



**ERST-PHIL 3300Y
Environmental Ethics
Fall/Winter 2010-2011**

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And by appointment, or drop in

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Course time and location:

Lecture: Tuesday, 11 – 12:50, GSC 108
Seminars: Wednesday, 2 – 2:50, SC W2
Wednesday, 3 – 3:50, SC W2
Wednesday, 4 – 4:50, SC W2

Description of the course:

This course provides a consideration of the moral dimensions of human/nonhuman relationships. We will critically examine a range of systems of thought that address such ethical questions, including deep ecology, eco-feminism, and animal rights. We will then turn to a series of contentious case studies and emergent issues to think about how theories of environmental ethics are embedded in practice. We will give specific attention to ecological restoration, its critics, and possibilities for progressive change. We end the course with thinking about new directions in the field of environmental ethics.

Course Objectives:

- To provide students with a critical understanding of the wide array of approaches to theorizing human relationships with and responsibilities to the natural world;
- To enable students to evaluate moral arguments about human/nonhuman relationships;
- To aid students in developing their own environmental ethic.

Required texts:

There are two required texts for this course, both of which are available through the Trent Bookstore:

- David Schmidtz & Elizabeth Willott, *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works*
- Christine E. Gudorf & James E. Huchingson, *Boundaries: A Casebook in Environmental Ethics*.

Any additional readings will be available online or through the library e-resources and will also be posted to myLearningSystem (WebCT).

Grading Scheme:

Seminar attendance and participation		10%
Leading seminar discussion	10%	
Critical reading reviews		20%
In-class test	10%	
Second Term Paper	25%	
Final Exam	25%	

Explanation of Assignments and Grading:

Seminar attendance and participation: A proportion of your grade will be based on your participation in the course seminars. Indeed, a goal of this course is to encourage a collaborative and creative working and learning environment—your engaged participation is therefore a vital component to its success. The following elements will be taken into account when determining the participation mark: attendance, familiarity with readings, active participation, and contribution to the learning of your peers.

Leading Seminar Discussion/Presentation: Each student will be expected to lead one seminar discussion during the first term of the course (going into the second term if enrolments are high). This means that you will be responsible for developing questions and stimulating discussion about the class readings for the day. You will also be expected to research and present on a case study not covered in the readings that illustrates the topic at hand and offers an opportunity to deepen our understanding of ethical issues surrounding the environment. For example, if you were responsible for the seminar on the day we talk about genetic engineering, you might choose a case study like artist Eduardo Kac's transgenic glow-in-the-dark bunny or the ethics of Vitamin A enriched rice. Your discussion/presentation will be evaluated by both the instructor and your peers.

Due Date: Varies--you will sign up during the second week of class.

Critical Reading Responses: In the Fall semester, you will be asked to write four 800-1,000 page critical reading response papers on an article or chapter of your choice. You are **not** meant to summarize the articles but to **comment** upon them. For example, you might answer some of the following questions: What is the reading's significance; what questions do they raise and/or attempt to address; how do they fit with, challenge, reflect/concur, and/or link with other readings and approaches taken in the course material; do you find the arguments and presentation of material compelling, convincing, persuasive and how so? Obviously, you will not be able to address all of these issues/questions in the word limit but the list is meant to give you some ideas and a guideline in preparing your short responses. These are not research papers and you should not need to consult any sources outside of the assigned course materials.

Due Date: You can choose any four readings from any of the classes in between **September 21st** and **November 30th**. Due dates vary based on the readings selected. The Critical Reading Responses will be due at the beginning of the lecture corresponding to the date you selected.

In-Class Test: The in-class test will be held on **December 7th** and will cover all required readings, lectures, and films from the first term. The test will be made up of two essay questions.

Second Term Paper – Personalizing Environmental Ethics: The subjects covered in this course often have local and even personal dimensions. In order to bring environmental ethics closer to home and 'dig where we stand', the Winter term paper for this course asks you to examine an environmental issue that affects the area in which

you live, the broader bioregion, or your own personal environmental choices or moral dilemmas. Topics here could range from vegetarianism to ecological restoration, from environmental justice to animal rights. Using the philosophies we have examined in this course, discuss how this issue fits into a broader framework of environmental ethics and work to develop your own approach to moral relationships between the human and nonhuman.

This paper should be 10-12 page (2,500-3,000 words) in length and include at least five sources from outside the course. These sources can include interviews, activist accounts, and films where relevant, as well as the usual books and articles.

Due Date: March 8th

Final Exam: The final exam held **during the exam period** covers both the required readings and the lectures for the entire course, but will place an emphasis on the Winter term material (25% Fall material and 75% Winter material). The exam tests mastery of the material covered, ability to synthesize overarching patterns and relationships, and ability to respond to the central debates. The format for the final exam will include short answer questions and essay questions. While other material may be useful, you will be assessed for understanding and using ideas drawn from lectures and readings from this course.

General Information:

Due dates and late papers: Late assignments will be penalized at 5% of the value of the assignment per weekday late. Weekends will be treated as a single weekday. *Deadlines are non-negotiable.*

Extensions will only be granted with appropriate documentation (i.e. for medical reasons [supported by a doctor's note] or upon the written recommendation of Counseling Services).

Assignments are due in lecture. Late assignments may be dropped off in the appropriate slot of the drop box outside of Rob Loney's office (ESC A204). Please note that only late assignments should make use of this option – assignments that are to be considered as being submitted on time must be handed in during the lecture period (unless accompanied by appropriate documentation, as above).

Environmental Policy: We like to minimize the use of paper in this course. Accordingly, we encourage you to hand in assignments and essays double-sided or on re-used paper (i.e. that has something already on the other side).

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from a 0 grade on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's Academic Integrity Policy. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more – www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity.

Access to Instruction: It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and/or health consideration and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in this course, the student should contact the Disability Services Office (BL Suite 109, 748- 1281, disabilityservices@trentu.ca) as soon as possible.

In-Class Behaviour: Students are expected to come to lecture and seminar prepared for the class (i.e. having read the assigned readings). Questions are permitted during lecture provided that they do not disrupt the rest of the students' ability to take in the

material presented. Students are expected to treat each other with the utmost respect; disruptions to the class will not be permitted. Active listening is encouraged.

Course Schedule and Readings

September 14 – Course Introduction

September 21 – Introductory Perspectives

- Gudorf & Huchingson, Chapter 1
- Schmitdz & Willott, Chapter 1

Part I: Who and What Counts in Environmental Ethics?

September 28 – The Land Ethic

- Schmitdz & Willott, Chapter 2

October 5 – The Rights of the Non-Human

- Schmitdz & Willott, Chapter 3 & 4

October 12 – Radical Ecologies

- Schmitdz & Willott, Chapter 5

October 19 – Ecofeminism

- Schmitdz & Willot, Chapter 8

October 26th – Reading Week

Part II: Contentious Cases

November 2 – Preservation or enclosure?

- Schmitdz & Willott, Chapter 10
- Gudorf & Huchingson, Chapter 4

November 9 - Hunting

- Gudorf & Huchingson, Chapter 14

November 16 – Is eating animals ethical?

- Charles Eisenstein. (2002). "The Ethics of Eating Meat: A Radical View." *Wise Traditions in Food, Farming and the Healing Arts*, June 29th. You can access this article online from <http://www.eatlocalguide.com/bouldercounty/the-ethics-of-eating-meat-a-radical-view/> or on myLearningSystem (WebCT).
- Michael Pollan. (2006). "The Ethics of Eating Animals." In *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin, pp. 304-333. You can access this on myLearningSystem (WebCT).

November 23 – Lifestyle and consumption

- Schmitdz & Willott, Chapter 7
- Michael Maniates. (2001). "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Ride a Bike, Save the World?" *Global Environmental Politics*, 1 (3): 31-52. You can access this article through the library e-resources or on myLearningSystem (WebCT).

November 30 – Feeding People vs. Saving Nature?

- Schmidtz & Willott, Chapters 9 & 12

December 7 – In class test

Part III: Emerging issues in Environmental Ethics

January 11 - Environmental Justice

- Robert J. Brulle and David N. Pellow. (2006). "Environmental Justice: Human Health and Environmental Inequalities," *Annual Review of Public Health* 27: 103-124. You can access this through library e-resources or on myLearningSystem (WebCT).
- Robert J. Bullard. (1993). "Anatomy of Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement." In *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*. Boston, MA: South End Press, pp. 15-23. You can access this chapter online at <http://www.eiu.edu/~soc1/DeptSyllabiFA08/Hendrickson/EnviroRacism.pdf> or on myLearningSystem (WebCT).

January 18 – Global Environmental Justice: Climate Politics

- Gudorf & Huchingson, Chapter 12

January 25 – Urban Environmental Ethics

- Schmidtz & Willott, Chapter 13
- Andrew Light. (2001). "The Urban Blindspot in Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Politics*, 10 (1): 7-35. You can access this article through the library e-resources or on myLearningSystem (WebCT).

February 1 – Genetic Engineering

- Gudorf & Huchingson, Chapter 13
- Ron Epstein. (1998). "Redesigning the World: Ethical Questions about Genetic Engineering." You can access this article online at: <http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/GEessays/Redesigning.htm> or on myLearningSystem (WebCT).

February 8 – Xenotransplantation

- Gudorf & Huchingson, Chapter 15
- Michael J. Reiss. (2000). "The Ethics of Xenotransplantation." *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 17 (3): 253-262. You can access this article through the library e-resources or on myLearningSystem (WebCT).

February 15 – Environment, Development & Privatization

- Gudorf & Huchingson, Chapters 6, 7, & 9

February 22nd – Reading Week

Part IV: Applying Environmental Ethics: Ecological Restoration

March 1 – The Idea of Ecological Restoration

- Marguerite Holloway. (1994). "Nurturing Nature." *Scientific American*, 270 (4): 98-108. You can access this article through the library e-resources or myLearningSystem (WebCT)

- Laura L. Jackson, Nikita Lopoukhine, & Deborah Hillyard. (1995). "Ecological Restoration: A Definition and Comments." *Ecological Restoration*, 3 (2): 71-75. You can access this article through myLearningSystem (WebCT)

March 8 – Ecological Restoration Considered

- Schmidtz & Willott, Chapter 6

March 15 – New Visions of Ecological Restoration

- Eric Higgs. (2003). "Focal Restoration." In *Nature by Design: People, Natural Processes and Ecological Restoration*. Boston: MIT Press, pp. 225-254. You can access this chapter through myLearningSystem (WebCT).

March 22 – Ecological Restoration in Practice

- Gudorf & Huchingson, Chapter 11

Part V: Living Ethically in an Uncertain World

March 29 – We Have Never Been Human: Post-Environmental Ethics

- Noel Castree. (2003). "A post-environmental ethics?" *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 6 (1): 3-12.
- Donna Haraway. (2007). "When species meet: Introductions." In *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 3-44. Available on myLearningSystem (WebCT).

April 5 – Acting, strategizing, resisting

- Schmidtz & Willott, Chapter 15

Final Exam During Exam Period