



ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

PHIL206

Carroll College, Spring 2020

Meeting time and place: 8:00-9:15 am, Tues & Thurs; 101 O'Connell
3 credit hours

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. Mark Smillie, Professor of Philosophy

Office: 142 St. Charles; **Phone:** 447-5416;

Email: msmillie@carroll.edu

Office Hours Spring 2020: MW, 3:30-4:30; TTh: 2:30-4:30; Th:
10:00-11:30; Fri, 2:00-4:00 & by appointment

I will respond to email and phone inquiries within one business day (Saturdays and Sundays are not business days). I will post notifications about the course in the Moodle News Forum. Students should also be aware of the Moodle Calendar that announces assignment deadlines.

READING MATERIALS

Please obtain copies of these texts for class

Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy. Joseph R. Desjardins. 5th Edition. Wadsworth, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-133-04997-5. Required text.

Environmental Ethics: An Anthology. Edited by Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston III. Blackwell, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-631-22294-1

Other assigned readings will be available on the Moodle course page.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Environmental Ethics applies ethical or moral thinking to the natural world and seeks to understand the relationship between humans and the earth. Simply put, this class will study and identify the moral obligations of humans to the environment and the non-human inhabitants of the earth. But philosophers have found this more difficult than it looks, as they struggle to agree about a common starting-point or principle to answer this question. This class will review the search of these obligations. Students will find themselves learning (1) the essential features of moral thinking, (2) the important and distinguishing characteristics of

environmental ethics, and (3) skills to recognize and employ moral thinking to environmental fields and issues.

COURSE PROCEDURE

This course starts with identifying some basic ideas about moral philosophy and moral reasoning, and then begins to look at the ways philosophers have applied moral thinking to non-human animals and the environment. It is hoped that students will take the initiative to formulate their own questions and clarify their own conclusions about the moral questions we raise.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course. A previous ethics course brings the advantage of experience in thinking in ethical categories, but the lack of this would not seriously impede success in this course.

COURSE ELEMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

Instructional Objectives

- To identify ethical principles pertinent to the practice of medicine.
- Practice the analysis of ethical principles and learn the standards for such analysis

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Identify and analyze environmental ethics discussions in text and oral forms
- Describe, employ, examine, and critique principles and methods of environmental ethics developed by environmental philosophers and ethicists
- Analyze and assess ethical arguments offered by others and the student themselves
- Develop resolutions to ethical problems and dilemmas using recognizable ethical principles and established patterns of argumentation

Disclaimer regarding these objectives:

- Students may vary in their competency levels on these abilities.
- Students can expect to acquire these abilities only if they honor all course policies, attend class regularly, complete all assigned work on time and in good faith, and meet all other course requirements and expectations.

FULFILLMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

► Study Groups: 20%

Most Thursdays will include group discussion of the cases presented at the beginning of the chapters in the Desjardins text. These groups will consist of 5 students each, and they will be fixed throughout the semester. Each case includes discussion questions for the group. Individuals in the group will take “facilitator” and “recorder” roles, and these roles will rotate throughout semester. Results of the discussion will be posted on Moodle.

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► **Papers: 30%**

Each student will write two reviews/analyses of environmental ethics articles not assigned or studied in class. Directions and format for these articles will be distributed separately. Students will receive a grade based on an assessment using an instructor-developed rubric that will be made available in advance of the assignment.

► **Tests: 30%**

There are two tests in this course, a midterm and a final. Each is worth 15% of your final grade. Students will receive credit for correct answers on “objective” questions (questions with predetermined answers. For essay questions, students will receive a grade based on a rubric made available in advance of the test.

► **Semester Research Project: 20%**

Students will choose a topic relevant to environmental ethics, either practical or theoretical. Students will research the issue and present various sides, and post the results to a forum in Moodle with some questions to generate discussion. Students will respond to two issues posted by other students, and respond to any reactions they receive on their issue. Specific directions will be distributed separately.

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

93-100: A
90-92: A-
87-89: B+
83-86: B
80-82: B-
77-79: C+
73-76: C
70-72: C-
60-69: D
Below 60: F
P/F Grade: D (60)

COURSE SCHEDULE (OVERVIEW)

W	Date	Topic
1	Jan 14	First class day. Introduction to the course.
	Jan 16	An autobiography of your relationship with the Earth Read Desjardins, “Science, Ethics, and the Environment” (Discussion Group Practice)
2	Jan 21	Read Desjardins, Ch 2 “Ethical Theories and the Environment”
	Jan 23	Reading: Lynn White: “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis” on Moodle (Discussion day)
3	Jan 28	Read Desjardins, Ch 3 “Ethics and Economics: Managing Public Lands”
	Jan 30	“The Wild Parks and Forest Reservations of the West and Hetch Hetchy Valley” by John Muir on Moodle (Discussion day)
4	Feb 4	Read Desjardins, Ch 4 “Sustainability and Responsibilities to the Future”
	Feb 6	Sustainability continued (Discussion day) Choose first article to review by Feb 7.
5	Feb 11	Read Desjardins, Ch 5 “Responsibilities to the Natural World: From Anthropocentric to Nonanthropocentric Ethics” [Extensionism]

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	Feb 13	Read Peter Singer, "Not for Humans Only" and Tom Regan "Animal Rights" in <i>Anthology</i> . (Discussion day). Study Group Evaluation I due (by Feb 14)
6	Feb 18	Read Eric Katz, "Is there a Place for Animals in the Moral Consideration of Nature?" in <i>Anthology</i>
	Feb 20	Read Desjardins, Ch 6 "Biocentric Ethics and the Inherent Value of Life" First Article Review due FEB 21
7	Feb 25	Read Paul Taylor, "The Ethics of Respect for Nature" in <i>Anthology</i> (Discussion day)
	Feb 27	TEST #1 (MIDTERM)
M 3/5 Spring Break. Midterm Grades posted on MYCARROLL March 10		
8	Mar 10	Read Desjardins, Ch 7 "Wilderness, Ecology, and Ethics"
	Mar 12	Reading: TBA (Discussion day)
9	Mar 17	Read Desjardins, Ch 8 "The Land Ethic"
	Mar 19	Read Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," and Harley Cahan, "Against the Moral Considerability of Ecosystems," in <i>Anthology</i> (Discussion day). Choose second article to review by Mar 20
10	Mar 24	Read Desjardins, Ch 9 "Radical Environmental Philosophy: Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism" [Eco Justice]
	Mar 26	Read Warwick Fox, "Deep Ecology" and Arne Naess "The Deep Ecological Movement" in <i>Anthology</i> (Discussion day)
11	Mar 31	(Ecofeminism) Read Marti Kheel, "From Heroic to Holistic Ethics" on Moodle.
	Apr 2	Read "A Critique of Ecofeminism" by Margarita Garcia Levin and Michael Levin on moodle. (No Discussion) Second review/analysis due April 3
12	Apr 7	Read Desjardins, Ch 10 "Environmental Justice and Social Ecology"
	Apr 9	Reading: TBA (Discussion day) Study Group Evaluation II due (by Apr 10)
13	Apr 14	No Class! (Monday Schedule)
14	Apr 16	No Class! Dr. Smillie is out of town
15	Apr 21	Read Desjardins, Ch 11 "Pluralism, Pragmatism, and Sustainability"
16	Apr 23	Read Anthony Weston, "Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics" in <i>Anthology</i> . (Discussion day). Research Projects Due on Sunday, April 27.
17	Apr 28	No Class: Research project will be posted for responses
18	Apr 30	Last Day of Class
19	May 4	Final Exam (8:00-9:45) (Monday)

COURSE POLICIES

Please be on time for class! Please stay alert (and awake!) in class, respect others, and limit private conversations. Please, eat food and use tobacco products some place other than class.

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Please attend class regularly (see "Attendance Policies" in the Carroll College Catalogue). I keep attendance regularly and expect to be informed if some legitimate excuse keeps you from attending class.

**"Eighty percent of success is showing up."
-Woody Allen**

Please note: I will only grade the assignments of students who regularly attend class. Each student is allowed two unexcused absences.

Submit your assignments electronically on Moodle, observing the deadlines posted there. Students having good reasons for missing a deadline or test should contact me in advance of the deadline. I reserve the right to penalize late assignments.

Carroll College's policy on Academic Integrity: "Students at Carroll College are expected to have high standards of integrity. Any student who cheats or plagiarizes on examinations or assignments, falsifies college records, or fails to give requested academic information on admission documents is subject to dismissal or other appropriate disciplinary action by the College." Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, deception, and complicity are wrong and undermine our ability to enjoy and profit from this class. I will investigate all suspected cases of plagiarism, and will penalize all verified instances; the penalty can be as severe as immediate failure in the course. If you are unsure about whether some actions constitute plagiarism, please ask me.

My goal is to grade and/or return all assignments within 2 weeks of their due dates, if not sooner.

Tests and exams should be taken on the dates and place assigned. Tests missed for legitimate reasons should be made up at the Testing Center. Please see <https://www.carroll.edu/academic-services/testing-center> for more information.

If you do not understand a grade you received, please seek clarification! If you want to appeal a grade, please submit your appeal first in writing, explaining your point, or if you think your answer was correct, documenting that belief with evidence from the text. In the case where there is a rubric, please identify the assessments of the rubric that you believe are incorrect and why. After receiving your written request, I will review your documentation and the assignment and decide if a grade change is warranted, and return the test with some written comments. If

**"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."
-Thomas A. Edison**

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your concern remains after that, then I will meet with you. Under no condition will a grade review result in a lowered grade.

Please see my office hours on page one of this syllabus. Everyone is welcome to my *office hours* to discuss assignments, your progress in the class, bioethical topics, or whatever. *Make an appointment if you wish, or drop by during the posted times!*

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I am a full professor in the Philosophy Department. I received my Ph.D. in 1992, from the University of Notre Dame. I came to Carroll College in 1995. My research interests are in Medieval Philosophy, especially the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, and applied ethics. I have given papers/presentations on: Thomas Aquinas, Catholic Identity, God's Omnipotence, End of Life Decision-Making, using technology in the classroom. I've been married almost 35 years and have eight kids (one Carroll grad; two at Carroll right now!). I am involved in various community organizations in Helena and enjoy visiting historical sites, hiking, and photography.

The college is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you believe that you may need accommodations based on the impact of a disability, please contact Dr. Kathleen Gilboy, Accessibility Services Coordinator, in order to discuss your specific needs and disability documentation requirements and to determine a reasonable accommodation plan. You may schedule a meeting through Handshake with Dr. Gilboy. Her office is located in O'Connell Hall room 126 and her extension is 406-447-4376.

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