

PHIL/ENVIR ST 441: Environmental Ethics
Syllabus, Fall 2016
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A. Administrative Information

Instructor: Professor Robert Streiffer

Office Hours: Tuesday, 3:30-4:30 in my philosophy office, and also by appointment

Philosophy Office: 5101 Helen C. White Hall

Bioethics Office: 1411 Medical Sciences Center

E-mail: rstreiffer@wisc.edu

Teaching Assistant: Emma Prendergast

E-mail: eprendergas2@wisc.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 4:00-5:00; Thursday 1:00-2:00

Office: 5166 Helen C. White

Lectures: 1131 Humanities, Tu, Th, 2:30-3:45

Discussions:

DIS 301 Monday 8:50 – 9:40 2221 Humanities

DIS 302 Monday 9:55 – 10:45 2101 Humanities

DIS 303 Monday 11:00 – 11:50 2131 Humanities

B. Course Description

The primary goal of this course is to prepare students to understand and critically evaluate various ethical perspectives on human beings' relationship to nature and the implications these perspectives have for environmental issues. A secondary goal of the course is to familiarize students with the historical sources of these perspectives and with contemporary manifestations of them in the political arena. The principal ethical perspectives studied will include animal welfare and animal rights views, biocentric individualism, and environmental holism. We will study representative descriptions and defenses of these perspectives and consider their application to contemporary environmental issues such as hunting, the preservation of endangered species, the use of biotechnology, the restoration of nature, sustainability, and global climate change. P: 3 cr. Philosophy enviro studies, or Grad st. in IES.

C. Materials:

- *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*, ed. Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston, available from the UW bookstore or on-line sources such as Borders, Barnes and Noble, and Amazon.
- Additional readings available through Learn@UW.
- Handouts and news articles distributed in class

D. Grading Plan:

I use the following grading scale, with your final grade rounded to the nearest letter grade:

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A	4
AB	3.5
B	3
BC	2.5
C	2
D	1
F	0

- Discussion Section Participation: 10%. The TA for the class will grade you on your overall level of contribution to discussion in sections according to the following holistic rubric (adapted from http://csufresno.edu/academics/documents/participation/grading_class_participation.pdf):

Letter Grade	
A	The student has excellent attendance for the discussion sections; contributes readily to the conversation but doesn't dominate it: makes thoughtful contributions that show a deep understanding of the material while advancing the conversation; shows interest in and respect for others' views; participates enthusiastically in small group activities.
B	The student has good attendance for the discussion sections; consistently makes thoughtful comments; shows interest in and respect for others' views; participates in small group activities. The B student may be may also be an active participant whose contributions are less developed or cogent than those of an A student but that still advance the conversation.
C	The student has good attendance for the discussion sections and occasionally makes thoughtful comments; does not engage with others' views; participates only minimally in small group activities.
D	The student either has poor attendance for the discussion sections or never contributes to classroom discussion or participates in small group activities.
F	The student either has abysmal attendance for the discussion section or is actively disruptive to classroom discussion or small group activities, through, for example, disrespectful or overtly rude comments.

- Quizzes: 20%. There will be several short unannounced quizzes in the discussion sections. These will be on the readings and lectures from the prior week. They will possibly include short-answer, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions. If you have an excused absence on a day when there is a quiz, your grade will be computed as if the quiz you missed did not occur. If you have an unexcused absence, you will get a zero for that quiz. No make-up quizzes will be given. The grade for the quizzes will be determined as follows:

% = total # of correct answers on all the quizzes/total # of questions on all the quizzes
 (“Select all that apply” questions possibly count as having more than one correct answer);

Grade	A	AB	B	BC	C	D	F
%	100-93	92.9-87	86.9-81	80.9-75	74.9-69	68.9-60	0-59.9

- Papers: See the schedules below for dates, lengths, and grade percentages. Undergraduates have two papers. Graduate students have a choice between two papers or one term paper in two drafts. You must hand in all of your papers assigned papers in order to pass the course. You may not elect to opt out of a paper and receive an F on it. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Papers handed in during class but after the beginning of class will be bumped to the next letter grade or half-letter grade down (e.g., from an A to an AB, from a C to a D.) After that, the penalty is one full letter grade per 24 hours. Any non-emergency extensions must be requested prior to the due date, and will be granted only in rare circumstances. Although you are encouraged to discuss your papers with friends and classmates, no group work is allowed.
- Undergraduate Papers:

	Assigned	Due	Paper Length	Grade
1	10/13	11/1	1,800-2,100 words (6-7 pages)	30%
2	11/22	12/13	2,700-3,000 words (9-10 pages)	40%

- Graduate Student Papers:

	Assigned	Due	Paper Length	Grade
1	10/13	11/1	First draft 2,400-3,000 words (8-10 pages); or first paper 2,400-2,700 words (8-9 pages)	NA/30%
2	11/22	12/13	Final draft 5,400-6,000 words (18-20 pages); or second paper 3,300-3,600 words (11-12 pages)	70%/40%

E. Additional Requirements:

- Read all of the assigned readings before the lecture on the date for which they are assigned. Since the readings form the basis of the intellectual content of this course, read them carefully and read them critically. Many of the readings are quite dense and will require that you read them more than once in order to fully understand the argument. Current scholarship on study skills suggests that most students should spend three hours outside of class studying for every hour of class, and that students who do well spend even more time.

- Read the news articles passed out in class. These will give you opportunities to reflect on the relevance of the readings and the lectures to recent or current events. They will also provide additional topics for discussion during the discussion sections.
- Attend all of the lectures. My lecture style includes many opportunities for students to respond to the arguments under discussion, and you will find that being an active listener and participant will greatly increase the amount you learn from this class.
- Attend and participate in all the discussion sections. Discussion section provides a forum for you to ask questions about the readings and lectures and to express and discuss your views about the issues raised.

F. Additional Class Policies

- **Accommodations:** The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>) to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.
- **Academic Misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, trying to get credit for a class you didn't attend, etc.):** I take academic integrity violations very seriously. Penalties for such violations will be adjudicated based upon the severity of the offense, and may range from a grade reduction on the assignment to failure of the course. For information about academic integrity and associated University policies, see <https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>. In addition to the University's policies on regarding academic integrity, all written work must conform to the guidelines at <https://students.wisc.edu/pdf/Plagiarism.pdf>. Failure to comply with these guidelines can result in penalties, including failure of the course, regardless of intent and regardless of whether the matter is also referred to the Dean's office as a case of official academic misconduct.
- **Incompletes:** I think incompletes are almost invariably a bad idea both for the student and the professor, and they will only be granted in rare cases of truly extenuating circumstances. An incomplete will only be granted after the student and I have come to an agreement about when the work for the course will be completed. If the work is not completed by the agreed-upon date, the incomplete will be changed to an F.
- **In-Class Computer Usage:** I strongly recommend that you not use your computer in class. Research has shown that they have a tendency to be distracting, both to the user as well as those around the user, and even when they are only used for note-taking, they still impair learning when compared to taking notes longhand. That said, I will allow them, with the caveat that if I find that laptop use is being disruptive, I reserve the right to ban their use in the classroom.
- I reserve the right to change anything on this syllabus in light of issues or problems that arise during the semester.

- Classroom Etiquette: You are expected to behave in ways that are appropriate and respectful to the professor, the teaching assistant, and the other students. This includes, but is not limited to
 1. Arriving on time. Students who walk into the classroom late create a distraction.
 2. Refraining from private conversations with classmates during lecture or discussion.
 3. Being patient and courteous to other students when they ask a question or make a comment.
 4. Expressing disagreement with the comments of others in a respectful manner.
 5. Removing sunglasses and hats.
 6. Staying awake.
 7. Refraining from reading non-course-related material.
 8. Refraining from packing up until class is completely over.
 9. Turning off any beepers or cell phones upon entering class.

G. Outside Resources

- For additional on-line materials about environmental ethics, some good sources are:
<http://www.cep.unt.edu/>
<http://ethics.sandiego.edu/Applied/Environment/index.asp>
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/>

The Writing Center has several classes and numerous handouts on academic writing. They will also provide individual writing instruction. Appointments can be made by stopping in at 6171 Helen C. White or calling 263-1992. Their web site is www.wisc.edu/writing. They can be much more effective if you approach them early in the writing process.

UW has on-line materials available on how to improve your study skills as an undergraduate at <http://guts.wisc.edu/>.

Jim Pryor has a very helpful page on how to read and write philosophy papers at

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

An excellent introductory book to writing argumentative papers is *A Rulebook for Arguments*, by Anthony Weston. An excellent introduction to writing style is *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. An on-line version of an early edition can be accessed at <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>. Keep in mind that some of the comments on writing a paper will not be appropriate for every particular paper topic.

Students are encouraged to discuss problems concerning the teaching of this course with me or with the TA directly. If you wish to pursue a complaint with someone else, you should contact Jesse Steinberg, Assistant to the Chairperson, Philosophy Department, 5185 H.C. White Hall, 263-5162.