

PHIL 0060 - INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Catalog Description

Advisory: Eligibility for ENGL 1A

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Philosophical survey of the ethical questions and issues raised when considering the relationship between human beings and the environment. Topics include the moral standing of animals, land use and preservation policy, growth and sustainability, and environmental justice. Theoretical approaches include deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism, multicultural perspectives, and environmental pragmatism. (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Apply major ethical theories to issues of environmental responsibility.
- CSLO #2: Describe the cultural influences on ideas of nature and wilderness.
- CSLO #3: Compare and contrast positions in environmental ethics (e.g. Animal Welfare versus Rights, Deep Ecology vs Social Ecology, Ecofeminism vs Deep Ecology).
- CSLO #4: Communicate effectively orally or in writing on a topic in environmental ethics.

Effective Term

Fall 2022

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Apply the ethical theories of divine command, Utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, natural law, and virtue ethics to environmental issues such as wilderness preservation, sustainability, pollution, and global warming;
2. Describe the way historical ideas of nature and wilderness affect humankind's moral treatment of the natural environment;
3. Analyze the conflicts that exists between extending moral consideration to animals, plants, and ecosystems and the human need to use natural resources;
4. Compare and contrast anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches to environmental ethics;
5. Analyze the main ethical approaches of Creation Care, Free-Market Environmentalism, Deep Ecology, Social Ecology, Environmental Justice,

Ecofeminism, Environmental Pragmatism in terms of their strengths and weaknesses

6. Assess the challenges of contemporary environmental problems in terms of the available ethical, political, and economic frameworks.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Literature & Language
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
 - CSUGE - C2 Humanities
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)
 - IGETC - 3B Humanities

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
 - Example: Instructor will lead a discussion about (1) Karen Warren's argument on the conceptual connections between the oppression of women and nature. During the last few minutes of the class, students will provide a written answer the following questions: "What the clearest point you learned today?"; and, "What point remains least clear to you?".
- Essay Examinations
 - Example: Write a four page essay that identifies the challenges and opportunities for Judeo-Christians when developing an environmental ethic based on the intrinsic value of nature/wilderness. Student essays will be assessed based upon a rubric that includes criteria such as correctness of response, thoroughness of explanation, relevance of quotes provided, and demonstration of "justification" by way of quote selection.
- Objective Examinations
 - Example: Students will take a multiple-choice examination aligning the terminology ethical theories with the corresponding moral positions defending the moral consideration of non-human animals. Example: Why does Hardin reject the appeal to individual moral conscience as an adequate solution to the Tragedy of Commons? A. Individual moral conscience is too restrictive of necessary freedoms. B. Divine Command theories vary too much from culture to culture. C. Appeal to individual moral conscience fails to adequately provide incentives and disincentives. D. all the above
- Projects
 - Example: Students create poster presentations depicting the way historical ideas of nature and wilderness (1) continue to exist and (2) have changed in mainstream media. Posters will be graded based upon (a) accuracy and (b) thoroughness.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will facilitate a discussion on why the bumper-sticker, "Tree Hugging Dirt Worshiper," could inadvertently create a divisive message regarding efforts to promote environmental sustainability. Students will learn to identify the challenge of promoting environmental sustainability in the context of a divine command theory that identifies nature as having only instrumental value.
2. Instructor will moderate an in-class debate over whether hunting is morally justifiable. Students will learn why Peter Singer and Tom Regan would for different reasons ethically object to hunting; whereas Aldo Leopold would defend certain types of hunting as part of developing an ecological conscious. Students will learn to analyze the conflicts that exist when extending moral consideration to animals, plants, and ecosystems and the human need to use natural resources.

Distance Learning

1. Distance learning students will watch the film, "If a Tree Falls," and instructor will lead a discussion on the challenges of advocating for environmental sustainability given the available ethical framework of civil disobedience. Students will learn to assess the challenges facing environmental efforts given available ethical, political, and economic frameworks.

- Environmental Ethics
 - Author: Joseph R. Des Jardins
 - Publisher: Wadsworth
 - Publication Date: 2012
 - Text Edition: 5th
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works
 - Author: David Schmidtz and Dan C. Shaha
 - Publisher: Oxford University Press
 - Publication Date: 2018
 - Text Edition: 3rd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Arnae Naess', "The Deep Ecology Movement: Some Philosophical Issues," and Anthony Weston's "Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics" and (1) identify Naess' argument for why the concept intrinsic value is essential for environmental ethics and (2) identify Weston's main arguments against the concept intrinsic value and be prepared to discuss in class.
2. Read Eugene Hargrove's "Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value," and identify the distinction he is making with the term "weak" insofar as it relates to an anthropocentric evaluation of the environment and be prepared to discuss in class.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Write a three-page essay that explains what Roderick Nash means when he states that the presence of wilderness presented early world settlers with both physical and spiritual challenges.
2. Write a three-page essay that identifies the challenges of environmental justice as being different from the more typical interests of environmental groups such as the Sierra Club.

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Required Materials

- Environmental Ethics
 - Author: Michael Boylan
 - Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell
 - Publication Date: 2013
 - Text Edition: 2nd
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER: