Syllabus for GSR 150:
**Unchopping a tree: Introduction to Environmental Ethics**
Spring 2008

Instructors and Office Hours

Dr. Teresa Burke  
Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
teresa.burke@gallaudet.edu

Dr. Caroline Solomon  
Associate Professor of Biology  
caroline.solomon@gallaudet.edu

Office Hours: TBA

Class Meeting Time and Locations

Days T Th  Time 10am-12pm

Course Description

**General:** This course is intended to help your transition from the basic skills courses of the first semester to the more challenging 200 level Integrated Learning Courses they will take afterward. It will be team-taught by at least two faculty members from different disciplines and will focus on a central topic/question; topics/questions will vary from section to section and semester to semester. Whatever the topic, the goal will be to start building your competency with regard to all five Undergraduate Learning Outcomes.

**This specific course:** This course will expose you to introductory concepts in environmental science and ethics through case studies and primary philosophical sources on a variety of environmental issues including, but not limited to, endangered and invasive species, pollution, population growth, urban sprawl, and climate change. You will learn concurrently basic concepts in ecology and key theoretical frameworks in ethics and issues in philosophy of science, plus selected topics in philosophy of science.
Course Outcomes

1. (Language & Communication) Students will use American Sign Language (ASL) and written English to communicate effectively with diverse audiences, for a variety of purposes, and in a variety of settings
   a. (1.1, 1.3-1.5) Students will use different modes of visual communication, not limited to ASL, to convey basic ecological and ethical concepts through classroom discussions and a presentation.
   b. (1.2, 1.4) Students will be exposed to different types of academic writing through philosophical papers and a lab report.
   c. (1.2-1.4) Students will demonstrate competence in receptive communication and comprehension of written material, through a summary of the primary argument and supporting details in the explicative essay focused on a specific reading assignment, and through argument analysis in the argumentative essay, focused on a few assigned reading sources.
   d. (1.2-1.4) Students will express their understanding of ecology and ethics through essay questions on two exams.

2. (Critical Thinking) Students will summarize, synthesize, and critically analyze ideas from multiple sources in order to draw well-supported conclusions and solve problems
   a. (2.1-2.4) Students will bring together ideas, comparing, contrasting and building on them to arrive at reasonable conclusions. Students will evaluate the structure and soundness of arguments, objections, and replies. Students will identify arguments and their supporting details (structure) in the explicative paper, and evaluate the logic of arguments and strengths of evidence using deductive or inductive methods through the two argumentative philosophical papers. Argumentative papers will include cogent reasons in support of one’s opinions, as well as considering objections and replies.
   b. (2.1-2.2, 2.5) Students, through their synthesis project, will analyze current scientific primary and secondary sources and devise a scientific experiment that is intended improve our understanding of environmental issues.
   c. (2.4-2.5) Through discussions, students will be expected to analyze complex environmental issues and provide cogent reasons and modify one’s approach if needed to support one’s opinions.

3. (Identity & Culture) Students will understand themselves, complex social identities, including deaf identities, and the interrelations within and among diverse cultures and groups.
   a. (3.2-3.4) Students will discuss in class how changes in the environment have impact on diverse groups of people around the world.
b. (3.1, 5.3) Students will develop an understanding of how he/she has an impact on the environment and how he/she will handle those consequences.

c. (3.5) Students will develop and practice civility in class discussions and written academic work through the principle of charity and observing the practice of respectful interdisciplinary academic exchange.

4. (Knowledge & Inquiry) **Students will apply knowledge, modes of inquiry, and technological competence from a variety of disciplines in order to understand human experience and the natural world**
   a. (4.1, 4.5) Students will demonstrate introductory level competence in ecology and ethics and apply their understanding to tackle complex environmental problems.
   b. (4.2, 4.4) Students will discuss how the modes of inquiry of ecology and ethics contribute to a richer and deeper understanding of environmental issues.

5. (Ethics & Social Responsibility) **Students will make reasoned ethical judgments, showing awareness of multiple value systems and taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions. They will apply these judgments, using collaboration and leadership skills, to promote social justice in their local, national and global communities.**
   a. (5.2, 5.4) Students will demonstrate intellectual honesty, respect and integrity in their discussions of how different values, beliefs, and priorities can lead to different conclusions of what is right or wrong.
   b. (5.1) Students will, through their writing, will be expected to support ethical judgments with clear and cogent reasons.
   c. (5.3) Students will, through their writing, assess the ethical consequences of particular actions using utilitarian and deontological analyses.
Required Materials


*Gallaudet e-mail account.* If you do not use Gallaudet e-mail, set your Gallaudet account to forward to the account that you do read.

*Access to my.gallaudet.edu*
Assessment

Grading

This semester you will write 3 philosophical papers: (1) explicative, identifying and explaining an argument and argument structure; (2) argumentative, using specific course reading assignments as the basis for argumentation; and (3) you develop your own argument, using a combination of assigned materials and references that you select yourself. You will also be tested on the material learned in class in two essay exams. Also, at one point throughout the semester, you will be asked to do a presentation on a topic that is related to the current issue being discussed in lecture. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to synthesize what you have learned to devise a potential or actual scientific experiment that aims to help better understand an environmental issue in the format of a scientific lab report. Last but not least, your participation in class is essential and valuable and we expect you to come prepared to class (i.e. do the reading before class) so that you can make excellent contributions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 short papers</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 essay exams</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 class presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester synthesis (lab report)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class discussion/participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Policies

Due Dates

All assignments should be turned in electronically via Blackboard to allow for interaction, comments and feedback between you and your professors.

Assignments become late immediately after the day and time the assignment is due. Late assignments will be penalized according to the assignment rubric, and may be accepted for up to one week after the original due date.

Missing Classes or Exams Due to Conflict or Emergency

You are expected to attend all class meetings and turn in all assignments on time. The only exceptions are for documented emergencies or official conflicts.

Emergencies are extreme circumstances generally limited to hospitalization, death in the family or subpoena. Routine medical appointments are not considered an emergency.
Official conflicts include academic commitments or commitments to other classes such as field trips. Appointments with academic advisors or other instructors are not considered official conflicts.

In all situations, if you missed or will miss a class meeting or assignment, you are responsible for contacting the instructor and asking for special arrangements. For emergencies, you need to provide documentation. For official conflicts, you need to provide documentation and to ask for arrangements ahead of time.

Any special arrangements need to be documented in writing, for your protection. Upon your request, the instructor will e-mail you a description of these arrangements.

Class Cancellations or University Closings

If the university closes for any reason or I must unexpectedly miss class, check the announcement section of Blackboard for specific instructions, which will be posted by class time if at all possible.

Office Hours and Appointments

Office hours are times when you can expect to find me in my office. You are encouraged to make an appointment so that you can be sure that I am available to meet with you. Appointments may be available at other times as well; just ask. You are also welcome to stop by my office any time; if I am there and have the time, I will be happy to meet with you.

Special Needs

If you are a client of OSWD, see your instructor during the first two weeks of the semester so that your needs may be met.

University Policies

Academic Dishonesty

If an instructor discovers that a student is involved in unethical practices in connection with required course work, the instructor has full discretion to give a failing grade for the particular assignment(s), a failing grade for the course, and/or to recommend dismissal from the university. See the Gallaudet University Guidelines for Academic Integrity (http://my.gallaudet.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/Public/CUE-Academic-Integrity08-21-07.doc) for further information on this policy.
You will work independently on all assignments unless you have the explicit permission of your instructors.

**Attendance**

Regular attendance and participation is an obligation assumed by every student registered for courses at Gallaudet University. As stated above, attendance and participation in each class meeting is crucial for making progress on both your literature review and project proposals.

Students must attend the first week of classes to verify their enrollment. The instructor may drop students who are registered for class who fail to attend the first week of scheduled classes, from the course.

**Audit**

Auditing for this course will not be permitted due to the nature of the course.

**Disclaimers**

The course meeting times and assignment due dates initially set forth are subject to reasonable change by the instructor at any time. These changes may be announced during the class meeting time. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of any such information that may be announced.

The instructor reserves the right to remove a student from the class if the student appears to be disruptive or to have come to lab unprepared.
## Schedule for GSR 150: Environmental Ethics  
### Spring 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Environmental Science</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
<th>Readings/ Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
<td>Scientific Method</td>
<td>Philosophical Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>January 28</td>
<td><strong>Issue 1:</strong> Endangered and invasive species</td>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Value Theory: Ethics and Aesthetics Hist. Context</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Explicative paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corrugated Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 11</td>
<td><strong>Issue 2:</strong> Pollution</td>
<td>N &amp; P cycles; acid rain</td>
<td>Anthropomorphic and individualistic perspectives</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corrugated Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 25</td>
<td><strong>Issue 3:</strong> Population growth</td>
<td>Population growth</td>
<td>Religious and cultural views Ecofeminism</td>
<td>Lab Report/Exam 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corrugated Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 10</td>
<td><strong>Issue 4:</strong> Urban sprawl</td>
<td>Wildlife corridors; landscape ecology</td>
<td>Land and wilderness ethics, land rights, property</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### March 17  
**SPRING BREAK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Environmental Science</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
<th>Readings/ Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Argumentative paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td><strong>Issue 5:</strong> Global warming; climate change</td>
<td>C cycle; environmental geology; atmospheric chemistry</td>
<td>Ethics and law, ethics and policy, ethics and management, economics</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>April 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Corrugated Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>April 21</td>
<td><strong>Synthesis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Corrugated Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>April 28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop your own argument paper</td>
<td>Corrugated Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When assigned throughout the semester</td>
<td>Issue/topic of your choice</td>
<td>Relevant science concepts</td>
<td>Relevant philosophical concepts</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Subject to change*