

**ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS
POLITICAL SCIENCE 365/ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 365
FALL 2011**

8-22 Introduction: get acquainted; brief overview
Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 3-25

PART 1: DILEMMAS OF RIVAL ETHICAL CONCEPTIONS

A: Should non-human creatures and things matter ethically?

8-24 Valuing nature
Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 25-98

8-29 The land ethic and holism
Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 237-264
J. Baird Callicott, "The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic," 75-100 in *In Defense of the Land Ethic*

8-31 Sentience as a criterion of moral considerability
Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal," 26-40 in *Environmental Philosophy*
J. Baird Callicott, "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," 15-38 in *In Defense of the Land Ethic*
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

9-5 Labor Day (no class)

9-7 ***class debate: is sentience or holism the better criterion?***
Callicott, "Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Back Together Again," 49-59 in *In Defense of the Land Ethic*
Callicott, "Holistic Environmental Ethics and the Problem of Ecofacism," 111-125 in *Environmental Philosophy*

9-9 Micro-essay #1 due in CLA 251 4PM

B. The food system as an ethical case study

9-12 Behind the curtains: how the standard American diet is produced
Singer and Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat*, 3-80

9-14 Is conscientious omni-locavorism the answer?
Singer and Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat*, 83-183

9-19 The vegan option
Singer and Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat*, 187-240
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS

9-21 ***class debate: can meat eating be justified as an environmentally ethical practice?***
Singer and Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat*, 241-296
Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, *The River Cottage Cookbook*, 356-371
Michael Specter, "Test-Tube Burgers," *The New Yorker*, May 23, 2011, 32-38

9-23 Micro-essay #2 due in CLA 251 4PM

C. The debate over meta-ethics: how our view of human nature shapes our commitment to the environment

9-26 The conceptual problem with contractual duties
Mary Midgley, "Duties Concerning Islands," *Environmental Ethics*, 89-103

- 9-28 Where morality comes from
Mary Midgley, *The Ethical Primate*, 3-24; 95-120; 136-153
- 10-3 Sentiment as a route to value: is “inherent” value a coherent concept?
J. Baird Calicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic*, 129-155; 157-174
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 10-5 **class debate: are ecosystems (like mountains) coherent entities for attachment and ethical relationship?**
Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 101-163
Andrew Brennan, *Environmental Ethics*, 188-214
- 10-7 Micro-essay #3 due in CLA 251 4PM

PART 2: DILEMMAS IN APPLIED ETHICS

A: People and forests

- 10-10 Applying utilitarianism: a thought experiment
Martin Kruger, “What is Wrong with Plastic Trees?” *Environmental Ethics*, 158-187
- 10-10 SPECIAL CLASS TRIP: SPENCE FARM, LIVINGSTON COUNTY ILLINOIS
Meet in front of the Hansen Center at 3:20 PM. Return to Hansen 6 PM.
- 10-12 Of goods, property regimes, and collective action problems
Gibson, McKean, and Ostrum, *People and Forests*, 1-55
- 10-17 Patterns of local knowledge and practice in forest sustainability
Gibson, McKean, and Ostrum, *People and Forests*, 57-85; 99-134
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 10-19 **class debate: are individual or group rights the better tool for preventing users from becoming abusers?**
Gibson, McKean, and Ostrum, *People and Forests*, 227-241
Terry Anderson and Donald Leal, *Free Market Environmentalism*, 9-23
- 10-20 SPECIAL CLASS LECTURE: Marty Travis, “Sustainable Agriculture in Central Illinois,” 4 PM CNS
C 102
- 10-21 Micro-essay #4 due in CLA 251 4PM

B. People and risk

- 10-24 The community organizes: FACE and the scientific, governmental, and corporate systems
Phil Brown and Edwin J. Mikkelsen, *No Safe Place*, 1-42
- 10-26 Citizens frame the issue
Phil Brown and Edwin J. Mikkelsen, *No Safe Place*, 43-124
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 10-31 Should we err on the side of false negatives or false positives?
Carl F. Cranor, *Regulating Toxic Substances*, 12-66
- 11-2 **class debate: is popular epidemiology a good idea?**
Phil Brown and Edwin J. Mikkelsen, *No Safe Place*, 125-199
Charles Poole, “Causal Values,” 139-141
- 11-4 Micro-essay #5 due in CLA 251 4PM

C. People and food

- 11-7 The pre-history of agriculture and the birth of the modern food system
Richard Manning, *Against the Grain*, 3-84
- 11-9 “Hyper-agriculture”—industrial food production and a trip to Central Illinois
Richard Manning, *Against the Grain*, 85-147
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 11-12 SPECIAL CLASS EVENT: WHAT I EAT WORKSHOP 9 AM-noon
- 11-14 The case against conventional farming
Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 243-251
Pamela Ronald and Raoul Adamchak, *Tomorrow's Table*, 13-27
Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, 85-136
- 11-16 **class debate: is a shift to organic farming ethically necessary?**
The case for conventional farming
Martina McGloughlin, “Ten reasons why biotechnology will be important to the developing world,” 163-174
Gary Comstock, *Vexing Nature?*, 175-247
- 11-18 Micro-essay #6 due in CLA by 4PM
- 11-21 The science of genetic engineering
Pamela Ronald and Raoul Adamchak, *Tomorrow's Table*, 3-12; 28-39; 43-59
- 11-23 / 11-25 THANKSGIVING BREAK
- 11-28 The GMO debate
Pamela Ronald and Raoul Adamchak, *Tomorrow's Table*, 63- 102
THREE QUESTIONS CLASS
- 11-30 **class debate: should ethical environmentalists support GMOs?**
The environmental consequences of GMOs
Pamela Ronald and Raoul Adamchak, *Tomorrow's Table*, 105-167
- 12-5 Reading Day
- 12-7 FINAL EXAM 10:15-12:15

Course reading

The following required books will be available at the IWU Bookstore.

- Phil Brown and Edwin J. Mikkelsen, *No Safe Place: Toxic Waste, Leukemia, and Community Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)
- J. Baird Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989)
- Clark Gibson, Margaret McKean, and Elinor Ostrom, *People and Forests: Communities, Institutions, and Governance* (Cambridge, Ma: The MIT Press, 2000)
- Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990)
- Richard Manning, *Against the Grain: How Agriculture has Hijacked Civilization* (New York: North Point Press, 2004)
- Mary Midgley, *The Ethical Primate: Humans, Freedom and Morality* (New York: Routledge, 1994)

Pamela Ronald and Raoul Adamchak, *Tomorrow's Table: Organic Farming, Genetics, and the Future of Food* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Peter Singer and Jim Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter* (Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press, 2006)

The following articles or selections from books will be kept on e-reserve at Ames Library. The password is "holism"—all lower case letters.

Terry Anderson and Donald Leal, *Free Market Environmentalism* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1991)

Andrew Brennan, "Ecological Theory and Value in Nature," 188-214 103 in *Environmental Ethics* Edited by Robert Elliot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

J. Baird Callicott, "Holistic Environmental Ethics and the Problem of Ecofacism," 111-125 in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology* Edited by Michael Zimmerman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall)

Gary L. Comstock, *Vexing Nature?: On the Ethical Case Against Agricultural Biotechnology* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000)

Carl F. Cranor, *Regulating Toxic Substances: A Philosophy of Science and the Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, *The River Cottage Cookbook* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2008)

Martin Kruger, "What is Wrong with Plastic Trees?" 158-187 in David Schmidtz and Elizabeth Willott, *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Martina McGloughlin, "Ten reasons why biotechnology will be important to the developing world," 163-174 in *AgBio Forum* Vol. 2 (1999)

Mary Midgley, "Duties concerning Islands," 89-103 in *Environmental Ethics* Edited by Robert Elliot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008)

Charles Poole, "Causal Values," *Epidemiology* Vol. 12 (March 2001): 139-141

Michael Specter, "Test-Tube Burgers," 32-28 in *The New Yorker*, May 23, 2011

Social contract

Students are required to complete six micro-essays (750-850 words each). Help conserve paper by single-spacing your essay and printing on both sides of a sheet of paper. All assignments and the final exam will be posted on my homepage.

Students can revise essays to improve their grade, but they must: (1) visit me during office hours with the graded paper to discuss how to improve it; (2) visit me again with the new draft (which may need further revision); (3) make sure the revised version of the paper is turned in with the original and all other drafts; and (4) do all this by the last day of class (November 30). Grades on revised papers will be averaged with the original grade to create a final composite grade.

60% micro-essays (students will receive an extra 10 points for attending the What I Eat workshop)

25% final exam

15% class participation (including seven three questions classes and seven class debates)

No student who misses as many as **eight** class sessions, for whatever reasons, shall receive a passing grade.

Office hours

Jim Simeone

CLA 251; 556-3126

M 3:15-3:30; TH 4-5; W 9-11; 1-3

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