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Fall 9-1-2007

### EVST 495.03: Agriculture and Environmental Ethics

Dane Scott

University of Montana, Missoula, [dane.scott@mso.umt.edu](mailto:dane.scott@mso.umt.edu)

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## **EVST 495.03**

Tues. & Thurs. 12:40-2:00

Fall 2007

Dane Scott

Phone: 243-6632

Email: [dane.scott@mso.umt.edu](mailto:dane.scott@mso.umt.edu)

Office hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2:00-3:00

### ***AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS***

#### **COURSE OUTLINE**

##### I. Philosophies of Agriculture & Environmental Ethics

- A. Productionism
- B. Agrarianism
- C. Holism

##### II. The Challenges of Modern Agriculture

- A. Sustainability
  - 1. Biotechnology
  - 2. Agroecology
- B. World Hunger
  - 1. Biotechnology
  - 2. Agroecology

#### **TEXTS**

Gregory Pence, *The Ethics of Food: A Reader for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (EF)

Paul Thompson, *Spirit of the Soil: Agriculture and Environmental Ethics* (SS)

Mansfield Library electronic reserve, password: evst495

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

- Book review: A critical book review (5-6 pages) of a recent work dealing with the agriculture and the environment. 20%
- Oral presentation of the above critical book review. Presentation should be roughly 15 min. in length. You must use handouts or some other aids to organize your presentation. 10%
- Final paper: Research paper (10-12 pages for UG students, 14-16 pages for G students) focusing on a specific issues in the broadly defined area of agriculture and environmental ethics. There will be a handout detailing this assignment. 40%
- Informal presentation of research topic 10%
- Class participation (this is based on attendance, keeping up with the readings and participation in class discussions) 20%

#### **GRADING**

The +/- grading system will be used as follows: 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B; 80-82 = B-; 77 - 79 = C+; 73 - 76 = C; 70 - 72 = C-; 67 - 69 = D+; 63 - 66 = D; 60 - 62 = D-; Below 60 = F.

#### **HELPFUL WEB-SITES**

Agroecology in Action: <http://www.agroeco.org/>

The Land Institute: <http://www.landinstitute.org/>

Agroecology: <http://www.agroecology.org/>

Food First: <http://www.foodfirst.org/>

AgBioForum: <http://www.agbioforum.org/welcome.htm>

AgBioWorld: <http://www.agbioworld.org/index.html>

PEW Initiative on Food and Biotechnology: <http://pewagbiotech.org/>

## **SCHEDULE OF READINGS**

### **Week 1**

**8/28**

Introduction

**8/30**

“The Ethics of Soil” (SS 1-20)

“The Environmental Critics of Agriculture” (SS 21-46)

### **Part I**

### **Week 2**

**9/4**

Trewavas, “Malthus Foiled Again and Again”

<http://www.nature.com/nature/food/>

Garrett Hardin, “Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor” (EF 54-70)

**9/6**

Rolston, “Feeding People versus Saving Nature”

<http://www.ecospherics.net/pages/RolstonPeopleVSNature.html>

### **Week 3**

**9/11**

“The Productionist Paradigm” (SS 47-71)

**9/3**

Gregg Easterbrook, “Forgotten Benefactor of Humanity”

<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/97jan/borlaug/borlaug.htm>

or

<http://www.agbioworld.org/biotech-info/topics/borlaug/benefactor.html>

Noramn Borlaug, “Are We Going Mad?” (EF 74-79)

### **Week 4**

**9/18**

Evenson and Gollins, “Assessing the Impact of the Green Revolution: 1960 to 2000,” *Science* 2  
May 2003: Vol. 300. no. 5620, pp. 758 – 762

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/reprint/300/5620/758.pdf>

**9/20**

Film Topic: Green Revolution

### **Week 5**

**9/25**

“Agricultural Stewardship and the Good Farmer” (SS 72-93)

**9/27**

Wendell Berry, “Christianity and the Survival of Creation”

<http://www.crosscurrents.org/berry.htm>

Wendell Berry, “How we Grow Food Reflects our Virtues and Vices” (EF 5-25)

### **Week 6**

**10/2**

Wendell Berry, “People, Land, Community” (e reserve)

----- “Conservation and the Local Economy” (e reserve)

**10/4**

Paul Thompson, “Agrarianism as Philosophy” (e reserve)

Montmarquet, “American Agrarianism” (e reserve)

### **Week 7**

**10/9**

Film: *Cadillac Desert*

**10/11**

Short Fiction by Wendell Berry (e reserve)

**Week 8**

**10/16**

“The Holistic Alternative,”(SS 118-146)

**10/18**

Snyder, “The Place, the Region, and the Commons” (e reserve)

**Week 9**

**10/23**

Student Presentation

“Sustainability and Politics, a Conversation with Wes Jackson”

<http://www.counterpunch.org/jensen07102003.html>

Wes Jackson, “Nature as the Measure of Sustainable Agriculture” (e reserve)

**Part II**

**10/25**

Student Presentation

Zimdahl, “Agricultural Sustainability,” Chapter 7, *Agriculture’s Ethical Horizon’s* (e reserve)

**Week 10**

**10/30**

Student Presentation

Tilman, et al. “Agricultural Sustainability and Intensive Production Practices”

<http://www.nature.com/nature/food/>

**11/1**

Student Presentation

*The Fatal Harvest Reader*, The Seven Deadly Myths of Industrial Agriculture (Mansfield Library electronic reserve, password: evst495)

**Week 11**

**11 /6**

Student Presentation

Jonathan Rauch, “Will Frankenfood Save the Planet?”

<http://www.monsanto.co.uk/news/ukshowlib.phtml?uid=7455>

Trewavas, “The Population/Biodiversity Paradox. Agricultural Efficiency to Save Wilderness,” *Plant Physiol*, January 2001, Vol. 125, pp. 174-179

<http://www.plantphysiol.org/cgi/content/full/125/1/174>

**11/8**

Student Presentation

Alteri, “The Ecological Impacts of Agricultural Biotechnology”

<http://www.actionbioscience.org/biotech/altieri.html>

Student Presentation

**Week 12**

**11/13**

Student Presentation

Atieri, Agroecology: A New Research and Development Paradigm for World Agriculture

<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/~agroeco3/index.html>

**11/15**

Student Presentation

Vaclav Smil, “Reasons for Concern” in *Feeding the World* (e reserve)

**Week 13**

**11/20**

Student Presentation

Briefing, Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology, “Feeding the World: A Look at Biotechnology and World Hunger”

<http://pewagbiotech.org/resources/issuebriefs/feedtheworld.pdf>

**Week 14**

**11/27**

Student Presentation

Vandana Shiva, Genetic Engineering and Food Security (EF 130-147)

**11/29**

Student Presentation

Altieri & Rosset, "Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology will not Ensure Food Security, Protect the Environment and Reduce Poverty in the Developing World"

<http://www.agroeco.org/>

**Week 15**

**12/4**

Student Presentation

Martina McGloughlin, "Ten Reasons Why Agricultural Biotechnology will be Important to the Developing World"

<http://www.agbioforum.org/v2n34/v2n34a04-mcgloughlin.htm>

**12/6**

Alteri, "The Potential for Agroecology to Confront Hunger in the Developing World"

<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/~agroeco3/index.html>

Norman E. Borlaug, "Ending World Hunger. The Promise of Biotechnology and the Threat of Antiscience Zealotry," Plant Physiol, October 2000, Vol. 124, pp. 487-490,

<http://www.plantphysiol.org/cgi/content/full/124/2/487>

or,

<http://www.agbioworld.org/biotech-info/topics/borlaug/endlhunger.html>