

# PHILOSOPHIES OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Gustavus Adolphus College  
Spring Semester, 2006  
**Section 1:** 11:30 MWF, OM 207  
**Section 2:** 2:30 MWF, OM 207

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Office Hours: 3:30 – 4:00 MWF

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is an introductory course in philosophy as well as a required course in the Environmental Studies major. It assumes no previous experience with philosophy. Philosophy, Aristotle was fond of saying, begins in wonder, not knowledge. This course will ask you to reflect on what questions are worth asking about nature and our relationships to it. It has little to do with settling on final answers.

The readings in the course are designed to both articulate and challenge typical American ways of looking at “the environment”. Not all cultures have a concept of “the environment” as something different from human culture. Some cultures would say that the very need for an “environmental ethic” reflects a degree of alienation from nature that other cultures do not experience. Since many questions of environmental ethics operate through issues of scale (global warming is both global and local) we will constantly be asking whether an American sense of the environment helps or hurts when it is projected onto the rest of the world.

This course satisfies the Humanities requirement for general education in Curriculum I.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

Three papers. Papers will be due one week to the day from the time we finish the final author in a section. They will be approximately four to five pages in length. No late papers will be accepted. Philosophy papers are likely to be very different from any other kind of paper you have written. You will receive a handout describing how to write a philosophy paper,.

Two tests. There will be two tests in this class. Each will be fifty minutes in length and will combine essays with short answers.

Class contribution, informal writing and reading quizzes. Socrates believed that philosophy goes on in public, not in the comfortable privacy of your room. Since human beings are fallible, the best way to test our opinions is to examine them with others. This Socratic conception of philosophy requires that you come to class prepared every day. To assist you I will often give short, informal writing assignments that help you to think through the text and the ideas it raises. These writing assignments will be the basis for class discussion. Since the point of these assignments is to encourage your creativity, the assignments will not be graded. However, I will keep track of your attendance and

whether you hand in informal writing assignments. I may also give quizzes on the reading material.

Grading. The two tests and three papers will each count for one fifth of your final grade. Class contribution and informal writing can affect your final grade by up to two thirds of a full grade.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- All texts for this class are on electronic reserve in the Gustavus library.

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

#### **2/6 – 2/13. Introduction: Doing Ethics Cross-Culturally:**

- Martha Nussbaum, “Judging Other Cultures: The Case of Genital Mutilation”
- Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, “The Environmentalism of the Poor”

#### **2/15 – 2/27. Section One: Wilderness and the Integrity of Ecosystems**

- John Muir, “The Hetch Hetchy Valley”
- Gifford Pinchot, “The Fight for Conservation”
- 1964 Wilderness Act (excerpt)
- Jack Turner, “The Abstract Wild,” from *The Abstract Wild*
- Arne Naess, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecological Movement,” “Ecosophy T: Deep vs. Shallow Ecology”
- Ramachandra Guha, “Radical Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique”
- Ward Churchill, “Nits Make Lice: The Extermination of North American Indians, 1607-1996”
- William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness”
- Pramod Parajuli, “How Can Four Trees Make a Jungle?”
- Fabienne Bayet, “Overturning the Doctrine: Indigenous People and Wilderness—Being Aboriginal in the Environmental Movement”
- Raymond Bonner, “At the Hand of Man: Peril and Hope for Africa’s Wildlife”

**3/1.** Writing workshop. First paper due in class Wednesday, March 8

#### **3/3 – 3/10. Section Two: Animal Cultures, Ecological Identity, and Animal Ethics**

- John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?” from *About Looking*
- Immanuel Kant, “Rational Beings Alone Have Moral Worth”
- Marc Bekoff, “Animal Minds and What’s in Them,” from *Minding Animals*
- James Rachels, “The Basic Argument for Vegetarianism”

- Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal”
- Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”
- Roger Scruton, “The Conscientious Carnivore”
- Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*

### **3/13 – 3/15. Section Three: Darwin’s Legacy for Environmental Ethics**

- George Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (excerpt)
- Edgar Rice Burroughs, “The Light of Knowledge,” from *Tarzan of the Apes*
- Stephen Jay Gould, “The Golden Rule—A Proper Scale for Our Environmental Crisis”

### **3/17 – 3/20. Section Four: Population and the Environment**

- Thomas Malthus, excerpt from *An Essay on the Principle of Population*.
- Amartya Sen, “Population: Delusion and Reality”

### **3/22. Review for Midterm Examination**

### **3/24. Midterm Examination**

### **4/3 – 4/7. Section Five: Private Property and Sustainability**

- John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, chapter V section 25
- Terry L. Anderson and Donald R. Leal, “Free Market Versus Political Environmentalism”
- Paul Hawken, “A Declaration of Sustainability”
- Darrell Addison Posey, “Intellectual Property Rights and the Sacred Balance: Some Spiritual Consequences from the Commercialization of Traditional Resources”

### **4/10 – 4/ 12. Section Six: Forests, Sacred Groves and the Biological Commons**

- Wangari Maathai, The Greenbelt Movement,
- Sahotra Sarkar, “Restoring Wilderness or Reclaiming Forests”

### **4/19 – 4/21. Section Seven: Agriculture**

- Norman Borlaug, “The Green Revolution, Peace, and Humanity”
- Deane Curtin, “Making Peace with the Earth: Indigenous Agriculture and the Green Revolution”
- Frances Moore Lappé, “Food, Farming, and Democracy”

### **4/24 – 4/28. Section Eight: Women and the Environment**

- Amartya Sen, “Many Faces of Gender Inequality”
- Karen Warren, “The Power and Promise of Ecofeminism”
- Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen, “Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health”
- Deane Curtin, “Recognizing Women’s Environmental Expertise”

### **5/1 – 5/3. Section Nine: Indigenous Environmental Issues**

- Pradip Prabhu, “In the Eye of the Storm: Tribal Peoples in India”
- Winona LaDuke, “Indigenous Environmental Perspectives, A North American Primer”

### **5/5. Section Ten: Environmental Racism**

- Peter Wenz, “Just Garbage”
- Winona LaDuke, “Nuclear Waste: Dumping on the Indians,” from *All Our Relations*

### **5/8 – 5/12. Section Eleven: Globalization**

- Helena Norberg-Hodge, “The Pressure to Modernize and Globalize”
- Ken Saro-Wiwa, Closing Statement to the Nigerian Military Tribunal
- Nader, Ralph and Lori Wallach, “GATT, NAFTA, and the Subversion of the Democratic Process” *The Case Against the Global Economy*. Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith. San Francisco, Sierra Club Books.
- Jagdish Bhagwati, “Environment in Peril?” from *In Defense of Globalization*
- *The Earth Charter*
- Sulak Sivaraksa, “Development as if People Mattered?”
- Ogbu U. Kalu, “The Sacred Egg: Worldview, Ecology, and Development in West Africa”

### **5/15. Section Twelve: Contemporary Culture**

- Dale Jamieson, “Against Zoos,”
- Dave Foreman, “Strategic Monkeywrenching”

### **5/17. Review for Final Examination**

**Final Examination:** Friday, May 19, 3:30 – 5:30, OM 06

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please observe the above dates carefully; no alternate dates for papers and exams will be scheduled because of early flights home, late arrivals, encounters with St. Peter’s finest, near death experiences, etc.

