conceptual advances to environmental practices and policies. This class has a pre-requisite of a lower division course from Perspective 5.

2. Reading Material (all required reading):

Course Packet available at UC Bookstore

Articles on E-reserve

3. General Expectations:

I request that come to class having carefully read the material assigned for that day prior to your arrival. As we talk about the reading, I will seek opinions on various topics and will pick out individuals to answer questions relevant to the reading and lecture. Please be prepared to discuss the positions discussed in the text and to bring your own questions and concerns to everyone's attention.

We will be using Blackboard throughout the semester. Please ensure you know how to log on to Blackboard and how to navigate the different panes. Discussion questions will be posted each week for you to be thinking about as you do the reading

I also expect you to contribute **positively** to a community of learning. This means being respectful of those around you in the class at all times, including myself. You are expected to attend class, to not disrupt those around you unnecessarily, and to stay for the duration of each class period. I also expect complete academic integrity at every point of the course. Any academic dishonesty will lead to an automatic F for your semester grade and a meeting with the appropriate academic authorities. There will be no exceptions to this zero tolerance policy on academic dishonesty.

Some assignments in this class may require familiarity with Blackboard and E-res at the library. Please ensure that you know how to access these two digital services.

#### 4. Reading Assignments (provisional):

**Week 1** (Jan 24, 26): KINSHIP ETHICS: Singer.

**Week 2** (Jan 31, Feb 2): KINSHIP ETHICS: Regan, Jones, Lockwood, Fields.  
**\*\*\*Observation Paper 1 due\*\*\***

**Week 3** (Feb 7, 9): ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: Callicott.

**Week 4** (Feb 14, 16): ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: Rolston (w), Plumwood (w).  
**\*\*\*Reading Test 1 (16<sup>th</sup>)\*\*\***

**Week 5** (Feb 21, 23): WILDERNESS: Turner (E-res), Rolston.

**Week 6** (Feb 28, Mar 2): WILDERNESS: Rolston (E-res) Cronon, Guha.  
**\*\*\*Observation Paper 2 due\*\*\***

**Week 7** (Mar 7, 9): SOCIAL ECOLOGY: Bookchin, Dowie (E-res).

**Week 8** (Mar 14, 16): SOCIAL ECOLOGY: Attfield, (Carter), Preston/Cory.

**Week 9** (Mar 21, 23): Plumwood (w), Abram (w).  
**\*\*\*Reading Test 2 (23<sup>rd</sup>)\*\*\***

## SPRING BREAK

**Week 10** (April 4, 6): RELIGION AND ENVIRONMENT: White, Guelke.  
**\*\*\*Observation Paper 3 due\*\*\***

**Week 11** (April 11, 13): RELIGION AND ENVIRONMENT: *Pease* Lecture (Gallagher 106, 7pm, Apr 11<sup>th</sup>), Cheney (w), Ouderkirk.

**Week 12** (April 18, 20): AESTHETICS: Hargrove, Walter.  
**\*\*\*Observation Paper 4 due\*\*\***

**Week 13** (April 25, 27): AESTHETICS: Carlson (E-res), Hettinger.

**Week 14** (May 2, 4): ENLIVENING THE SENSES: Wallace, Pyle, Weston (w).  
**\*\*\*Reading Test 3 (4<sup>th</sup>)\*\*\***

### 5. Course Requirements:

a) Attendance, participation, and scholarly attitude will account for 20% of your grade (20 points). I will be taking attendance at the start of every class and I shall be keeping track of your participation and attitude during the class. If there is some legitimate reason why you need to miss a class, please let me know by e-mail before class if possible. If you cannot let me know before class, please e-mail me as soon as you can afterwards. When appropriate you should bring some form of verification for your absence to the next class.

b) In-class presentation (10 points). Amongst the discussion questions posted on Blackboard will be several I particularly want us to discuss as a group. Each student will sign up for one of these questions and come to the selected class with 3 different specific arguments in favor of or against the position. For example, if the argument is on the question of “Do trees have rights” a student might come to class with a negative position supported by the two arguments that 1) trees are not sentient and so cannot have rights and 2) If trees have rights we would reach political deadlock on any environmental decision.

c) Observation papers (20 points). Choose a favorite spot to which you can return four times during the semester. You will be asked to go to that spot, immerse yourself in its details, and make observations on an assigned topic (for example, “color”). These reflections/observations are very open-ended. You can write a poem, paint a picture, record sounds, prepare a text, or use any other medium of your choice. If you choose to write something, it should be approximately one page. The idea is to let yourself be surrounded by a particular environment and to think about the boundaries that separate you from it or connect you to it.

c) Office visit (5 points). Everyone should make at least one office visit before spring break. You can use this visit for help with the reading tests, guidance on an observation

paper, help with the final assignment, or for any other reason. I need to check in with you at least once before the break to see how things are going.

d) Reading Tests (30 points). Three times during the semester there will be a short 30 minute in class quiz to test your comprehension of the articles we have been reading.

e) Campus talk (5 points). UM offers a range of extra-curricular lectures, conferences, and talks on environmental issues. You are required to attend one of these events during the semester on your own initiative and to turn in to me a one page summary of the content of the talk. You should also include a sentence or two on your opinion of the quality of the talk. Suitable events can be found posted on flyers around campus, in the *Missoulian*, the *Kaimen*, the *Independent*, and on the website <http://www.umt.edu/news>. If you hear of a suitable upcoming campus event, you should feel free to announce it at the start of class. You may not use an event that you are required to attend for another class.

g) Final Assignment (20 points). You must prepare a 3-4 page, double-spaced, closing essay that applies one or more of the positions discussed during the semester to a practical environmental issue that interests you in this region of the country (e.g. bison hunting, wilderness protection, fire, water quality, energy, urban sprawl, Native American issues, environmental justice etc.). Select the regional issue, briefly outline the relevant facts, take a strong position on this issue using some of the theoretical material from the class, and anticipate some objections. This paper will be due on Monday May 8<sup>th</sup> at noon in hard copy or as an attachment to an e-mail.

#### 5. Additional remarks:

If you have any physical or learning disability that may make it hard for you to complete the requirements of this class, let me know right away and I will be happy to make appropriate accommodating arrangements.

I encourage you to use my office hours. I am paid to help you with this class! It is a good idea to use office hours as much as you need. Five or ten minutes of discussion can sometimes really help to clarify things. Use e-mail to stay in touch.

Finally, I ask you to contribute to the best learning environment possible as we share time together this semester. With your help, this class will be challenging, stimulating, and – I hope – helpful to the intellectual path you choose.