

# ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 425 (3 hrs), Manchester College, Spring 2008

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**Instructor:** Dr. Steve Naragon, Office: Ad Bldg., #35b (Phone — *office:* 982-5041; *home:* 982-6033)

Required Text:

**Course Overview.** We will explore a number of competing traditions that answer the question of how we should distribute benefits (e.g., land, clean air and water, food, healthcare, iPods) and burdens (e.g., polluting factories, incinerators, toxic dump sites) among all those who enjoy moral standing. This will involve exploring two fundamental questions: “What determines this distribution?” and “What determines moral standing?” Almost every issue in environmental philosophy turns on these questions of distributive justice and the breadth and width of our moral community. The “schedule of discussion and readings” (reverse side) offers a closer account of the specific topics.

**Some Course Objectives.** My intention for this class is that — through reading, study, and conversation — we increase our knowledge of factual information regarding environmental matters, and that we fine-tune our understanding of the relevant moral principles and their application. More specific goals include: (1) Become aware of the implications of environmental problems and investigate various likely causes of these problems. (2) Gain facility in distinguishing empirical claims from moral claims. (3) Search for a moral theory that offers adequate protection to the non-human world. (4) Develop skills for critically evaluating arguments and beliefs. (5) Have the opportunity to reflect on two basic questions confronting each of us: What is my proper relationship to other humans? What is my proper relationship with the rest of nature?

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## Requirements

**Readings.** Work through the assignments *prior* to class, and **always bring the text.** *Class discussions depend upon this.*

**Attendance.** This course is heavily dependent on discussion. “Taking the course” requires more than simply doing the written work. Thus the following policy: Six absences (excused or otherwise) are allowed. After that, each additional absence (of any kind) results in a 1% drop in course grade.

**Exams.** There will be three non-cumulative exams on the class discussions, readings, and material presented in class.

**Quizzes.** At the beginning of each class you will complete a brief quiz on the topic for the day (possibly also including material from the previous class sessions). These exercises help keep me informed of your comprehension of the material, and should also help motivate you to read the material when it is due. The quizzes will consist of either 3-4 objective questions (multiple choice, true/false) or else a short essay question. [Makeup: Missed quizzes can be made up in my office the following day or at the very beginning of the next class session; this is your responsibility.]

**Group Research Essay.** Groups will research and write one five page essay (about 1500 words), involving at least two drafts. The essay will be about some consumer good, and the environmental and social effects of its manufacture, distribution, and consumption. Groups will be coordinated using the Discussion Board on *Blackboard*. In preparing the essays, groups will also need to develop a one-page “summary sheet” to be made available to the rest of the class on Blackboard. Finally, I would like each group to present their research as a brief video clip, which should be posted on YouTube; this is your opportunity to share your research findings with the rest of the class, and anyone else in the world with an internet hook-up. The summary sheets need to be clear and concise, with all factual claims carefully documented and a concise bibliography. The video should be accurate, informative, cinematically gripping, and no longer than fifteen minutes. Borrowed sounds, images, and footage must be credited and appropriate to the project. The first draft of the essay is due **Thursday, April 3**; the final draft (and summary sheet) is due **Thursday, April 24**. The video should be posted to YouTube no later than **Friday, May 9**; please email the link to me.

**Grading.** Exams (3 x 21% = 63% of the course grade) + Quizzes (20%) + Research Essay (10%) + Summary Sheet (2%) + Research Presentation (5%). Letter grade conversion: A (94-100), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D-(60-62), F (0-59).

**Cheating and Plagiarism.** Everyone knows what cheating is, and knows how to avoid it; plagiarism, on the other hand, is a little trickier. *Plagiarism* consists of submitting the statements, ideas, opinions, or findings of another *as if they were your own*. It is *not* plagiarism to copy from or paraphrase a source as long as this is acknowledged and the source is cited. For more information, see the college *Catalog* or your *Spartan Cue*.

**SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION AND READING**

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*Population/Consumption*

**Thu, Jan 31**

Locke on Private Property

**Tue, Feb 5**

Read: Hardin (#45)

**Thu, Feb 7**

Read: McKibben (#44) + Pojman (#77)

*Food Ethics*

**Tue, Feb 12**

Read: Hardin (#49) + Murdoch/Oaten (#50)

**Thu, Feb 14**

Read: Coffin (#54) + Fox (#55)

*Animal Rights*

**Tue, Feb 19**

Read: Kant (#7) + Wilson (#8)

**Thu, Feb 21**

Read: Singer (#9)

**Tue, Feb 26**

Read: Regan (#10) + Warren (#11)

**Exam #1**

**Thu, Feb 28**

*Species and Biodiversity*

**Tue, Mar 4**

Read: Meadows (#30) + Russow (#31)

**Thu, Mar 6**

Read: Krieger (#32) + Elliot (#33)

*Constructing an Environmental Ethic*

**Tue, Mar 11**

Read: Rolston (#13)

**Thu, Mar 13**

Read: Schweitzer (#16) + Goodpaster (#18)

— **Tue, Thu, Mar 18, 20 - Spring Break** —

**Tue, Mar 25**

Read: Leopold (#19) + Callicott (#20)

**Thu, Mar 27**

Read: Naess (#24) + Naess (#25)

**Tue, Apr 1**

Read: Bookchin (#28)

**Thu, Apr 3**

Read: Sterba (#29)

**Exam #2**

**Tue, Apr 8**

*Religious Perspectives*

**Thu, Apr 10**

Read: Genesis (#1) + White (#2) + Moncrief (#3) + Dobel (#4)

**Tue, Apr 15**

Read: Dwivedi (#35) + Silva (#36) + Izzi Deen (#37)

*Economics and the Environment*

**Thu, Apr 17**

Read: Baxter (#58) + Schmitz (#69)

**Tue, Apr 22**

Read: Daly (#67) + Sagoff (#68)

*Environmental Justice*

**Thu, Apr 24**

Read: Bullard (#70) + Wenz (#72)

**Tue, Apr 29**

Read: Mies (#73) + Guha (#39)

*Sustainable Societies*

**Thu, May 1**

Read: Saunders (#78) + Pojman (#79)

**Tue, May 6**

Read: Martin (#80) + Foreman (#81)

**Thu, May 8**

Read: Brown/Flavin/Postel (#82)

**Exam #3**

**Finals Week**