

COURSE SYLLABUS
PHILOSOPHY 2500—INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
SPRING 2006

Section 004, MWF, 1:00-1:50pm, Wooten Hall 217

Section 005, MWF, 2:00-2:50pm, Wooten Hall 217

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Online journal: www.livejournal.com/users/jbsimus/.

Office hours: MWF, 3:00-3:50pm or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will examine some of the fundamental questions, ideas, concepts, and arguments in contemporary environmental issues and environmental philosophy. While familiarizing ourselves with current environmental issues, we will evaluate and discuss the philosophical implications of those issues in a critical yet openminded and respectful fashion. The purpose of this course is to (1) become familiar with contemporary environmental issues, (2) become familiar with the rudiments of environmental philosophy, particularly environmental ethics and aesthetics, and (3) learn to understand, evaluate, and construct arguments regarding environmental topics.

REQUIRED TEXTS

(1) The Worldwatch Institute, *State of the World 2006* (New York: W.W. Norton Publishing, 2006). (SOW)

(2) Michael E. Zimmerman, ed. *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, 4th edition (New York: Prentice Hall, 2004). (EP)

(3) Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant, eds. *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004). (ANE). All available in the campus bookstore.

GRADING AND ATTENDANCE

Your final grade will be based on an introductory paper, 20 reading topic paragraphs (RTPs), three exams, a final paper, attendance, and participation in class discussions. You are responsible for keeping track of your grades. Regular class attendance and participation in discussion is highly recommended. Missing classes will result in missing information that will be on the exams. 5 or more unexcused absences will result in the loss of 5 points. Lack of participation in class discussion will result in the loss of 5 points. Grading scale: 100-90=A; 89-80=B; 79-70=C; 69-60=D; 59-0=F. Makeup exams, papers, or RTPs, will be accepted only with written documentation, such as a physician's note, that excuses you absence. Tardiness or leaving class early will constitute an absence. Sleeping in class will constitute an absence and lack of participation. A breakdown of the 100 possible accumulated points is outlined below.

Assignment	Length	Due date	Points
Introductory paper	800 words	1/25	5
RTPs	One paragraph	See schedule	2 each, 40 total
Exam 1	10 mc + 1 essay	2/17	10
Exam 2	10 mc + 1 essay		10
Exam 3	10 mc + 1 essay	5/8	10
Final paper	4-6 pages	5/1	15
Attendance			5
Participation			5
			100 total

READING TOPIC PARAGRAPHS (RTPS)

For each regular class meeting there will be a reading assignment from the texts. After carefully reading the assigned article, provide a clear, concise, and thoughtful response that answers the following 4 questions. (1) What is the thesis (main point or conclusion) that the author is defending in the article? (2) What is the argument for that thesis? (3) Do you agree or disagree? (4) Why or why not? Your RTPs should be typed (double spaced, 12 point font, including your name, date, and title of the article). RTPs should be between ½ page and one page in length. There will be 20 reading assignments, each counting 2 points for a total of 40 points toward your final grade. RTPs are due at the beginning of class. Late or emailed RTPs (unless you provide documentation excusing your absence) will not be accepted.

EXAMS

The exams will consist of 10 multiple choice questions and one essay. The multiple choice questions will cover lecture, reading, and discussion material. Each multiple choice question will count ½ point. For the essays, you will be asked to construct an argument that defends a thesis on any one of the topics we have discussed, or on a topic we have not discussed, upon my approval. You will be asked to consider a position regarding a contemporary environmental issue, an objection to that view, and a response to that objection. The list of instructions and grading criteria for the essays is posted at www.livejournal.com/users/jbsimus. Each exam counts 10 points toward your final grade.

FINAL PAPER

The final paper will be 4-6 pages in length (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins). As in the exam essays, you will be asked to consider a position, an objection to that view, and a response to that objection. The grading criteria for the papers is similar to the criteria posted on the livejournal site, only each criterion will count 3 points for a total of 15 points. A preliminary thesis and outline of your papers will be due one week before the paper due date. You may write on any topic we have discussed in the course, or on another topic upon my approval.. **ANY PAPER THAT IS LESS THAN 4 FULL PAGES WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY CREDIT.** Papers exceeding 6 pages will be accepted. Papers should be submitted in class in hard copy form. You will be required to submit an electronic copy of your paper(s) upon request.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

To prevent disruption, I do not allow the use of laptop computers, cell phones, text messaging devices, pagers, or other electronic devices in class. To encourage respectful and productive debate, I require that you do not interrupt others when speaking, that you refrain from issuing personal attacks, and that you keep your criticisms constructive during class discussion.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

According to the UNT student code of conduct section A2, the term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to: (a) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear Acknowledgement and (b) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by any agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. **If you are guilty of academic dishonesty (cheating) or plagiarism, you will receive an F for the assignment, this course, and will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.**

RESOURCES

I will provide you with a reading guide, a writing guide, a guide for citing sources in writing your paper. Go to www.livejournal.com/users/jbsimus/ for links to sites on environmental news and issues, and philosophy resource material. See www.phil.unt.edu for UNT philosophy department news, links, and resources.

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	DISCUSSION TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT/RTP DUE
1/18	Course introduction	None
1/20	Philosophy introduction	Syllabus, Plato handout
1/23	Evaluating arguments	Sample arguments handout
1/25	E-Philosophy introduction	Brown timeline (SOW), Zimmerman introduction (EP). intro paper due
1/27	Meat industry	Nierenberg (SOW) 1st RTP due
1/30		
2/1	Freshwater Ecosystems	Postel
2/3		
2/6	Oil alternatives	Hunt, Sawin, Stair
2/8		
2/10	Nanotechnology	Shand, Wetter
2/13		
2/15	Mercury	Greer, Bender, Maxson, Lennett
2/17	EXAM 1	
2/20	Environmental Ethics	Callicott intro (EP), Routley
2/22		

2/24	Animal rights	Singer
2/27		
3/1	Biocentrism	Taylor
3/3		
3/6	The Land Ethic	Leopold
3/8		
3/10	Ecofeminism	Warren intro, Gaard, Gruen
3/13	Spring Break	
3/15	Spring Break	
3/17	Spring Break	
3/20	E-continental philosophy	Klaver intro, Vogel
3/22		
3/24	EXAM 2	
3/27	Environmental Aesthetics	Carlson, Berleant intro. Hepburn (ANE)
3/29		
3/31		Carlson
4/3		
4/5		Berleant
4/7		
4/10		Carroll
4/12		
4/14		Godlovitch
4/17		Final paper thesis and outline due.
4/19		Hepburn
4/21		
4/24		Fisher
4/26		Final paper due
4/28		Crawford
5/1		
5/3		Open
5/5		“review”
5/8		EXAM 3

INTRODUCTORY PAPER: due 1/25.

The purpose of this assignment is to introduce yourself and to get you started thinking about the kinds of questions and issues we will be addressing in this course. In an essay (800 words) please answer the following questions.

1. Who are you?
2. Why study environmental philosophy? (“for course credit” is not an adequate response).
3. How would you characterize your relationship to the natural environment?
4. What environmental issues concern you the most?
5. What beliefs and values about the environment are most important to you?
6. Can you give reasons why you hold those beliefs?
7. Have you considered an opposing point of view?
8. What role are you going to play in the success of this course?
9. What role should the instructor play in the success of this course?
10. What else do you want me to know?