Phil 250: Environmental Ethics
Spring 2013
Monday, Wednesday 7:40–9:00 PM, Hardenbergh Hall A2

INSTRUCTOR: Preston Greene
OFFICE HOURS: 3 Seminary Place, Room 005
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COURSE GOALS:
We’ll be learning about a number of difficult moral issues in environmental ethics, relating to such topics as climate change, animal welfare, food, and population growth. In the first part of the course, we will learn about different approaches to ethical questions generally, as well as proposed approaches that are distinctive of environmental ethics. In the second part of the class we investigate these debates, and spend some time thinking about the biases that may be engaged by those on both sides of an issue that make resolution difficult.

The class is designed to allow you to develop skills for reasoning effectively and impartially about difficult moral issues. This will partly involve learning different theoretic frameworks for investigating ethical questions, and partly involve developing philosophical critical thinking skills that are relevant to thinking through any difficult issue. By the end of the course you will hopefully have formed reasoned opinions, based on the evidence available to you, about the various issues we discuss.

READINGS
There is a sakai website for the class that is available once you are enrolled. You can find it by going to http://sakai.rutgers.edu and clicking on the “Environmental Ethics” tab. All readings can be found on sakai site, as well as class announcements. You will also receive announcements through your Rutgers email address, so make sure to check it frequently.

REQUIREMENTS:
Short Assignments/Participation: 10%
Research Poster: 15%
Exam 1: 20%
Exam 2: 25%
Paper (4-6 pages): 30%
ATTENDANCE
Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the university absence reporting website: sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

INITIAL READING LIST

Jan 23: Introduction

Jan 28: What Is Environmental Ethics?
Rolston, III, “Environmental Ethics”

Jan 30: Moral Theories and Anthropocentrism
Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles (selection)
Shafer-Landau, Normative Ethics Chp. 9
Optional:
Mill, Utilitarianism (selection)

Feb 4: Moral Theories (cont.)
Shafer-Landau, Normative Ethics, Chp. 10
Frasz, “Environmental Virtue Ethics”
Optional:
Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals (selection)

Feb 6: Moral Theories (cont.)
Sylvan, “Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?”
Merchant, “The Death of Nature”

Feb 11: Anthropocentric Environmentalism vs. Deep Ecology
Naess, “The Deep Ecology Movement”
Watson, “A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Biocentrism”

Feb 13: Animal Welfare
Rachels, “The Basic Argument for Vegetarianism”
Pollan, The Omnivore's Dilemma Chp. 17

Feb 18: Animal Welfare (cont.)
Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, and People
Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights
Feb 20: Animal Welfare (cont.)
Singer, “All Animals Are Equal”
Scruton, “The Conscientious Carnivore”

Feb 25: Animal Welfare (cont.)
Kagan, “Do I Make a Difference?”

Feb 27: Exam Review

Mar 4: Exam 1

Mar 6: Moral Psychology and the Environment
Feinberg, “The Paradox of Hedonism”
Partridge, “Why Care About the Future?”

Mar 11: Climate Change
Watch An Inconvenient Truth
Shue, “Subsistence Emissions vs. Luxury Emissions”
Gardiner, “The Perfect Moral Storm” (selection)

Mar 13: Climate Change (cont.)
Finish An Inconvenient Truth and discuss

Mar 25: Climate Change (cont.)

Mar 27: Climate Change (cont.)
Watch The Great Global Warming Swindle
Baer, “The Right to Develop in a Climate Constrained World”

Apr 1: Climate Change (cont.)
Finish The Great Global Warming Swindle and discuss
Haidt, The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion (selection)

Apr 3: Food
Union of Concerned Scientists, “Industrial Agriculture: Features and Policy”
Optional:
Pollan, Omnivore’s Dilemma Chps. 8 and 9
Apr 8: Food (cont.)
The Economist, “Voting with Your Trolley”
The Economist, “Good Food?”

Apr 10: Food (cont.)

Apr 15: Food (cont.)
Manning, Food’s Frontier, 191–207
Pretty, Agri-Culture, 3--10 and 126--145

Apr 17: Food (cont.)
Princeton University, “A Sweet Problem: Princeton Researchers Find that High-Fructose Corn Syrup Prompts Considerably More Weight Gain”
Grist, “Researchers: HFCS Is Much Worse than Table Sugar”

Apr 22: Population Growth
Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons”
Simon, “The Ultimate Resource”

Apr 24: Population Growth (cont.)
McKibben, “A Special Moment in History”
Wolf, “Population and the Environment”

Apr 29: Population Growth (cont.)
Worldwatch Institute, “The Economic Conundrum of an Aging Population”

May 1: Exam Review

May 6: Exam 2