

# Philosophy 230.1: Environmental Ethics (Fall 2015)

## Syllabus

Class: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 1:00–1:50 p.m. in North Quad (NQ) 291

Professor: Rachel Fredericks, PhD

I prefer to be called Rachel, but you may call me Professor or Doctor Fredericks if that makes you more comfortable.

Email Address: rlfredericks@bsu.edu

I prefer to be contacted by email rather than telephone. I usually respond to emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Office Hours: Mondays 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., Tuesdays 12:15–1:15 p.m., & by appointment

Office hours are a chance for you to ask me questions and have a conversation about course material, whether you are struggling or you are curious to go beyond what we discussed in class. They can be incredibly helpful to you, and help me to get to know you better.

Office Location: North Quad (NQ) 230

Office Phone: 285-1261

### Course Description and Goals

This survey course is designed to help students understand and respond to a variety of ethical challenges that all humans face, since we cannot help but interact with the natural environment in various ways. We develop our philosophical skills by grappling with questions about how to conceptualize the natural world, what its value is, and our proper place in it. We may or may not arrive at firm convictions about how to answer such questions, but we will gain a more sophisticated understanding of why reasonable people disagree about how to do so. The goal is not for me to tell you *what* to think about these issues, but rather to help you learn *how* to think about such things more productively, logically, and creatively through practice.

This course also has a service learning component, so to successfully complete it, each student must perform 10 hours of environmental service (specifically, we will be doing invasive species removal and similar outdoor tasks) during the week of September 14–18. Students will also complete written assignments in which they reflect on and think critically about what they learned through the experience of performing that service out in the field. Service learning projects like these are a great opportunity to put our thoughts into action and use our actions to inform our thoughts.

### Required Book

Light, Andrew and Holmes Rolston III, eds. *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

- Additional required readings are on Blackboard & are marked on the schedule with a \*.
- All the readings on the schedule are required unless marked otherwise.
- You should have all required readings done before class on the day listed.
- You should always bring a copy (paper or electronic) of the reading with you to class.

## Recommended Books

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Persuasive Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007.

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2009.

- More recommended readings (and videos) are available via Blackboard.

## Schedule

All groups of students are different in their interests, needs, and talents, so I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule (although I try to do that as little as possible and give as much warning as possible if and when I do).

### WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

8/24: Introduction to the Course

Required reading: Rachel Fredericks, "Syllabus"\*

Recommended reading: Sharon Rupp, "Be Employable. Study Philosophy"\*

8/26: Introduction to Philosophical Arguments

Required reading: John D. Mariana, "How to Read Philosophy"\*

Required reading: Rachel Fredericks, "Guide To Philosophical Reading And Questioning"\*

Required reading: Rachel Fredericks, "Guide to Philosophical Note-Taking"\*

Recommended reading: Ali Almosawi, "An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments"\*

Recommended viewing: Greg Ganssle, "Argument and Evidence"\*

### WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS?

8/28: Andrew Light & Holmes Rolston, "Introduction: Ethics & Environmental Ethics," pp. 1-11

Recommended viewing: Kelley Schiffman, "Normative & Descriptive Claims"\*

8/31: Clare Palmer, "An Overview of Environmental Ethics," pp. 15-37

Recommended reading: Krista Langlois, "Has Environmental Journalism Failed?""\*

Recommended listening: Chris Benderev, "Millenials: We Help the Earth, But Don't Call Us Environmentalists"\*

9/2: Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," pp. 38-46

9/4: Richard Sylvan (Routley), "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?" pp. 47-52

9/7: LABOR DAY: NO CLASSES

9/9: Prepare for Service Week (guest lecture on safety, etc.)

Required reading: Elizabeth Kolbert, "The Big Kill"

### WHO/WHAT COUNTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS?

9/11: Peter Singer, "Not for Humans Only: The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues," pp. 55-64

Recommended viewing: Jeff Sebo, "Moral Status"\*

9/14: Singer

9/16: Tom Regan, "Animal Rights: What's in a Name?" with a brief extract from *The Case for Animal Rights*, pp. 65-73

9/18: Regan

9/21: Eric Katz, "Is There a Place for Animals in the Moral Consideration of Nature?" pp. 85-94

- 9/23: Katz  
9/25: Gary Varner, "Can Animal Rights Activists Be Environmentalists?" pp. 95-113  
    Recommended viewing: Tyler Doggett, "Killing Animals for Food"\*  
9/28: Varner

#### IS NATURE INTRINSICALLY VALUABLE?

- 9/30: Holmes Rolston III, "Value in Nature and the Nature of Value," pp. 143-153  
    Recommended viewing: Kelley Schiffman, "Intrinsic vs Instrumental Value"\*  
10/2: Rolston  
**ESSAY 1 DUE AT 11:59 P.M. ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2**  
10/5: Eugene Hargrove, "Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value," pp. 175-190  
    Recommended listening: Radiolab, "How Do You Put a Price Tag on Nature?"\*  
10/7: Hargrove  
10/9: Bryan Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," p. 163-174  
10/12: FALL BREAK: NO CLASSES  
10/14: Norton

#### SHOULD WE BE MONISTS OR PLURALISTS?

- 10/16: Christopher Stone, "Moral Pluralism and the Course of Environmental Ethics," pp. 193-202  
    Recommended reading: J. Baird Callicott, "The Case Against Moral Pluralism," pp. 203-219  
10/19: Stone  
10/21: Peter Wenz, "Minimal, Moderate, and Extreme Moral Pluralism," pp. 220-228  
10/23: Wenz  
10/26: Andrew Light, "The Case for a Practical Pluralism," pp. 229-238 and 242-247 (that is, you may skip section 2)  
    Recommended reading: Light, "The Case for a Practical Pluralism," pp. 238-242 (section 2)  
10/28: Light

#### DEEP ECOLOGY

- 10/30: Warwick Fox, "Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy of Our Time?" pp. 252-261  
    Recommended reading: Catrin Einhorn, "A Project to Turn Corpses Into Compost"\*  
11/2: Fox  
11/4: Arne Naess, "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects" pp. 262-274  
11/6: Naess

#### PRAGMATISM

- 11/9: Anthony Weston, "Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics," pp. 307-318  
11/11: Weston  
11/13: Ben Minteer & Robert Manning, "Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics: Democracy, Pluralism, and the Management of Nature," pp. 319-330  
11/16: Minteer & Manning

#### ECOFEMINISM

- 11/18: Greta Gaard & Lori Gruen, "Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health," pp. 276-293  
11/20: Gaard & Gruen

11/23: Karen Warren & Jim Cheney, "Ecological Feminism and Ecosystem Ecology," pp. 294-305  
11/25: THANKSGIVING: NO CLASSES  
11/27: THANKSGIVING: NO CLASSES  
11/30: Warren & Cheney

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

12/2: Robb Willer, "Is the Environment a Moral Cause?"\* AND Stephen Gardiner, "A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics and the Problem of Moral Corruption"\*

12/4: Gardiner

#### **ESSAY 2 DUE AT 11:59 P.M. ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4**

12/7: Tim Hayward, "Human Rights versus Emissions Rights: Climate Justice and the Equitable Distribution of Ecological Space"\* (you may skip the section about domestic / international contexts that starts on p. 437 and ends on p. 439)

12/9: Hayward

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES (Options include: environmental justice, food ethics, environmental restoration, wilderness, human population, etc.)

12/11: Students' Choice

12/14: Students' Choice

#### **Final Exam**

The final exam is on Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, from noon to 2:00 p.m., in our regular location.

#### **Assignments & Assessment**

Your final grade will be based on:

- Participation: 25 points (10%)
- Homework & in-class assignments: 75 points total (30%)
- Essay 1 (service learning / argumentative essay): 50 points (20%)
- Essay 2 (media engagement / argumentative essay): 50 points (20%)
- Final Exam: 50 points (20%)
- Total: 250 points (100%)

All assignments (other than those completed during class) must be typed (double-spaced) and submitted (as attachments) electronically via Blackboard.

All assignments will be processed using SafeAssign, a plagiarism-detecting technology, so every assignment must include appropriate citations for all quotations *and paraphrases*, as well as a complete list of bibliographic references at the end. Use the MLA style guide to format your citations and references, but you do not need to put the Works Cited section on a separate page, and please do provide the URL for any source materials found on the Internet.

All assignments will be graded anonymously, so you must not write your name within the document that you attach when you submit it. Empirical research shows that people have a variety of biases of which they are not aware, even people who are strongly explicitly committed to equality, fairness,

and so on. Thankfully, there are some measures that we can take to minimize the effects of implicit bias, and anonymous grading is an easy and effective one, so I appreciate your helping me with my efforts to be as fair as I can.

Attendance and active participation in class discussions are crucial to success in mastering the course material and developing your skills. You are expected to come to class with informed questions and opinions about the relevant readings. I will keep track of attendance in class, but attendance is only one factor relevant to your participation grade. The quality and quantity of your contributions to discussion will be the primary basis for your participation grade, but participation in office hours, email exchanges with the professor, and communication via note cards will also be considered.

You will often complete small homework assignments (usually worth 5 or 10 points) in this course, and they will always be due at 12:30 p.m. (half an hour before class starts) via Blackboard on days that we have class. Occasionally, we may do an activity in class that will count toward your homework grade. Late homework will not be accepted unless (a) arrangements have been agreed upon with the professor in advance, which requires planning and good reasons, or (b) in case of documented emergency beyond the student's control. If the latter, the student must contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

I recognize that *occasionally* one will have a good reason for not being in class and/or completing a homework assignment on time. Therefore, I will assign approximately 85 points worth of homework and in-class assignments, even though I will calculate grades as though there were only 75 points worth of homework (that is, you only need 75 points to get 100% for this portion of the class, though there will be about 85 points possible). This means that it is possible to earn more than 100% of the available homework points. Thus, if you forget or botch an assignment or two, you can still get a high score for the homework portion of the course.

You will be required to write two short argumentative / persuasive essays (approximately four pages double-spaced). In them, you will be advancing a position from the first person perspective and supporting that position with reasons (an argument), aiming to persuade your audience to agree with you about a specific claim and/or to take a specific kind of action. Essays will always be due at 11:59 p.m. via Blackboard. Late essays will be penalized 5% for the first minute they are late and an additional 5% for each day that passes between the deadline and submission.

Your final exam will be comprehensive (cumulative), and will be taken without your books or your notes. You will have some choice of which questions you answer. A much more detailed explanation of what to expect will be posted on Blackboard.

If you earn the points listed below, you are guaranteed *at least* the corresponding letter grade. Grades will not be rounded up, nor curved, but I may, at my discretion, boost the final grade of students who show *significant* improvement over the course of the term.

A = 95% = 238 points

A- = 90% = 225 points

B+ = 87% = 218 points

B = 83% = 208 points

B- = 80% = 200 points

C+ = 77% = 193 points

C = 73% = 183 points

C- = 70% = 175 points

D+ = 67% = 168 points

D = 63% = 158 points

D- = 60% = 150 points

F = <60% ≤ 149 points

In general, written assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Structure and Organization

- a. Is the assignment well organized?
- b. Does it have a clear thesis statement in the first person?
- c. Are there clear transitions between paragraphs and sections of the assignment?

2. Exposition and Interpretation

- a. Do you give a clear, accurate, and charitable interpretation of the view(s) considered?
- b. Do you make clear the underlying assumptions of the view(s) and their implications?
- c. Do you support your interpretations with relevant citations to the text?

3. Argument and Critical Evaluation

- a. Do you give rational arguments for the claims you make? Is it obvious what they are?
- b. When critiquing a view, do you consider possible responses to that critique?
- c. Do you show that you have thought independently about the problem in question?

4. Writing Style

- a. Is your prose style clear and easy to understand?
- b. Are there any recurring grammatical or spelling errors?
- c. Do you avoid awkward and confusing sentence structures?

One key to improving your writing is getting feedback and revision suggestions on your text during the writing process. The Writing Center at Ball State offers free writing feedback sessions (online or face-to-face) to all students. They work with students on essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. Students can make an appointment by going to [www.bsu.edu/writingcenter](http://www.bsu.edu/writingcenter), stopping by Robert Bell 295, or by calling 765-285-8370.

## **Student Conduct**

A respectful, civil environment is crucial for learning any subject, but especially so for philosophy, which involves questioning, defending, and criticizing the beliefs and practices that mean the most to us. Conduct that interferes with other students' ability to learn or my ability to teach is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. In particular, students should not interrupt other students or the professor; dominate class discussion; disparage or disrespect the ideas, beliefs, or practices of others (which does not mean that one cannot or should not respectfully provide reasons to disagree); habitually arrive late or leave early; make or receive phone calls; text; surf the internet; or use other technology that is not directly related to course goals.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Academically honest students do not use others' ideas or words without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarism, a form of academic *dishonesty*, is presenting someone else's work or thought as one's own original work or thought. If I discover that a student has plagiarized, cheated, or otherwise violated the academic dishonesty policy, the student will receive a score of zero for the assignment in question, and if the violation is sufficiently significant, may fail the course as whole, at the professor's discretion.

More detailed resources relating to academic dishonesty and how to avoid it are posted on Blackboard. If, after investigating those resources, you have questions, please contact me *as soon as*

*possible*. It is much better for everyone involved if a student gets help clearing up any confusion right away, rather than waiting and needing to deal with a bigger problem.

### **Disability Accommodations**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).

### **Concerns or Problems**

If you have a concern or problem relating to the course or your performance in it, please get in touch with me as soon as possible! That is the only way for us to work together to devise the best possible plan for moving forward.