

## **PHIL 213 Environmental Ethics**

### **Topic of Sustainability in Environmental Ethics:**

**The topic of sustainability is of course a natural one for environmental ethics. Most of the course revolved around this theme, examining various ethical positions regarding environmental issues. Sustainability was also directly addressed (and even criticized) as an ethical position. The students were required to define sustainability, inform themselves about its relevant issues, and be able to express & criticize its position in various assignments (journals & quizzes). The students also put together a "Sustainability-Fair" on a variety of topics for the campus community.**

## **PHILOSOPHY 213: ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

Section 1 (30799)

### **SYLLABUS AND COURSE OUTLINE**

T/TH 10:00-11:15 AM

Spring 2007

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Office Hours: T/TH 9:00-10:00 AM; 4:00-4:30 PM (and other times by appointment)

Instructor: *C. M. Gschwandtner*

Office: *St. Thomas #557*

Phone: *ext. #7756*

#### *COURSE DESCRIPTION*

An introduction to environmental philosophy and the various ethical responses to the ecological crisis of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examines such issues as biocentrism vs. anthropocentrism, the relation between culture and nature, the environmental ethical debate.

#### *COURSE OBJECTIVES*

- The course will allow students to explore and compare various systematic accounts of the moral relations between human beings and their natural environment.
- The course will explore the roles of science, technology, religion, and philosophy in bringing about the current environmental condition and their potential in ameliorating it.
- The course will outline and criticize ethical theories employed to advocate environmentally conscious positions and policies.
- The course will deal with specific philosophical positions in environmental ethics, such as sustainability, animal rights, biocentrism, ecofeminism, social/political ecology, ecophenomenology.

#### *REQUIRED READING*

- *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. Fourth Edition. Pearson, 2005.
- other readings as distributed in class or on reserve in the library

#### *COURSE REQUIREMENTS*

- You are expected to come to class prepared, having finished and reflected on the required reading, ready to engage in discussion. Most of our class sessions will be discussions of the assigned material, so it is very important that you read the material before class and come prepared to discuss it.
- This class will be essentially discussion-oriented. Your active participation in class discussion in

forms of questions, comments and other contributions is *absolutely essential* to make the class an interesting and successful experience for all of us. Participation will therefore be a significant component of your grade (15%). Come to class prepared with questions and/or comments. Participation will include at least one weekly blackboard posting about an environmental issue or a suggestion for ecologically conscious action. Reflective e-mail questions or comments concerning the read material/class discussions may supplement in-class participation (e.g. participation in blackboard discussions). To count as participation, such e-mails must engage the *content* of class.

- There will be **five quizzes** in the course of the semester dealing directly with comprehension of the discussed material. Each will be worth 5% of your grade, for a total of 25%. Tentative dates for quizzes are *Feb. 22, March 8, April 3, April 26, and May 10, 2005*.
- As a class we will put together a Sustainability-Fair to apply the learned material by informing the campus community about it. Each student will participate in a **group project/presentation** for the fair. The project & fair participation will be worth 15% of the grade. The fair will be on **April 12, 2007**.
- You are to keep an electronic journal for the class which will be accessible to the entire class on blackboard and where we will share insights about environmental issues and ideas. Questions or suggestions for reflection will be provided. Your cumulative journal grade will be 20% of your grade. One journal will ask you design a webpage about a local environmental organization (or some other useful topic) that could be included on the SAGE initiative's website. Since this journal will require a bit more work and some research, it will be worth an extra 5%.
- In place of a final exam there will be a cumulative portfolio that will contain the insights gained from journals, class, and the group project. (The best such portfolios will be used by the SAGE initiative or another local organization of your choice.) This portfolio will be worth 20% of your grade.

**ATTENDANCE**

This course is heavily discussion-oriented, thus your attendance is absolutely imperative. If you do have to miss a class, you are expected to get the material from a classmate, however, you are encouraged to come by and talk to me about the material afterwards. *Excessive absence (more than four sessions) may result in failure of the course.* [Repeated tardiness counts as absence.]

**GRADING**

Your overall grade will be determined as follows:

- Participation: 15%
- Quizzes: 25%
- Sustainability Fair Project: 15%
- Journals: 25%
- Final Portfolio: 20%
- **Total: 100%**

100% -95%	A	94% - 90%	A-	89% - 87%	B+	86% - 83%	B
82% - 80%	B-	79% - 77%	C+	76% - 73%	C	72% - 70%	C-
69% - 67%	D+	66% - 63%	D	62% - 60%	D-	59% - 0 %	F

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READING**

<i>Week 1 (Jan. 25/30)</i>	Introduction: What is Environmental Ethics?	
<i>Week 2 (Feb. 1/6/8):</i>	Sustainability: What are the issues?	R: EP, 419-29
<i>Week 3 (Feb. 13/15):</i>	Why are we in this Crisis?	R: White, "Ecological Crisis"
<i>Week 4 (Feb. 20/22):</i>	Why are we in this Crisis?	R: "Renewing the Earth"
<i>Week 5 (Feb. 27; Mar. 1):</i>	Animals Rights	R: EP, 25-52
<i>Week 6 (March 6/8):</i>	Animals Rights & Biocentrism	R: EP, 53-81
<i>Week 7 (March 20/22):</i>	Environmental Justice	R: EP, 178-93
<i>Week 8/9 (March 27/29; April 3):</i>	Political Ecology	R: EP, 450-78

<i>Week 10 (April 10/12):</i>	<b>Sustainability Fair</b>	no reading
<i>Week 11 (April 17/19):</i>	Ecofeminism	R: EP, 139-77
<i>Week 12 (April 24/26):</i>	Ecofeminism	R: EP, 208-27
<i>Week 13 (May 1/3):</i>	Ecophenomenology	R: EP, 311-34
<i>Week 14 (May 8/10):</i>	Ecophenomenology	

**[Note: Schedule and due dates are subject to change, depending on the pace of the course.]**

#### *OTHER COMMENTS*

- **Plagiarism:** Using any work or ideas that are not your own (whether summarizing or quoting, whether from a book, article, internet, or other source) without clearly indicating the author or source is considered plagiarism and will receive an automatic F for that assignment (and possibly the course). Please refer to the university *Code of Ethics* on plagiarism.
- Please turn off all cell phones or pagers during class and refrain from eating or other activities that cause any kind of disturbing **noise** in the classroom.
- All **assignments** must be turned in on time, on standard sized paper, typed, double-spaced, and stapled. Do not send papers by e-mail. Print them out early enough, so that computer problems will not be an issue. *Make sure to keep an extra copy of your assignments at all times.* Late assignments will be reduced by a letter grade per class session that they are late.