

Philosophy 3323



Environmental Ethics

**Academic Semester/Term:** FALL 2021

*Course description:* We remain amid an ongoing ecological crisis and although we have begun to re-consider the nature of our habits as they relate to our habitat, it seems as though we are still far from coming to a viable solution to the crises manifested in what we are now calling the Anthropocene. Yet, if we are to have a viable environmental ethic, we must re-consider the *nature* of our relationship to “Nature.” In part, we must consider the nature of Being. Furthermore, we must consider the nature and value of “Nature.” In this light, and in this course, we will consider some dominant traditions in the extension of ethical consideration to the environment. We will analyze anthropocentric, biocentric, and ecocentric approaches to environmental ethics. We will explore their successes and failures in their attempts at redefining human/nature relationships and the ethics that are involved therein.

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Office hours: T/TH 1:00 - 4:00, or BY appointment, All office hours will be held remotely, I schedule via ZOOM

## **General Education Core Curriculum (Code 040)**

### **Language, Philosophy and Culture Component Outcomes**

Students will explore habits and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, culture, and environment.

### **Core Objectives/Competencies Outcomes:**

- **Critical Thinking**
  - o Students will demonstrate creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- **Communication**
  - o Students will effectively develop, interpret, and express ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Bio-Cultural Responsibility**
  - o Students will demonstrate inter-bio-cultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- **Personal Responsibility**
  - o Students will relate choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

### **Course Materials:**

You will NOT need books for this class:

ALL Supplemental readings will be posted on CANVAS. (Read for each class DAILY-Please bring the daily readings to class in either print or electronic copy.)

### **Evaluation:**

**The grade in your class will be based on (a) three reading assessment papers, (b) two journal reflection projects, (c) one applied environmental ethics paper, and (d) class participation.**

A point scale calculates the course grade; the total available points for the semester are 600 points. Each assignment represents a percentage of the overall points available in the course.

A= 540 – 600., B = 480 – 539., C= 420 – 479., D = 360 – 419., F = < 359.

### **Grading Scale**

All grades will be assigned on the standard scale:

90% - 100% = **A**, 80% - 89% = **B**, 70% - 79% = **C**, 60% - 69% = **D**, 59% and below = **F**

Each reading assessment paper is worth **10%** of your grade, there are **3** of these, totaling **30%** of the total course grade. The journal reflection projects are each worth **10%** of your grade, there are **2** of these, totaling **20%** of the total course grade. The applied ethics paper is worth **35%** of your total course grade. Participation is worth the remaining **15%** of the total course grade.

### **Reading Assessments**

In each of the **reading assessment papers**, you will (a) identify the major concepts in the reading, and (b) reflect on these concepts as they relate to contemporary ethical issues of your choice. Each paper must be 750 words. I will provide more specific guides on CANVAS for these writing assignments.

[Reading Assessment I](#) due on or before October 2

[Reading Assessment II](#) due on or before October 30

[Reading Assessment III](#) due on or before November 20

## **Personal Reflections**

You will turn in two creative works that will allow you to reflect on your growth in the course as it relates to your personal orientation and your ethical code. The projects are more informal and creative, i.e., prose, poetry, journal entry, art, digital work, music, etc... I will provide more specific guides on CANVAS for these creative assignments.

[Personal Reflection Project I](#) due on or before September 17

[Personal Reflection Project II](#) due on or before November 5

## **The Applied Environmental Ethics Paper**

The **applied environmental ethics paper** will represent the culmination of the course. It will be due at the end of the semester during finals week. The paper must be 1500 words. In the paper you will: (a) synthesize a philosophical theory we've discussed throughout the semester with your personal orientation to Nature; (b) I will choose a contemporary ecological issue, and (c) you will then analyze the contemporary issue in the context of your synthesized environmental ethic.

I will provide additional details for this assignment throughout the semester.

The grading of the paper is divided into **4** sections: (a) Abstract/Topic worth **10%** of the entire paper grade; (b) the Bibliography section (Chicago Format) with at least 6 –10 sources; worth **10%** of the entire paper grade; (c) a Rough Draft, worth **15%** of the entire paper grade - (this project is given special attention and will dedicate plenty of time at the end of the semester to craft solid drafts) and, (d) the Final Draft will be worth **65%** of the entire paper grade.

[Abstract](#) due on or before: November 13

[Bibliography](#) due on or before: November 13

[Rough Draft](#) due on or before: December 4

[Final Draft](#) due on or before: December 10

## **Participation**

**Participation** is the key to an enriching online educational experience. Each week I will post a discussion topic and/or reflection questions. These topics will range from contemporary ecological issues, value theory and the environment, and our personal orientation toward this subject matter. Each student will: **(a)** post **1** original reply to the topic, **(b)** post **2** responses to other classmates replies, and **(c)** post **1** response to a response made to your original reply.

**If you want to earn full credit for participation you will have to fully engage in our discussions:**

[Introduction](#) closes August 29

[Basics Thread](#) closes September 5

[Thinking Like a Mountain Thread](#) closes September 12

[The Land Ethic Thread](#) closes September 19

[Conceptual Roots: White Jr. Thread](#) closes September 26

[Conceptual Roots: Routley Thread](#) closes October 3

[Conceptual Roots: Tom Regan Thread](#) closes October 10

[Conceptual Roots: J. Baird Callicott Thread](#) closes October 17

[Conceptual Roots: J. W. Williams Thread](#) closes October 24

[Conceptual Roots: Anthony Weston Thread](#) closes October 31

[Reciprocal Links Thread](#) closes November 7

[Reciprocal Links: The Question Concerning Technology Thread](#) closes November 14

[Reciprocal Links: The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism Thread](#) closes November 21

YOU MUST READ.

**This class is designed to foster discussion so feel free to speak up and ask questions.**

## Academic Honesty:

## Honor Code:

<http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html>

**Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense. If I catch you, you will fail the course. Moreover, you are responsible for knowing what counts as plagiarism: ignorance is no excuse.**

(If you aren't sure what counts as plagiarism, please visit: <http://libguides.txstate.edu/avoiding-plagiarism>.)

## Some Extras:

- I will provide additional handouts, specifications, readings, and any other updates as they arise via **CANVAS**
- **READ YOUR SYLLABUS** so many answers are encrypted into these pages for specific questions not addressed in these pages feel free to ask me.
- If you want to contact me, **email** me, also be sure your main email is linked to your university email so that you receive **CANVAS** updates
- **Read, read, and re-read** we are going to be covering some heavy philosophical material that sometimes can be tough to understand. **Read, take notes, and read again.**
- Please feel free to ask questions at any time regarding subject matter; I understand these concepts can take some time to wrap your head around. **DO NOT** hesitate to contact me to ask for clarification on a subject. I want to ensure we have a clear understanding.

Familiarize yourself with the University Library writing tools: you will never have to think about formatting citations again. For details, visit:

[TXST Library](#)

- We may discuss topics that many people find awkward, or upsetting, or just plain painful. If something is stated during a discussion that reopens an old wound –or creates a new one – please know that that was not my intention. Moreover, **please remember that the folks at the Counseling Center are always available.** The Counseling Center is in LBJ 5-4.1; you can reach them at 512.245.2208.
- Civility in the classroom is very important for the educational process and it is everyone's responsibility. If you have questions about appropriate behavior in a particular class, please address them with your instructor first. Disciplinary procedures may be implemented for refusing to follow an instructor's directive, refusing to leave the classroom, not following the university's requirement to wear a cloth face covering, not complying with physical distancing or sneeze and cough etiquette, and refusing to implement other health and safety measures as required by the university. Additionally, the instructor, in consultation with the department chair/school director, may refer the student to the Dean of Students Office for further disciplinary review. Such reviews may result in consequences ranging from warnings to sanctions from the university. For more information regarding conduct in the classroom, please review the following policies at <https://policies.txstate.edu/division-policies/academic-affairs/02-03-02.html>, Section 03: Courteous and Civil Learning Environment, and <https://studenthandbook.txstate.edu/rules-and-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html>, number II, Responsibilities of Students, Section 02.02: Conduct Prohibited.

<https://www.counseling.txstate.edu/>

- If you feel as though you will want additional help in the course work, feel free to visit the Student Learning Assistance Center. They will be happy to help you; for more information you can visit them at:

<http://www.txstate.edu/slac/>

**Office of Disability Services:**

**Students with special needs** (as documented by the Office of Disability Services,) **should notify me about those needs at the beginning of the semester.** The ODS is located in LBJ 5-5.1; you can reach them at 512.245.3451.

<https://www.ods.txstate.edu/>

#### **Office of Veterans Affairs:**

Student Veterans can find support services at the Office of Veterans Affairs:

<https://www.va.txstate.edu/#:~:text=The%20Texas%20State%20University%20Office,plans%20and%20academic%20progress%20as>

I will do everything within my skill set to ensure that you have an enriched learning environment

\*This is a living document and is subject to change with prior notice\*

#### **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:**

Again, this is a self-paced course

To move on to the next module, you must score between 70 – 100 %, if you score between 0 – 69% you will be directed to a supplementary pathway until you reach the 70 – 100% threshold, you have unlimited opportunities to meet the 70 – 100 % threshold; moving forward to the next modules is predominately based on your **Personal Reflections, Reading Assessment Grades, and Discussion Participation**

#### **WEEKLY MODULES:**

[Welcome](#) August 23 - August 29

[Basics](#) August 30 - September 5

[Thinking Like a Mountain](#) September 6 - September 12



[The Land Ethic](#) September 13 - September 19

[Conceptual Roots Of the Ecological Crisis: White Jr.](#) September 20 - September 26

[Conceptual Roots: Richard Routley](#) September 27 - October 3

[Conceptual Roots: Tom Regan](#) October 4 - October 10

[Conceptual Roots: J. Baird Callicott](#) October 11 - October 17

[Conceptual Roots: J.W. Williams](#) October 18 - October 24

[Conceptual Roots: Anthony Weston](#) October 25 - October 31

[Reciprocal Links: Reciprocal Links](#) November 1 - November 7

[Reciprocal Links: The Question Concerning Technology](#) November 8 - November 14

[Reciprocal Links: The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism](#) November 15 - November 21

Remember you have unlimited attempts at achieving the 80 – 100% Threshold. There are multiple pathways for achievement, if you find yourself having a difficult time in the course, there will be pathways to supplemental material so that you can successfully move forward, if you find you are grasping the material quickly, there are pathways to deep dives and specialized material if you so choose.

Here is a link if you would like to download a file of the syllabus: