Phil 422E/Environmental Philosophy
Fall 2012
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O.H. tba

Are the moral traditions that were developed to guide human relations also relevant to interspecies relations? If so, to what extent are they relevant? If not, is it because the theories are ultimately anthropocentric, as some critics argue? Or are they problematic for other reasons? If our traditions fail to justify the interspecies obligations we have gut feelings about, then what other moral visions can we appeal to? And, importantly, how is environmental philosophy—all this academic theorizing—relevant to our environmental crisis?

To start, we’ll talk about what it means for our environmental crisis to be a moral crisis. Then we’ll read essays by theorists who attempt to extend traditional moral principles to guide our behavior toward nature. We’ll also consider criticisms of these attempts. Deep ecologists, ecofeminists, and social ecologists try to articulate radically nontraditional ways of thinking about our moral relations to nature. We focus on that literature during the second half of the term.

I want this course to be concrete and practical. In light of that we’ll host guest speakers from the community, read a number of essays that look at relevant and current issues, I’ve devoted a number of classes to discussions that relate theory to issues, and the final paper will review a local environmental problem.

The prerequisite for this course is an introductory ethics class. This prerequisite will be strictly enforced.

Schedule
Aug. 27 Hello
Aug. 29 Chapter 1 in Foundations of Environmental Philosophy (FEP)
Sept. 3 No Class/ Labor Day
Sept. 5 Thomas Hill, p. 338 (FEP)
Sept. 10 Hill continued; “Quiet, Please,” Slicer (ER); “Defenders of Quiet Places,” Mahler (ER)
Sept. 12 Bryan Norton, p. 326 (FEP)
Sept. 17 FEP, chapter 5, p. 141-150; Singer, p. 150 and Regan, p. 156, both in FEP
Sept. 19 Singer and Regan continued, “Test-Tube Burgers,” Specter (ER)
Sept. 24 Guest speaker, Anja Heister from Footloose Montana on trapping;
Sept. 26 “Neptune’s Navy,” Raffi Khatchadorian (ER); Moby Dick, all (kidding!).
Please find a copy of Moby and read chapters XLV (The Affidavit), XLVII (The Maker), XLVIII (The First Lowering), LX (The Line), XLI (Stubb Kills a Whale), XLIi (The Dart), XLIii (The Crotch). Melville, by the way, spent nearly 3 years, 1839-1842, whaling; “Save the Whalers!,” p. 190, (FEP)
Oct. 1 Discussion Singer, Regan, Heister, Specter, etc.
Oct. 3 *Respect for Nature* (RN), Taylor, chapter 1 (make a list of terms and definitions)
Oct. 8 RN, chapters 2-3 (outline arguments)
Oct. 10 RN, chapters 2-3 continued
Oct. 15 RN, chapter 4
Oct. 17 RN, chapter 6, “The Climate Fixers,” Specter (ER)
Oct. 22 Discussion RN and Specter
Oct. 24 FEP pages 246-257; Johnson, p. 280, (FEP)
Oct. 29 Guest Speaker Sean Kochel on bees
Oct. 31 Discussion of Johnson and Kochel
Nov. 5 Naess, p. 402 (FEP)
Nov. 7 “Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique,” Guha (ER)
Nov. 12 NO class, Vets’ Day
Nov. 14 Warren, p. 406 (FEP)
Nov. 19 Warren continued; “Of Mice and Men,” MacKinnon (ER)
Nov. 21 No class/Thanksgiving
Nov. 26 Guest Speaker from WVE (Women’s Voices for the Earth)
Nov. 28 Discussion Warren, MacKinnon, WVE
Dec. 3 & 5 Brief presentations on local issues

**Texts**

*Foundations of Environmental Philosophy*, edited by Frederik Kaufman

*Respect for Nature*, Paul Taylor

ER=E-reserve at Mansfield Library

**Requirements**

4 synopsis papers on assigned passages in our readings, 2 pages = 10 points each (I’ll assign 5 but count your highest 4.)

3 discussion papers on our discussion days (10/1, 10/22, 10/31, 11/28), 2-3 pages (I’ll assign 4 but count your highest 3) = 10 points each.

Final paper on local issue: Ethical analysis, recommendations, and justification of recommendations = 30 points

**Synopsis Papers**

You will simply write a thorough and detailed summary of an assigned passage in one of our readings. Usually I’ll ask you to summarize and/or untangle an important and complicated argument.

**Discussion Papers**

Relate the relevant philosophic readings to the more concrete readings on issues. I’m not looking for a mechanical application of the obvious. Please bring your own insights to the table. Hone in on a specific problem or twist, that “Ahhhhhh…."moment you might have as you think through the issues in light of our readings. Tell me something I don’t already know and that isn’t obvious. I’ll model this on 9/10. You’ll bring these papers to class for discussion days and share.