

PHI 3640 – ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
Dr. Howe

Course Description:

This course introduces students to issues and problems in the field of environmental ethics. Theories of value are investigated in the effort to clarify the interrelations between persons and nature. Discussions concerning the moral status of the non-human community will not be restricted to debates over value theory alone, but will also encompass metaphysical issues that bear upon environmental problems.

Course Objectives:

1. Comprehension of philosophical positions within environmental issues.
2. Develop a working knowledge of concepts in ethics that apply to environmental thought.
3. Clarification of metaphysical issues that prefigure humanity's place in nature.
4. Articulation of issues, problems and solutions relating to environmental philosophy.
5. Familiarity with scientific and theological views that shape our ideas of moral responsibility.

Texts:

- A. Leopold: *A Sand County Almanac*
- R. Nash: *The Rights of Nature*
- B. Devall and G. Sessions: *Deep Ecology*

Class Work:

Readings of the text will be assigned to supplement class lectures and discussions. Students should be prepared to discuss reading material in class. Course topics will include:

1. Instrumental and intrinsic value theories within environmental issues
2. Anthropocentrism and ecocentrism
3. Paradigms of nature: mechanism and organicism
4. Shallow ecology and deep ecology
5. Moral sentientism and holism
6. Science, technology and environmental issues
7. Religion, myth and environmental issues

Tests:

There will be two essay examinations testing the ability to assimilate lectures, assigned readings and class discussions .

Research Paper

Each student is required to write a research paper of 5 to 8 pages (typed and double-spaced) on a topic in environmental ethics that has been approved by the professor.

Grading:

The final course grade will be based on the cumulative grades of the two essay examinations and the research paper. Each will count for 1/3 of your grade. Attendance is mandatory. Missed classes will have an adverse affect on final grade.