

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

THRS 404-01 / ENVA 404-01
Tuesday, 6:15 — 9:55 p.m., Cowell Hall 325
Sam Mickey, Professor
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Course Description

This course explores ethical underpinnings of contemporary attitudes and practices concerning the environment and the human/nature relationship. The course is introductory and is designed to give students an overview of major players in current debates concerning the environment. By the end of the course students should: (1) be conversant with major ethical perspectives, both historical and contemporary, on the human relationship with the natural world, (2) be able to identify ethical or religious underpinnings of factions within the contemporary environmental movement, and (3) be able to think and write critically about current environmental issues.

Required Texts

Boundaries: A Casebook in Environmental Ethics by Christine Gudorf and James Huchingson

A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming by Michael Northcott

A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There by Aldo Leopold

The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation by Mark Hathaway and Leonardo Boff

Additional readings are available online or they will be distributed in class

Course Requirements

Class Participation 10%
Critical Reflection Papers 10%
Fieldwork 10%
Midterm Examination 20%
Presentation 10%
Research Paper 15%
Final Examination 25%

Grading Scale:

A = 94-100	B = 84-86	C = 74-76	F = 0-59
A- = 90-93	B- = 90-83	C- = 70-73	
B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D = 60-69	

Description of Requirements

Class Participation: Active and informed participation is required of all course participants. Students must enter the classroom prepared to discuss the readings or to engage guest lecturers and each other. Attendance is required.

Critical Reflection Papers: Three critical reflection papers will be due throughout the semester. Paper guidelines will be discussed in class. Each will be approximately 3 pages (double-spaced) and will consist of an autobiographical narrative, a book review, and a movie review.

Fieldwork Paper: All students are required to conduct fieldwork as part of the course, spending a minimum of 6 hours doing fieldwork related to course themes. Each student will write a 5-7 page typed paper based on fieldwork. Guidelines for the paper will be discussed in class.

Presentations: Each student will give an oral presentation to the class, either individually or in groups of up to 4 students. Guidelines for presentations will be discussed in class.

Research Paper: Each student will write a 7-10 page typed paper based on a research topic. The instructor must approve the topic. The research paper is due the last day of class. Guidelines for the writing the research paper will be discussed in class.

Midterm and Final Examinations: The midterm and final exams will each consist of a combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions. The midterm will be on March 9 (during regular class hours), and the final will be on May 18, at 6:30pm.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. You risk failing the course and even suspension from the university. Suspected cheating or plagiarism will be referred to the Committee on Student Academic Honesty. The Student Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures can be found online at http://www.usfca.edu/acadserv/catalog/policies_honesty.

Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend classes. Absences may affect the final grade or eligibility to sit for the final examination. Any student who misses 20% or more of classes will risk failing the course. When representing the University of San Francisco in intercollegiate competition (e.g., athletics, debate), students shall be excused from classes on the hours or days such competition takes them away from classes. However, such students shall be responsible for advising their professors regarding anticipated absences and for arranging to complete course work for classes, laboratories, and/or examinations missed. (USF General Catalog 2003-2005)

You are expected to attend class unless you are ill or there is a crisis in your family. Prolonged illness or a pattern of frequent absences can jeopardize your grade. In the case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to gather class notes from other students. You are encouraged to be on time to class since being tardy can be disruptive to others in the class. *Any student who misses 20% or more of classes will risk failing the course.*

Note: The instructor may edit this syllabus throughout the semester. Students will be notified of any changes in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (January 26) **Course Introduction:** overview of class procedures, syllabus, and assignments, and an overview of the field of environmental ethics

Week 2 (February 2) **The Meaning of Nature:** reflections, memories, experiences, and narratives to explore the values of the natural environment

Readings: Part I of *A Sand County Almanac* (Leopold, pp. 3-91)

Week 3 (February 9) **The Evolution of Ethics:** theoretical and practical implications of Leopold's land ethic

Readings: *A Sand County Almanac*, selections from Part II and III
"Marshland Elegy" (Leopold, pp. 95-101)
"Thinking like a Mountain" (Leopold, pp. 129-133)
"Escudilla" (Leopold, pp. 133-137)
"Song of the Gavilan" (Leopold, pp. 149-154)
"Clandeboye" (Leopold, pp. 158-162)
"Conservation Esthetic" (Leopold, pp. 165-177)
"The Land Ethic" (Leopold, pp. 201-226)

Week 4 (February 16) **Theories and Concepts:** overview of the main ideas, frameworks, and terminology found in the field of environmental ethics

Readings: "Theory in Environmental Ethics," *Boundaries*
(Gudorf & Huchingson, ix-xi, pp. 1-24, 160-173)

 "Environmental Ethics: An Overview" (Baird Callicott)
<http://fore.research.yale.edu/disciplines/ethics/index.html>

Assignment: Critical Reflection paper due this week (autobiographical narrative)

Weeks 5 (February 23)

Worldviews and Our Environmental Crisis: exploring various roots of the environmental crisis, including cultural, religious, economic, political, and technological factors

Readings: *The Tao of Liberation* (Hathaway and Boff, pp. 1-61, 129-167)

Weeks 6 (March 2)

Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism: examining challenges and proposing alternatives to anthropocentrism and patriarchy

Readings: *The Tao of Liberation* (Hathaway and Boff, pp. 62-126)

Week 7 (March 9)

Midterm Exam

Spring break 3/15 - 19

Week 8 (March 23)

Liberation Ecology and the New Cosmology: a new story of the relationships humans have with one another, with the planet, and with the evolving universe

Readings: *The Tao of Liberation*
(Hathaway and Boff, pp. 246-289, 343-369)

Assignment: Critical Reflection Paper due this week

Week 9 (March 30)

Integral Ecology: a framework for including multiple perspectives on environmental issues

Readings: “Interiority Regained: Integral Ecology and Environmental Ethics”
(Michael Zimmerman, pp. 65-88, available on Blackboard)

“Whose Environment Is It?” (in *Integral Ecology*)
(Sean Esbjorn-Hargens and Michael Zimmerman,
pp. 1-13, available on Blackboard)

“An Overview of Integral Ecology: A Comprehensive Approach to Today’s Complex Planetary Issues”
(Sean Esbjorn-Hargens and Michael Zimmerman,
pp. 1-14, available on Blackboard)

Week 10 (April 6) **Ecological Spirituality:** religious and spiritual responses to the ethical challenges of our environmental crisis

Readings: *The Tao of Liberation* (Hathaway and Boff, pp. 289-342, 369-391)

“Overview of World Religions and Ecology”
(Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim)
<http://fore.research.yale.edu/religion>

Assignment: Critical Reflection Paper due this week

Week 11 (April 13) **Animals and Genetically Modified Organisms**

Readings: Chapters 11-13 in *Boundaries* (pp. 177-229)

Week 12 (April 20) **Water Issues**

Readings: Chapter 8 in *Boundaries* (pp. 130-145)

“The Kingdom, the Power, and the Water,” and
“Thinking like a River,”
by Donald Worster (pp. 112-134, available on Blackboard)

“Resisting Water Privatization, Building Water Democracy”
by Vandana Shiva (pp. 1-16, available on Blackboard)

Week 13 (April 27) **Global Climate Change**

Readings: *A Moral Climate*, (Northcott, pp. 1-61, 80-101)

Assignment: Fieldwork paper due

Week 14 (May 4) **Energy, Transportation, and Food**

Readings: *A Moral Climate*, (Northcott, pp. 109-119, 201-209, 213-250)

Week 15 (May 11) **Review for Final**

FINAL EXAM: May 18, 6:30 p.m.