

# Introduction to Environmental Ethics

Phil. 187, Section 003, Spring 2013

Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 2:45-3:35PM  
Dumbach Hall, 228

## Course Instructor

Bryan Kibbe

## Office Hours:

1:30-2:30PM on Mondays

Or by appointment  
(Crown Center 369)

## Course Content:

Environmental ethics began in earnest in the 1960s and 1970s following such major works as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* (1949). This course will introduce you to some of the major issues and questions that researchers have been wrestling with over the past forty years. For instance, do we value nature because of what it provides for us as humans (instrumental value account), or does nature have value in and of itself apart from our interests (intrinsic value account)? Do only animals and sentient life have intrinsic value or do plants and ecosystems also have intrinsic value? How should we care for animals, for plants, for ecosystems? When is it appropriate to intervene in natural processes? Can natural areas and features be restored? Why should we protect natural wilderness areas? We will be considering these questions and more through class readings, lectures, and discussions over the course of the semester.

The course is broken into three major units.

1. **The first unit (Weeks 1-9)** will serve as a general orientation to some of the major issues, questions, and ethical frameworks in environmental ethics. To do this, we will be reading through Holmes Rolston's book, *A New Environmental Ethics* (2012), as well as some key articles in the history of environmental ethics.
2. Following a midterm exam, we will begin the **second unit (Weeks 9-12)** on the theme of technology and the environment. In this unit we will use important work from various philosophers of technology (i.e. Martin Heidegger, Albert Borgmann, Langdon Winner, et al.) to consider how technological systems mediate our relationship with the environment. Specifically we will consider the debate surrounding the possibility or impossibility of restoring damaged landscapes.

3. In the **third unit (Weeks 13-15)**, we will try to apply some of our discussions and insights over the course of the semester to the broad question of how we should live given what we have studied. We will do this by considering several practical questions, in particular, 1) Should I recycle? 2) How should I travel? 3) Where should I live? 4) What kinds of food should I eat? 5) Should I maintain a garden? 6) Should I share resources with my neighbors? 7) How should I experience nature (hunting, hiking or movies)? 8) Should I consume less household goods? Of course we will only have a short time to address each of these questions, but by the end of the course you should have many of the resources needed to continue these conversations and more outside of the classroom.

### Special Circumstances:

- If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (773-508-3700 and [SSWD@luc.edu](mailto:SSWD@luc.edu)) as soon as possible.

### Course Requirements

**Reading responses-** Prepare a one-page (**1.5 spaced**, size 12 font- Times New Roman, 1 inch margins) typed response to the reading assignment for each and all classes (starting with the second class). In your response, you should 1) highlight two major themes or issues raised by the reading and 2) propose two of your own questions about the reading. I will collect and grade only one of your responses each week. You will not know from week to week what day I plan to collect the reading response. Responses will be collected at the beginning of class, and will NOT be accepted late. Missing responses will receive a 0, good responses will receive a ✓(87%), and especially thoughtful responses will receive a ✓+ (98%). If you do the reading and fulfill the requirements, then you will receive no less than a ✓. If your response shows active and insightful engagement with the material, then you will receive no less than a ✓+. The average of all of your reading responses will count as a single grade at the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, I will drop your two lowest reading response grades (For example, if you missed a class or did not turn in a response on two occasions, then I will drop each of those zeros from your average). Your averaged reading response grade will count as 20% of your overall grade.

**Newspaper Analyses:** You will write two, short (3 page, **double spaced**, size 12 font- Times New Roman, 1 inch margins) typed, ethical analyses of a current (within the past month) newspaper article relating to an environmental issue. In one, succinct introductory paragraph (less than half a page), present the ethical dilemma introduced by the article and state your position on the issue. In the remainder of the paper, set forth a thoughtful argument using concepts, distinctions, and values discussed in class to defend and advance your position. The newspaper article must be attached to the assignment when you turn it in. Each newspaper analysis will be worth 15% of your final grade (Total of 30%). See Appendix A for further instructions.

**Midterm and Final-** Both the midterm and final exam will be cumulative, in class examinations involving a variety of multiple choice, true false, definitions, and short answer questions based

on assigned readings and class lectures. The midterm will be worth 20% and the final will be worth 25% of your final grade (Total of 45%).

**Participation-** You are expected to attend each class and contribute to class discussions. Participation can involve well-framed questions and/or comments. This will be particularly important on symposium days when you are expected to come with a written position on a prompt that I have assigned. Participation will count as 5% of your final grade.

- Symposium days are class periods dedicated completely to class discussion, often in response to a prompt that I will assign in advance. Come prepared to speak. I will primarily act as a facilitator of the discussion, and leave it to all of you to provide the substance of the conversation. You will be directing your comments to your fellow classmates. During the discussion, I will be taking notes on who is speaking and contributing.

### Grading Breakdown

Reading Responses: 20%  
 Newspaper Analyses 30%  
 Midterm: 20%  
 Final Exam: 25%  
 Participation: 5%

### Grading Scale

93-100: A	77-79: C+
90-92: A-	73-76: C
87-89: B+	70-72: C-
83-86: B	67-69: D+
80-82: B-	60-66: D
	Below 60: F

### Grading Criteria

F: Failure to meet any of the minimum requirements  
 D: Unsatisfactory, does not meet minimum requirements, but some effort made  
 C: Satisfactory, meets all of the minimum requirements but little else  
 B: Good, evidence of thoughtfulness and insight, clear writing style  
 A: Excellent, consistent thoughtfulness and insight, clear writing style, incisive reasoning

### Required Texts (Available at Loyola Bookstore)

1. Holmes Rolston III. 2012. *A New Environmental Ethics*. New York: Routledge.
2. All other readings can be found online on the course Blackboard website

Schedule of Topics and Readings

NEE- A New Environmental Ethics (Holmes Rolston)

BB- Blackboard

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignments and Exams</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>The Major Questions and Issues (Unit 1)</b>	
Jan. 14	<b>Class Introductions</b>	
Jan. 16	Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" (BB)	
Jan. 18.	"The Environmental Turn" NEE p. 1-31	
<b>Week 2</b>		
Jan. 21	<b>No Class- Martin Luther King Day</b>	
Jan. 23	Rachel Carson, selection from <i>Silent Spring</i> (BB) "People on their Landscapes" NEE p. 32-47	
Jan. 25	Bryan Norton, "Weak Anthropocentrism" (BB)	
<b>Week 3</b>		
Jan. 28	"People on their Landscapes" NEE p. 48-62	
Jan. 30	"Animals" NEE 63-67 Peter Singer, "Specieism" (BB)	
Feb. 1	"Animals" NEE p. 68-92	
<b>Week 4</b>		
Feb. 4	"Organisms" NEE p. 93-110	
Feb. 6	Paul Taylor, "Ethics of Respect for Nature" (BB)	
Feb. 8	"Organisms" NEE p. 110-125	<b>Symposium</b>
<b>Week 5</b>		
Feb. 11	"Species and Biodiversity" NEE p. 126-157	
Feb. 13	"Ecosystems" NEE p. 158-173	
Feb. 15	Arne Naess "Deep Ecology" (BB)	<b>Newspaper Analysis #1 Due</b>
<b>Week 6</b>		
Feb. 18	"Ecosystems" NEE p. 173-193	
Feb. 20	"Earth" NEE p. 194-210	
Feb. 22	Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons" (BB)	
<b>Week 7</b>		
Feb. 25	"Earth" NEE p. 210-226	
Feb. 27	*In class viewing of <i>Grizzly Man</i> (Part 1)	
March 1	*In class viewing of <i>Grizzly Man</i> (Part 2)	
<b>Week 8</b>		
March 4	<b>No Class- Spring Break</b>	
March 6		
March 8		

<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Technology and the Environment (Unit 2)</b>	
March 11	<b>Review session before midterm</b>	
March 13		<b>Midterm Exam</b>
March 15	Martin Heidegger "The Question Concerning Technology" (BB)	
<b>Week 10</b>		
March 18	Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?"	
March 20	Strong and Higgs "Borgmann's Philosophy of Technology" (BB)	
March 22	Albert Borgmann, "The Challenge of Nature" (BB)	
<b>Week 11</b>		
March 25	Paul B. Thompson, "Farming as Focal Practice" (BB)	
March 27	Eric Katz "The Big Lie: Human Restoration of Nature" (BB)	
March 29	<b>No Class- Easter Break</b>	
<b>Week 12</b>		
April 1	<b>No Class- Easter Break</b>	
April 3	Andrew Light "Restoration, Autonomy, and Domination" (BB)	
April 5	*In class viewing of film on ecological restoration	
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>How Should We Then Live? (Unit 3)</b>	
April 8	<b>Should I recycle?</b> McDonough and Braungart, "Why being less bad is no good" (BB)	<b>Symposium</b>
April 10	<b>Planes, trains, and automobiles: How should I travel?</b> Meaton and Morrice, "The Ethics and Politics of Private Automobile Use" (BB)	
April 12	<b>Downtown or out of town: Where should I live?</b> Kirkman, "Reasons to Dwell On (If Not Necessarily In) the Suburbs" (BB)	<b>Newspaper Analysis #2 Due</b>
<b>Week 14</b>		
April 15	<b>What kinds of foods should I eat?</b> Wendell Berry, "The Pleasures of Eating" (BB)	
April 17	<b>Should I maintain a garden?</b> Wendell Berry "Think Little" (BB)	
April 19	<b>Should I share resources with my neighbors?</b> Bill McKibben "The Wealth of Communities" (BB)	
<b>Week 15</b>		
April 22	<b>How should I experience nature (hunting, hiking, or movies)?</b> Cypher and Higgs, "Colonizing the Imagination: Disney's Wilderness Lodge" (BB)	<b>Symposium</b>

April 24	<b>Should I consume less?</b> Reading TBA	
April 26 (Last Day of Class)	<b>Review Session before Final Exam</b>	
May 2		<b>Final Exam 1-3PM</b>

### Academic Honesty

When **quoting or paraphrasing** any material from an author or thinker other than yourself, you **must cite the reference using proper citation standards** (i.e. MLA, Chicago, APA, etc.). **If you are unfamiliar with these citation styles, then you must contact me before completing the assignment.** Failure to do this may count as an instance of plagiarism, and will be punished according to school standards. Additionally, any attempt to copy the work of another person, whether on a quiz or writing assignment, will be counted as an instance of academic dishonesty and addressed according to school guidelines.

#### Examples

If you copy and past any material from Wikipedia or another website online, and do not properly cite the source, then that is a case of plagiarism and will be treated as an instance of academic dishonesty.

If you are paraphrasing some material that someone else said, and do not properly cite the source, then that is a case of plagiarism and will be treated as an instance of academic dishonesty.

If you exchange notes during an in class exam, look/glance at another person's exam, or check notes on your cellphone or laptop during an in class exam, then those are instances of cheating and you will be punished according to the school standards for academic dishonesty.

## Class Policies

1. Laptops or tablets for the purpose of taking notes or following along with an assigned article are permissible during class. However, using laptops to check email, visit Facebook, play games, or do other non-class related activities are strictly prohibited. Do not display any material that is distracting or potentially offensive to other members of the class.
2. Late policies:
  - a. No reading responses will be accepted late (this means 10 minutes late or 1 day late)
  - b. Midterms and Finals will only be administered on the days indicated by the class schedule
  - c. Newspaper analyses will be accepted **up to one class period late**, but at a penalty of one entire letter grade (meaning that a late paper that might otherwise have received an A would receive a B, and so on).
3. All assignments must be submitted in paper format, I will **not** accept any digital submissions via email. Give yourself enough time before the assignment is due to print and staple your assignment. "The printer was not working in the Information Commons" is not an acceptable excuse for not turning an assignment in on time.
4. You should arrive on time to class. Chronically arriving late will impact your participation grade. Additionally, if I have already collected the reading responses for the day and you arrive afterwards, I will not accept the assignment.
5. All cell phones should be turned off or on silent during class.
6. If you have questions or concerns about writing a paper or preparing a reading response for this course, please take the time to talk with me during office hours or contact me via email at least one week in advance of the due date.
7. If you have questions or concerns about a grade that you received, please see me during office hours to discuss your grade.

## Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the option to modify assignments detailed in this syllabus during the semester. If I do make any changes, I will give you appropriate notice and reflect any changes with an updated syllabus that will always be posted on Blackboard.

## Class Contract

As your instructor, I am committing to arrive to class on time and prepared to teach on the material that I have outlined in this syllabus. I will grade your assignments in a fair and timely manner. I expect you to attend class regularly, follow the instructions provided in this syllabus and on Blackboard, and to be prepared and willing to engage in class discussion.

Thank you.

### Appendix A: Newspaper Analysis Assignment

Directions: You will write two short (3 page, **double spaced**, size 12 font- Times New Roman, 1 inch margins) ethical analyses of a current (within the past month) newspaper/magazine article that raises an environmental ethics issue. The newspaper article must be attached to the assignment when you turn it in.

In one, succinct intro paragraph (less than half a page), present the ethical dilemma introduced by the article and state your position on the issue. In the remainder of the paper, set forth a thoughtful argument using concepts, distinctions, and values discussed in class to defend and advance your position. Your argument should be structured according to the standard class format below.

1. Clearly state the issue or question raised by the newspaper article (some articles may raise multiple issues, you should pick just one) [Do not summarize the article]
2. State your position on the issue (This is your thesis, and it should be in the first paragraph)
3. Provide reasons for taking your position (These should be the first sentence of each subsequent paragraph after your introduction)
4. Offer 2 possible objections to your position, and respond to those objections. (You should preface each objection with, "Someone might object that...")
5. Conclude by restating your position and summarizing the central reasons for taking your position.

This assignment has two primary objectives:

1. To get you to apply what you have learned in class to contemporary ethical dilemmas as they appear on a regular basis in news sources.
2. To develop your own confidence and skill in taking a clear position and defending it, so that you are then more able to articulate your own position and your reasons for holding it.

#### **To be clear:**

- The goal of this assignment is to be succinct and to the point. You have a small amount of space to make your points and present your argument, thus it is important that you think about and plan what you want to say in advance of writing.
- To do this assignment well will require that you are frequently reading articles in major news sources. Not every article will clearly raise an ethical issue, and thus it is important that you are reading reputable newspapers and magazines (i.e. no tabloids, blogs, or commercial websites) over the course of several days, on the lookout for articles that raise interesting and significant issues or dilemmas.

#### **Suggested News Resources**

<b>Local Newspapers:</b> Chicago Sun Times Chicago Tribune	<b>National Newspapers:</b> New York Times The Wall Street Journal The Washington Post	<b>Online News Services:</b> Google News (Able to create personal news feed based on keywords)
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