

Environmental Ethics and Policy

Description:

This course will survey well-known theories of environmental ethics and their applications to policy debates. This survey will inform our seminar discussion of contemporary issues related to the environment, such as sustainability, climate change, land use, endangered species, technological impact, energy use, human population dynamics, and large-scale industrial agriculture. The seminar is organized to cover theoretical issues first (weeks 1-5), after which we will have a brief exam. The balance of the seminar will focus on problems of application, with at least one student presentation each week. As a culmination of the course, each student will be required to write an original research paper that integrates environmental ethics with his or her field of study. Paper topics will be developed by the student in consultation with the instructor. **All Readings on Sakai or available online.**

Grading:

An original 12-16 page term paper, on an approved topic:	40%
One midterm exam on concepts and definitions:	20%
One in-class report on a current environmental issue:	20%
Class attendance and participation:	20%

Readings:

Week 1: Introduction; Background reading: "Environmental Ethics" in the [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#) and/or C. Palmer, et al. (2014) "Environmental Ethics" [Annual Review of Environment and Resources](#), 39:419–42

Week 2: A. Leopold, "The Land Ethic"

Week 3: E. Hargrove, "Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value"

Week 4: D. Jamieson, "Sustainability and Beyond" + Discussion of the Brundtland Commission Report

Week 5: H. Shue "Global Environment and International Inequality"

Week 6: Exam; Transition from Theory to Practice

Week 7: M. Krieger "What's Wrong With Plastic Trees?"

Week 8: C. Stone "Should Trees Have Standing?" and M. Nussbaum, "The Moral Status of Animals"

Week 9: S. Gardiner, "A Perfect Moral Storm" and M. Grubb, "Seeking Fair Weather: Ethics and the International Debate on Climate Change"

Week 10: M. Liao, et al., "Human Engineering and Climate Change"

Week 11: P. Thompson, "Synthetic Biology Needs A Synthetic Bioethics" and P. Singer, "A Clear Case for Golden Rice"

Week 12: W. Steffen, et al., "The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives"

Week 13: J. Lubchenco, "The New Century of the Environment" and H. Jonas "Technology as a Subject for Ethics"

Week 14: Concluding discussion, student presentations (provisional) and submission of FINAL PAPER