



BIO 324/PHI 310

Environmental Ethics

Fall 2015

LSE 106

TTH 4:30-5:45PM

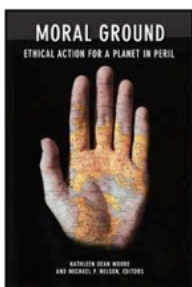
Instructor	Ben A. Minter	<i>Email:</i> Ben.Minter@asu.edu
Teaching Assistants	Aireona Bonnie Raschke	<i>Email:</i> bjraschk@asu.edu
	Christopher Rojas	<i>Email:</i> christopher.Rojas@asu.edu
Offices	Minter: LSA 262; Raschke: LSA 123; Rojas: LSA 104	
Office Hours	Minter: T 1:30-3:00PM, TH 3:00-4:30PM	
	Raschke: M 10:00-12:00PM	
	Rojas: T 1:00-4:00PM	
	(other times for all by appointment)	
Phone	Minter office: 480-965-4632	

Course Description

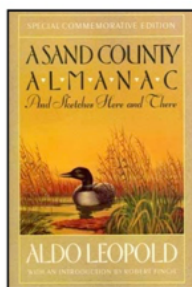
Environmental ethics is a branch of applied or practical ethics that challenges us to confront profound and difficult questions about our relationship to the natural (and built) environment. These include questions about the moral status of nature and the relative value of nonhuman individuals, populations, and ecosystems; the relationship between environmental values and other human interests (e.g., economic growth); and the responsibilities we may have to shrink our local, regional, and global ecological footprint as the planet's most dominant species. Should we, for example, conserve wild plants and animal populations for their usefulness (e.g., as food, fiber, medicine, entertainment, etc.), or do they have an inherent worth that demands respect – and that would make human exploitation of them morally unjustifiable? Why is the wilderness (both the place and the idea) important to us and what are the implications of becoming attached to the ideal of pristine nature in environmental science and policy? Are our dominant modes of settlement and transportation (e.g., dwelling in cities and in car-dependent suburbs); food production and consumption; and energy use ethically defensible given what we know about their consequences for animal welfare, species viability, ecological integrity, and human health? What about their impact on the wellbeing of future generations of humans? Why is climate change such a controversial issue and what would an appropriately ethical response to climate change require of us?

We will address these and many related questions throughout the semester. We'll do so by reading a series of important and interesting books on these subjects, and by discussing these themes and problems in lectures. You'll write about them in weekly web postings, your exams, and in a short essay assignment. Our goal is to learn how the principles and concepts of environmental ethics can help us better understand and engage these difficult problems confronting citizens, scientists, conservationists, and environmental policy makers today.

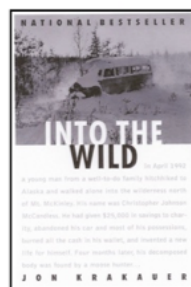
Course Texts (required):



Moore & Nelson
Moral Ground



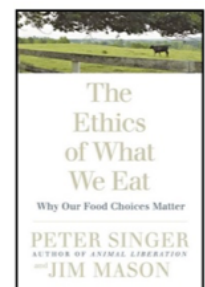
Aldo Leopold
A Sand County Almanac



Jon Krakauer
Into the Wild



Minteer & Pyne
After Preservation



Singer & Mason
The Ethics of What We Eat

[In addition to the ASU bookstore, all of the books are available via Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc., in inexpensive paperback copies, including cheaper used editions and also electronic editions]

Course Requirements

1. Exams 1 & 2	50% (25% ea)
2. Final exam	30%
3. Short essay assignment	10%
4. Weekly Blackboard postings	<u>10% (total)</u>
Total 100%	

Grading Schedule (for final course grades)

- A+ 96-100%
- A 93-95%
- A- 90-92%
- B+ 87-89%
- B 84-86%
- B- 80-83%
- C+ 77-79%
- C 70-76%
- D 60-69%
- E = <60%



A Note on the Reading

There is a healthy amount of reading for this course. Most of this will come from the required course texts, though occasionally we will read an essay available on the course Blackboard site. Although the reading expectations are high, you should know that the course texts have been chosen for their accessibility and readability as well as their rigor and importance to key questions and issues in environmental ethics. The essays in *Moral Ground* and *After Preservation* are also short pieces, a format that allows us to consider an unusually wide range of views in environmental ethics/studies. In other words, I think you'll find that you enjoy reading these books and that the ideas and arguments they contain will stay with you long after this semester is over. In many cases the reading will feed directly into our class lectures; at other times it will supplement or illustrate points raised in lectures (and you will be expected to draw such connections in your web postings, the short essay assignment, and your essay exams). You should always feel free to visit me (and/or Aireona and Chris, the course TAs) during our office hours if you have any questions about the reading, or if you simply want to discuss the material in more detail on a particular day. Office hours are your time so I encourage you to take advantage of them.

A Note on Exams and the Essay Assignment

Your exams will be in essay format. For all exams, you will receive a set of essay study questions a week before the exam is held. When you come into class on the exam day, I will have selected a subset of the questions for you to answer. While you will be able to study for the essay questions in advance of the exam, the exam itself will be *closed book and closed notes*. Given that you will have this study guide before the exam, we expect that your essays will be well-organized, clear, and generally detailed than if you were reading the exam questions for the first time. **[Please note that I DO NOT post my lecture slides online. It is therefore important that you attend class regularly and obtain notes from a classmate if you have to miss a lecture. Again, if you have any questions about any of the material covered in lectures, please come see me or the course TAs and we'll talk through it.]**

The short essay assignment on *Into the Wild* (1,000-1,250 words; due on 10/15) will be posted at least two weeks before the assignment is due. You will receive additional directions and guidelines on this assignment as the due date approaches.

**Essays must be submitted in hard copy on the day they are due as well as electronically submitted using SafeAssign. You will find this link on our course Blackboard site. This tool helps keep track of your assignment and also submits your work into an electronic database used to prevent plagiarism.*

A Note on Web (discussion board) Assignments

In addition to the three exams and the short essay assignment, you will submit regular, short web posts to the Discussion Board on the course Blackboard site (*posts will be due by **12:00 PM on Tuesdays** except when noted on the schedule*). These posts will be responses to a question or issue presented to you in a discussion thread on the Discussion Board (often these will relate to the course reading, though at times you'll write on other topics). Answers should be at least a paragraph (i.e., 150-200 words) in length. The posts will be graded on a 3-point scale (0=not submitted, 1= partial credit, 2=full credit). There will be *11 web assignments* during the semester; you may miss one without penalty.

Policy on Late Submissions/Missed Work

Late web posts will not be accepted. Late essay assignments will be docked 10% per day after the due date; assignments submitted more three days late will not be accepted. Missed exams may only be made up with a documented medical excuse. In all cases it is better to approach the course instructor and/or TAs prior to any possible absence during an exam day because of a documented medical issue.

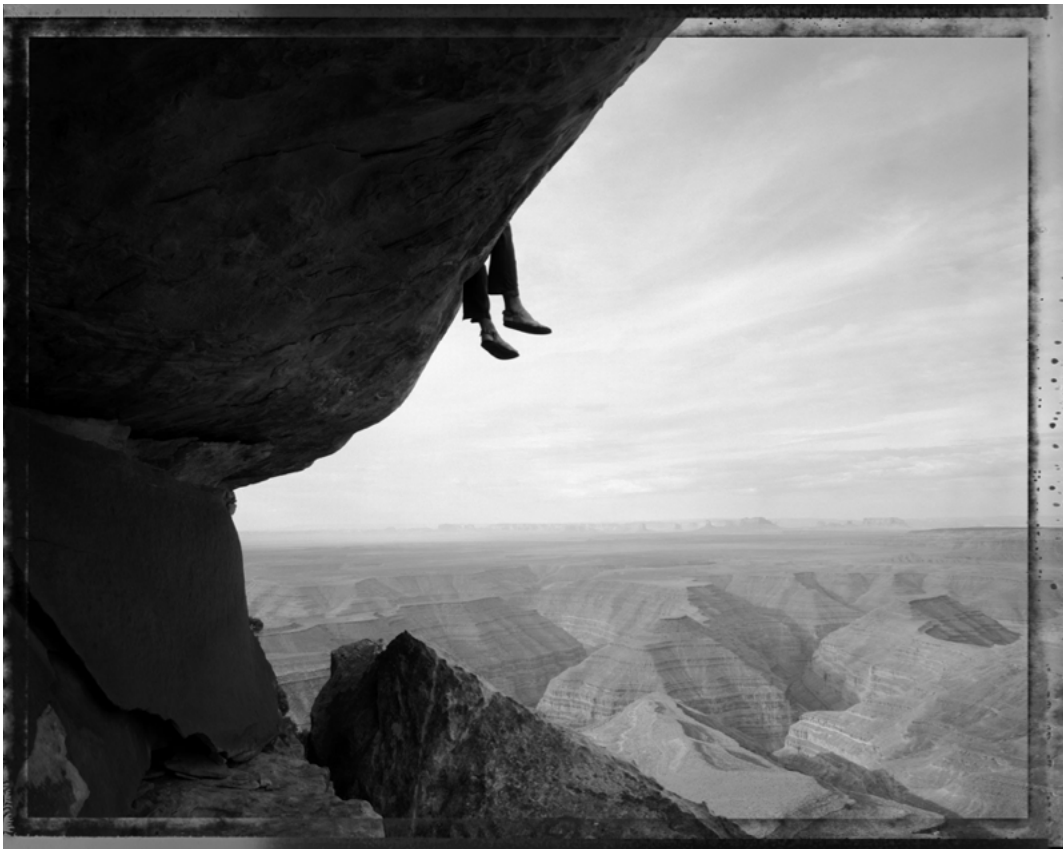


Policy on Academic Dishonesty

In the “Student Academic Integrity Policy” manual, ASU defines “Plagiarism” [as] using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately.” You can find this definition at: <https://provost.asu.edu/index.php?q=academicintegrity>. Academic dishonesty, including inappropriate collaboration, will not be tolerated. There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing, and any other form of dishonesty. All cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off and out of sight during exams. If a student is spotted with a cell phone out during an exam, the student will receive an immediate grade of zero for the exam, and potentially further disciplinary action.

Classroom Etiquette

This is a fairly large class and so it is important to abide by a few simple rules of classroom courtesy. All cell phones should be muted or turned off before you enter the classroom. If you will be using a laptop or an iPad/tablet to take notes during class, please sit in the back rows of the lecture hall so the screens do not distract other students. Also, please be on time to class; if a late entry is absolutely unavoidable, please enter quietly and take your seat quickly. Repeated lateness/early exits are disruptive for all of us and will be noticed and addressed.



Mark Klett, Contemplating the View at Muley Point, Utah

COURSE SCHEDULE: READING AND ASSIGNMENTS

*Reading assignments appear below each lecture topic. Readings will come primarily from the course texts. A handful of additional assigned readings will be accessible in the "Readings" folder on the course Blackboard site (designed as 'BB' below).

Reading key: **MG** (Moral Ground); **SCA** (A Sand County Almanac); **ITW** (Into the Wild); **AP** (After Preservation); **EWWE** (Ethics of What We Eat); **BB** (readings on course Blackboard site)

8.20.15 Course Introduction-Environmental Challenges, Ethical Questions

- **MG:** K. Moore and M. Nelson, "Toward a Global Consensus for Ethical Action"
J. Speth, "The Limits of Growth"
D. Quinn, "The Danger of Human Exceptionalism"
E. O. Wilson, "The Fate of Creation is the Fate of Humanity"

8.25.15 Dominion or Stewardship? Religion & Environmental Ethics

- **BB:** L. White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"
- **MG:** S. McFague, "A Manifesto to North American Middle-Class Christians"
M. Borg, "God's Passion in the Bible: The World"
T. Robinson, "The Biblical Mandate for Creation Care"
M. Kaplan, "Will Religions Guide Us on Our Dangerous Journey?"
- *Web post due by 12:00 PM

8.27.15 Religion & Environmental Ethics: *Is God Green?*

- **BB:** "Preachable Moments: Evangelical Christians and Climate Change"
- **MG:** J. Perry, "Worship the Earth"

9.01.15 Main Approaches in Environmental Ethics

- **BB:** B. Minteer, "Valuing Nature"
- **MG:** A. Weisman, "Obligation to Posterity?"
D. Jensen, "You Choose"
- *Web post due by 12:00 PM

9.03.15 Main Approaches in Environmental Ethics (continued)

- **MG:** O. Lyons, "Keepers of Life"
S. R. Sanders, "We Bear You in Mind"
J. C. Tremmel, "The No-Man's Land of Ethics"
D. Foreman, "Wild Things for Their Own Sakes"

9.08.15 Main Approaches in Environmental Ethics/Debates

- **MG:** H. Rolston, "A Hinge Point of History"
K. Rawles, "A Copernican Revolution in Ethics"
- *Web post due by 12:00 PM

9.10.15 Aldo Leopold & *A Sand County Almanac*

- **SCA:** "January Thaw," "Good Oak," "Draba," "Bur Oak"
- **MG:** S. Krech III, "Ornithophilia"



- 9.15.15 **Leopold & A Sand County Almanac**
- **SCA:** "Sky Dance," "Great Possessions," "Prairie Birthday," "Axe-in-Hand," "Marshland Elegy," "On a Monument to the Pigeon," "Flambeau"
 - *Web post due by 12:00 PM
- 9.17.15 **Leopold & The Land Ethic**
- **SCA:** "Thinking Like a Mountain," "Escudilla," "Conservation Esthetic," "The Land Ethic"
 - **MG:** G. Tinker, "An American Indian Cultural Universe"
J. Rose, "A Transformational Ecology"
- 9.22.15 **Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for our Time**
- **ITW:** Ch's 1-4 (start reading)
 - (NO Web post due this week)
- 9.24.15 ****EXAM 1****
- 9.29.15 **The Wilderness Idea**
- **ITW:** Ch's 5-10 [keep reading if you can]
 - **BB:** R. Nash, "Power of the Wild"
 - **AP:** D. Worster, "The Higher Altruism"
 - *Web post due by 12:00 PM
- 10.01.15 **The Wilderness Idea Reconsidered**
- **ITW:** Ch's 11-12 [keep reading to the end if you can]
 - **AP:** M. Marvier and H. Wong, "Move Over Grizzly Adams"
N. Christensen, "Preserving Nature on U.S. Federal Lands"
C. Meine, "A Letter to the Editors: In Defense of the Relative Wild"
- 10.06.15 **Natural Connections & The Lure of the Wild: Grizzly Man**
- **ITW:** Finish (if you haven't already)
 - *Web post due by 12:00 PM
- 10.08.15 **The Anthropocene & Human Responsibility: A Debate**
- **AP:** "Writing on Stone, Writing in the Wind" (introduction)
J. McNeill, "Nature Preservation and Political Power in the Anthropocene"
E. Ellis, "Too Big for Nature"
E. Marris, "Humility in the Anthropocene"
D. Foreman, "The Anthropocene and Ozymandias"
- 10.13.15 **Fall Break (no class)**
(NO web post due this week)



10.15.15 **The City: Rethinking Environmental Ethics**

- **BB:** D. Owen, "Green Manhattan"
- **MG:** S. Kellert, "For the Love and Beauty of Nature"
*Into the Wild Essay Assignment Due

10.20.15 **The City/"Faking Nature" & The Ethics of Restoration**

- **BB:** R. Elliot, "Faking Nature"
- **AP:** A. Revkin, "Restoring the Nature of America"
W. Covington and D. Vosick, "Restoration, Preservation, and Conservation: An Example for Dry Forests of the West"
*Web post due by 12:00 PM

10.22.15 **Biodiversity: What it is & Why it's Threatened**

- **MG:** D. Quammen, "Imagining Darwin's Ethics"
E. Pister, "Just a Few More Yards"
- **AP:** J. W. Thomas, "After Preservation - the Case of the Northern Spotted Owl"

10.27.15 **Valuing Biodiversity: Conflict & Controversy**

- **BB:** D. MacCauley, "Selling out on Nature"
R. Conniff, "Useless Creatures"
- **AP:** J. Rappaport Clark, "Endangered Species Conservation: Then and Now"
- *Web post due by 12:00 PM

10.29.15 **Whales, Dolphins, and Human Responsibility: The Ethics of Cetaceans**
(*guest lecture*)

- **BB:** TBD

11.03.15 **Valuing Biodiversity/Ethics of Pleistocene Rewilding & De-Extinction**

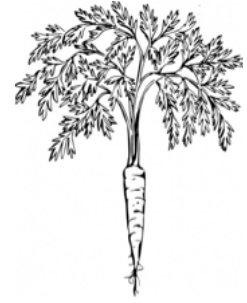
- **AP:** B. Minter, "When Extinction is a Virtue"
H. Greene, "Pleistocene Rewilding and the Future of Biodiversity"
- **BB:** S. Brand, "The Case for De-Extinction: Why We Should Bring Back the Woolly Mammoth"
- (NO web post due this week)



11.05.15 ****EXAM 2****

11.10.15 The Ethics of Food Production: *Our Daily Bread*

- **EWWE:** Ch's 1-4 (start reading)
- *Web post due by 12:00 PM



11.12.15 The Ethics of Food Production: Industrial Agriculture and Animal Welfare

- **EWWE:** Ch's 1-4

11.17.15 Industrial Agriculture & Eating Ethically

- **EWWE:** Ch's 5, 8, 10,12
- *Web post due by 12:00 PM

11.19.15 Eating Ethically & Alternative Agriculture

- **EWWE:** Ch's 14, 16-18

11.24.15 Global Climate Change

- **MG:** J.B. Callicott, "Changing Ethics for A Changing World"
K. McShane, "Love, Grief, and Climate Change"
T. T. Williams, "Climate Change: What is Required of Us?"
D. Duncan, "Being Cool in the Face of Global Warming"
- *Web post due by 12:00 PM

11.26.15 Thanksgiving (no class)

12.01.15 The Ethics of Global Climate Change

- **MG:** S. Watt-Cloutier, "The Inuit Right to Culture Based on Ice and Snow"
B. McKibben, "Something Braver than Trying to Save the World"
F. Chapin, "The Planet is Shouting but Nobody Listens"
D. Jamieson, "A Life Worth Living"
J. Garvey, "Climate Change is a Moral Problem for You, Right Now"
P. Singer, "A Fair Deal"
- (NO web post due this week)

12.03.15 When Sustainability Gets Personal: *No Impact Man* & the Ethics of Hope

- **MG:** B. Kingsolver, "How to Be Hopeful"
M. P. Nelson, "To a Future Without Hope"
P. Hawken, "The Most Amazing Challenge"



****FINAL EXAM: 12/10/15 (2:30-4:20 PM, same room) ****