Instructor: Ben A. Minteer  
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Office hours: Tu 1:00-2:30; W 1:30-3:00; other times by appointment

Course Description
An advanced, discussion-driven seminar focused on the ethical and value dimensions of human-environment relations. We will start the semester by assessing the main concepts, positions, and arguments in the field of environmental ethics, focusing in particular on the debate over whether the justification for environmental protection should appeal primarily to human-centered or to nature-centered ethical principles. Next, we will examine the environmental ethical thought of two of the most significant figures in the U.S. tradition, Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson. From there we will engage a series of topics and issues that bridge environmental ethics and societal action, including the debate over strategies and tactics in contemporary environmentalism, economic and ethical valuation of species and ecosystems, conservation philosophy on a human-dominated planet, and the ethical dimensions of climate change, energy development, and sustainability.
Seminar Themes/Core Questions

The following questions will drive much of our discussion over the course of the semester:

- How should we value the environment? Do wild species and/or ecosystems have a "good of their own" that must be respected regardless of their instrumental value to humans?
- Do "enlightened" anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric moral arguments lead to similar or different environmental policy agendas?
- What is the value of the work of historical environmental thinkers such as Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson for our understanding of environmental responsibility in the 21st century?
- What ethical and political vision – and what tactics – should define the environmental movement in the coming decades?
- Is there a fundamental conflict between economic/prudential environmental policy arguments and “moral” ones when it comes to valuing biodiversity and ecosystems?
- How does climate change (and global change more generally) raise significant and novel ethical and strategic concerns for conservation, ethical responsibility, and environmental decision making?
- How should we balance the normative and ethical dimensions of energy development and sustainability agendas alongside more traditional preservationist values and goals?
- What are the possibilities and challenges of adopting "environmental pragmatism" as an alternative philosophical, political, and policy vision?

Seminar Requirements

1) Weekly reading (and preparation of reading responses), consistent attendance, and regular, active participation in seminar discussions. Each week you will prepare a 1-1.5 page (single spaced) “response” to the readings for that week. Responses should not just be a summary of the reading but rather a concise analysis of/reaction to the material (this can include critique) and should include 3-4 questions for further discussion. Reading responses should be posted to the BB site by 5:00 PM on Mondays beginning the second week of class.

2) Reading discussion facilitation (1 time/semester). Organize and lead group discussion (~60-75 minutes) of assigned readings for that week.

3) Environmental Issues in the Media Presentation (1 time/semester). Present and lead discussion of an environmental policy, conservation, or management issue covered in the media (e.g., an online newspaper or magazine article, video excerpt, Ted Talk, etc.). Select and post material to be discussed by 12:00 PM on the Monday before the class you are scheduled to present. Lead roughly an hour-long discussion of the issue, focusing on how the material raises considerations of environmental ethics (e.g., moral responsibility to nature or future generations, environmental justice, values and science in environmental decision making, evaluation of environmental harms and benefits of proposed societal actions, technologies, or policies). Media discussions will take place during the second half of the seminar period when they are scheduled.

4) Final seminar paper and presentation. A research paper that develops an in-depth analysis of an environmental policy, conservation, or environmental management issue/problem from an ethical point of view (~18-20 pp. double-spaced). Paper proposals are due on 1/29 (incl. title & abstract; 4-5 references); Final papers due in class on 4/30. Presentations should be approximately~20-25 minutes in length.
Final Grade Distribution

- Seminar participation (=attendance & effort, reading responses, reading & media facilitations/presentations): ~55%
- Seminar paper/presentation: ~45% (paper 40%, presentation 5%)

Readings

BOOKS (available in the ASU bookstore):
- E. Marris, Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in A Post-Wild World (RG)
- T. Nordhaus and M. Shellenberger, Break Through: Why We Can’t Leave Saving the Planet to Environmentalists (BT)

ARTICLES (available as PDF files on the course Blackboard site).

Seminar Topics and Schedule

1: Ethics & Environmental Concern

(1/8/13) Introduction to Environmental Ethics
Readings:
- C. Stone, “Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects”
- J. Mark, “Natural Law”
- M. Sagoff, “Zuckerman’s Dilemma: A Plea for Environmental Ethics”
- J. B. Callicott, “Ecology: An Ethical Perspective”

(1/15/13) Ethical Convergence on Environmental Action?
Readings:
- B. Minteer, “Unity Among Environmentalists? Debating the Values-Policy Link in Environmental Ethics”
- B. Steverson, “Contextualism and Norton’s Convergence Hypothesis”
- B. Norton, “Convergence and Contextualism: Some Clarifications and a Reply to Steverson”
- H. Rolston, “Converging vs. Reconstituting Environmental Ethics”

2: Foundations of Environmental Ethics: Aldo Leopold & Rachel Carson

(1/22/12) Aldo Leopold, Conservation, & The Land Ethic
Readings:
(1/29/13) Rachel Carson, Silent Spring, & Environmental Ethics
Readings:
  o R. Carson, excerpt from Silent Spring
  o P. Cafaro, “Rachel Carson’s Environmental Ethics”
  o M. Atwood, “Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring, 50 Years on”
  o K. Walker et al., “Developing an International Consensus on DDT: A Balance of Environmental Protection and Disease Control”

*Paper proposals due*

3: ENVIRONMENTALISM: RADICAL, DEAD, & RESURRECTED

(2/5/13) Radical Environmentalism: History, Ethics, Politics
Readings:
  o B. Taylor, “The Tributaries of Radical Environmentalism”
  o R. Guha, “Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique”
  o D. Jensen, “What Goes Up Must Come Down”
  o S. Vanderheiden, “Radical environmentalism in an Age of Antiterrorism”

(2/12/13) The Death of Environmentalism?
Readings:
  o BT: Introduction, ch. 1, 6
  o C. Stone, “Is Environmentalism Dead?”
  o C. Pope, “An In-Depth Response to ‘The Death of Environmentalism’”

4: ECONOMICS, ETHICS, & ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION MAKING

(2/19/13) Ethical & Economic Approaches to Environmental Value & Policy Choice
Readings:
  o B. Norton and B. Minteer, “From Environmental Ethics to Environmental Public Philosophy: Ethicists and Economists, 1973-Future”
  o M. Sagoff, “Environmental Economics and the Conflation of Value and Benefit”
  o C. Zografos and R. Howarth, “Deliberative Ecological Economics for Sustainability Governance”

(2/26/13) Valuing Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services: Conflict & Congruence
Readings:
  o M. Sagoff, “The Uses of Biodiversity”
  o D. McCauley, “Selling out on Nature”
  o J. Justus et al., “Buying Into Conservation: Intrinsic versus Instrumental Value”
  o B. Reyers et al., “Finding Common Ground for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services”
5: RETHINKING CONSERVATION ON A HUMAN-DOMINATED PLANET

(3/5/13) Rambunctious Garden
Readings:
  o Marris, RG: Ch’s 1-5

(3/12/13) SPRING BREAK

(3/19/13) Rambunctious Garden
Readings:
  o Marris, RG: Ch’s 6-10

6: CLIMATE, ENERGY, & SUSTAINABILITY

(3/26/13) Climate Change: Ethics & Justice
Readings:
  o D. Jamieson, “Adaptation, Mitigation, and Justice”
  o S. Klinsky et al. “Comparing Public Rationales for Justice Trade-offs in Mitigation and Adaptation Climate Policy Dilemmas”
  o P. Singer, “One Atmosphere”
  o B. Minteer “Geoengineering and Ecological Ethics in the Anthropocene”

(4/2/13) Flashpoints in Energy Ethics
Readings:
  o H. Rogers, “Shale Gas – The Unfolding Story”
  o R. Howarth et al., “Should Fracking Stop?”
  o P. Thompson, “The Agricultural Ethics of Biofuels: The Food vs. Fuel Debate”
  o BT: ch. 6

(4/9/13) Sustainability: Contested Terrain
Readings:
  o R. Solow, “Sustainability: An Economist’s Perspective”
  o P. Thompson, “Sustainability: Ethical Foundations”
  o D. Jamieson, “Sustainability and Beyond”
  o J. Newton and E. Freyfogle, “Sustainability: A Dissent”

7: ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM(S)/PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

(4/16/13) Visions of Pragmatic Environmentalism/Project Presentations
Readings:
  o BT: Ch’s 9-10
  o B. Minteer and S. Pyne, “Restoring the Narrative of American Environmentalism”
(4/23/13) Project Presentations

(4/30/13) Project Presentations
**Final seminar papers due**