



FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH, 1853. *MT. KATAHDIN*

BIO 324/PHI 310

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Fall 2022
COOR 174
TTH 12:00-1:15PM

Instructor:

Prof. Ben A. Minter, School of Life Sciences
Email: Ben.Minter@asu.edu

Teaching Assistants:

Linda Howard *Email:* Linda.L.Howard@asu.edu
Daniel Bisgrove *Email:* dbisgrov@asu.edu

Office Hours

Minter: T 2:30-3:30pm; W 2:00-3:15pm via Zoom (join by clicking on the Zoom office hours link on our Canvas course site)

Howard: F 1:00-2:00pm (via Canvas Zoom link)

Bisgrove: M 10:00am-noon (via Canvas Zoom link)

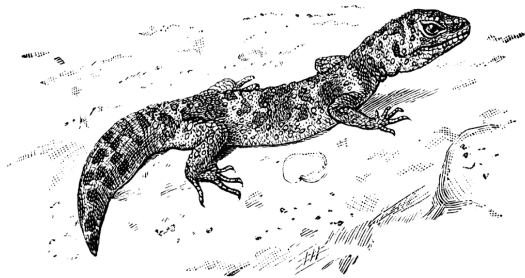
COURSE DESCRIPTION

Environmental ethics is a branch of applied or practical ethics that challenges us to confront difficult questions about our relationship to the natural world. 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 makes our 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 the wild in conservation efforts? What events and values shaped the American conservation movement and how can a more equitable and inclusive movement – and environmental ethic – be realized? Are our dominant modes of food production and energy use ethically defensible given what we know about their consequences for animal welfare, species viability, ecological health, climate stability, and human welfare? What about their impact on the wellbeing of future generations of humans?

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES

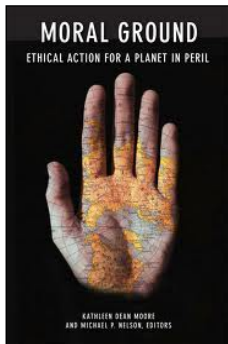
- *To gain a critical understanding of the ethical, historical, and ecological dimensions of contemporary environmental and conservation problems, emphasizing the intersection of science and society;*
- *To acquire analytical skills necessary for the study and communication of complex scientific and societal problems in the environmental realm;*
- *To develop the ability to make informed and well-reasoned arguments about the ethical and value-laden aspects of environmental and conservation challenges.*



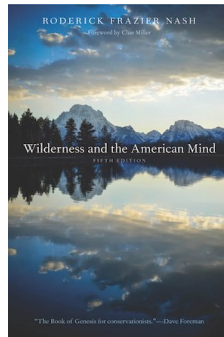
CANVAS COURSE SITE

Your canvas course page is accessible via canvas.asu.edu, my.asu.edu, and myasucourses.asu.edu; bookmark all in the event that one site is down.

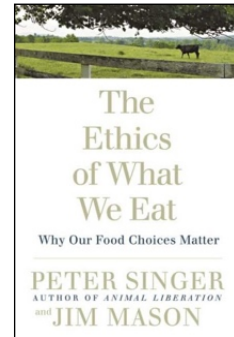
COURSE TEXTS (ALL REQUIRED)



K.D. Moore & M.P. Nelson
Moral Ground



Roderick F. Nash
Wilderness and the American Mind (5th ed.)



P. Singer & J. Mason
The Ethics of What We Eat

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

1. First exam	25%
2. Second exam	25%
3. Final exam	25%
4. Canvas discussion forums (10)	20%
5. Short essay assignment	5%
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	Total 100%



GRADING SCHEDULE (FOR FINAL COURSE GRADES)

A+ (98-100%); **A** (94-97%); **A-** (90-93%); **B+** (88-89%); **B** (84-87%); **B-** (80-83%); **C+** (78-79%); **C** (70-77%); **D** (60-69%); **E** (<60%)

A NOTE ON THE READING

There is a significant amount of reading for this course. Most of this will come from the required course texts, though we will read essays available on the course Canvas site. *You should come to class having read the assignment for that session.* 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*, which we will read from throughout the semester, are also short pieces, a format that allows us to consider an unusually wide range of views in environmental ethics/studies. All this is to say that I think you'll find you enjoy reading these books and that the ideas and arguments they contain will stay with you long after the 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 discussion forum postings and especially your essay exams).

You should always feel free to meet with me (and/or Linda and Daniel, 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, and we encourage you to take advantage of them.

ABOUT THE EXAMS

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 these 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 more detailed than if you were reading the exam questions for the first time.

SHORT ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

The short essay assignment will be posted 1.5-2 weeks before the assignment is due. You will receive additional directions and guidelines on this assignment as the due date approaches. Short essays will be submitted electronically through our Canvas course site. *They will be scanned by plagiarism-checking software that compares the papers against each other and material available on the web.*

DISCUSSION FORUMS

Regarding the online discussion forums, each forum will require an original post responding to a question or set of questions presented to you in a discussion thread on the Canvas discussion board (often these will relate to the course reading, though at times you'll write on other topics). [To access the forums click on the "Discussion" link on our Canvas course site.] You'll also post a reply to another classmate's post. Your original posts should run 150-200 words in length; reply posts should be at least 100 words. It's fine if your posts run a little longer than these word counts, though posts that fall significantly short of these thresholds will not receive full credit. There will be *10 discussion forum assignments* over the course of the semester. Collectively, this counts for 20% of your final grade so make sure you don't miss any of these assignments!

Discussion forums will always be viewable at the end of class on a Thursday; **original posts are due by 12 pm (noon) the following Monday. Reply posts are due by 12pm (noon) on Tuesday (i.e., a day after your original post is due).** See the schedule below for the specific due dates for your posts.

Finally, writing good forum posts requires you to be clear, thorough, and thoughtful. Posts must always be respectful and courteous in tone, engaging ideas without making the exchanges argumentative or personal (in other words, it is a "no trolling" zone). Our guidelines,

expectations and tips for preparing (great!) discussion forum posts may be found in the Course Information link on the Canvas site. Follow these rules of thumb and you will definitely increase your chances of getting full credit for the posts and responses.

A NOTE ON CLASS ATTENDANCE

Note that this class meets 100% in-person. *There will be no Zoom option* (other than instructor and TA office hours). If you have to miss a class, please reach out to Linda and Daniel (your TAs) to see about missed material and assignments.

Also, 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 drop in my office hours and/or meet with the course TAs and we'll talk through it.

POLICY ON LATE SUBMISSIONS/MISSED WORK

We understand this class is operating in challenging times. As the semester progresses, *please let us know* if you are struggling to meet deadlines or attend class. Notify me (or Linda and/or Daniel, your TAs) **BEFORE** an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and you are unable to submit the assignment on time. Follow the appropriate University policies to request an [accommodation for religious practices](#) or to accommodate a missed assignment due to university-sanctioned activities.

Absences for illness, quarantine or self-isolation related to illness should be documented by a health professional and communicated to the instructor as soon as possible by email. Excused absences do not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. We will provide accommodations that may include access to recordings of class activities and/or make-up work.

An *unexcused* late submission of the *zoo ethics* essay will be docked *half a letter grade each day*. Essays submitted more than three days late will not be accepted without an approved medical excuse. *Late discussion forums will not be accepted*. Missed in-class essay exams can be made up only with a *documented and approved medical excuse*.

DROP/ADD DATES AND WITHDRAWALS

Consult with your advisor if you are thinking of dropping this course. If you are considering a withdrawal, review the following ASU policies: [withdrawal from classes](#), [medical/compassionate withdrawal](#), and a [grade of incomplete](#), as well as the [tuition and fees 100% refund deadline](#), which is separate from final dates for add/drop and withdrawal. Please refer to the [academic calendar](#) for all important dates regarding these processes.

For Covid-19 student resources and information, please visit the [provost website for information regarding covid-19](#).

EXPECTED CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

This is a large class, 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. Also, please be on time to class; if a late entry is 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.

Netiquette --appropriate online behavior-- includes being respectful and keeping course interactions and discussion posts focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts [incident reports](#) from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic honesty is expected of all students in examinations, essays, discussion board posts, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <https://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>." As the ASU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences puts it, "Plagiarism is stealing. Whenever you borrow a phrase, sentence, paragraph — even an idea stated in your own words — from any outside source (news writing, magazine, TV show, book) *without giving credit to that source*, you have plagiarized. Plagiarism is cheating yourself and someone else. The consequences are severe including failure for the assignment, probable failure for the course, disciplinary referral to the dean and possible expulsion from the university."

Your short essay assignment will be submitted through a Canvas plagiarism program that will check them against each other, and against materials available on the web. *Writing and ideas drawn from books, articles, and other sources that are not the product of your own thinking always must be cited, even if you change the wording/paraphrase the text. We will provide additional citation guidance on and instructions for each assignment. Note that we will also monitor discussion forum posts as well to ensure that your work is your own.*

PROHIBITION OF SELLING CLASS NOTES

Students may not share outside the class, upload, sell, or distribute course content or notes taken during the conduct of the course. In accordance with [ACD 304-06 Commercial Note Taking Services](#), written permission must be secured from the official instructor of the class in order to sell the instructor's oral communication in the form of notes. Notes must have the notetaker's name as well as the instructor's name, the course number, and the date.

REPORTING TITLE IX VIOLATIONS

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the

basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

POLICY ON SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits [discrimination](#), [harassment](#), and [retaliation](#) by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at the [Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services](#) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Staff coordinate transition from high schools and community colleges, in-service training for faculty and staff, resolution of accessibility issues, community outreach, and collaboration between all ASU campuses regarding disability policies, procedures, and accommodations.

Students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services: <https://eoss.asu.edu/accessibility>.

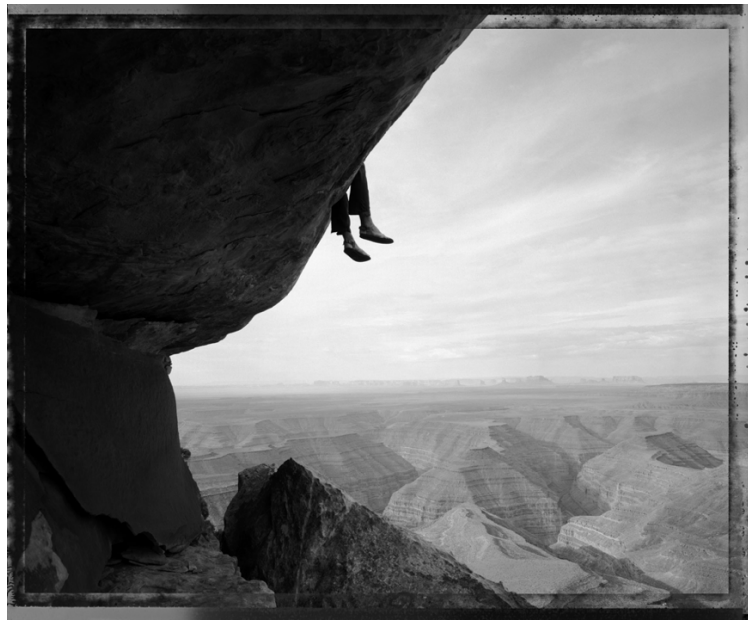


PHOTO: MARK KLETT, CONTEMPLATING THE VIEW, MULEY POINT, UTAH

COURSE SCHEDULE: READING AND ASSIGNMENTS

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

Reading key: **MG** (Moral Ground); **C** (readings on course Canvas site); **WAM** (Wilderness and the American Mind); **EWWE** (Ethics of What We Eat);

8.18.22 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"

8.23.22 Silent Spring & the Rise of Environmentalism/Religion & the "Ecocrisis"

- **C:** R. Carson [selections from *Silent Spring*]
L. White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis"
M. Nelson, "The Long Reach of Lynn White Jr.'s "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis"

**Discussion Forum 1 (original post due by noon on 8/22; reply by noon on 8/23)*

8.25.22 Religion & the Environment: Dominion or Stewardship?

- **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?"



8.30.22 Religion & Env't (finish)/Main Approaches in Environmental Ethics

- **C:** K. Hayhoe, "I'm a Climate Scientist Who Believes in God. Hear Me Out"
- **MG:** A. Weisman, "Obligation to Posterity?"
D. Jensen, "You Choose"

**Discussion Forum 2 (original post due by noon on 8/29; reply by noon on 8/30)*

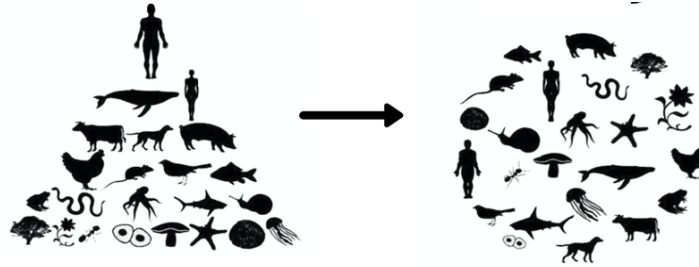
9.01.22 Main Approaches in Environmental Ethics (continued)

- **C:** E. Aaltola, "Animal Ethics: The Works of Singer and Regan"
- **MG:** S. R. Sanders, "We Bear You in Mind"
D. Foreman, "Wild Things for Their Own Sakes"

9.06.22 Main Approaches in Environmental Ethics/Debates

- **MG:** H. Rolston, "A Hinge Point of History"
K. Rawles, "A Copernican Revolution in Ethics"
- **C:** E. Crist, "Reimagining the Human"

**Discussion Forum 3 (original post due by noon on 9/5; reply by noon on 9/6)*



9.08.22 Main Approaches in Environmental Ethics (finish)/Environmental Justice & Ecofeminism

- **MG:** R. Kimmerer, “The Giveaway”
L. Savoy, “Still an American Dilemma”
- **C:** J. Schmonsky, “The Growing Importance of Ecofeminism”

9.13.22 The Wilderness Idea

- **WAM:** Prologue, Chapters 1-2, 4-5

**Short Essay Assignment (zoos & ethics) due by noon (via Canvas)



9.15.22 The Rise of Conservation, John Muir, & the Battle Over Hetch Hetchy

- **WAM:** Chapters 6-8, 10

9.20.22 Aldo Leopold & Environmental Ethics

- **WAM:** Chapter 11
- **C:** A. Leopold, “Thinking Like a Mountain”

*Discussion Forum 4 (original post due by noon on 9/19; reply due by noon on 9/20)

9.22.22 **EXAM 1 - in class**



9.27.22 Aldo Leopold & Environmental Ethics

- **C:** A. Leopold, "The Land Ethic"
- **MG:** G. Tinker, "An American Indian Cultural Universe"
M. S. Momaday, "An Ethic for the Earth"



9.29.22 Valuing the Wild

- **WAM:** Chapters 12-13

10.04.22 The Lure of the Wild (Grizzly Man)

- **[WAM (catch up on reading)]**

**Discussion Forum 5 (original post due by noon on 10/3; reply due by noon on 10/4)*

10.06.22 Valuing the Wild/Trouble with Wilderness?

- **WAM:** Epilogue ("Island Civilization")
- **C:** W. Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness"

10.11.22 No Class (Fall Break)

10.13.22 Parks & Wilderness, Race & Culture: Confronting Preservationist History

- **C:** H. Oatman-Stanford, "From Yosemite to Bears Ears, Erasing Native Americans From U.S. National Parks"
L. Tompkins, "Sierra Club Says it Must Confront the Racism of John Muir"
D. Gilio-Whitaker, "Environmental Justice is Only the Beginning"

10.18.22 "Faking Nature?"/Environmental Ethics in the Anthropocene

- **C:** R. Elliot, "Faking Nature"
E. Ellis, "Too Big for Nature"
D. Foreman, "The Anthropocene and Ozymandias"

**Discussion Forum 6 (original post due by noon on 10/17; reply due by noon on 10/18)*

10.20.22 Biodiversity: Concepts & Threats

- **C:** G. Ceballos et al, "Vertebrates on the Brink as Indicators of Biological Annihilation and the Sixth Mass Extinction"
- **MG:** E. Pister, "Just a Few More Yards"

10.25.22 Valuing Biodiversity

- **MG:** G. P. Nabhan, "Heirloom Chile Peppers and Climate Change"
D. Quammen, "Imagining Darwin's Ethics"
R. M. Pyle, "Evening Falls on the Maladaptive Ape"

**Discussion Forum 7 (original post due by noon on 10/24; reply due by noon on 10/25)*

10.27.22 Valuing Biodiversity/Zoo Ethics: Balancing Entertainment, Conservation & Animal Welfare

- **C:** S. Earle, "Twenty-First Century Aquariums and Zoos: Windows into the Wild"
L. Gruen, "Shifting Toward an Ethics of Sanctuary"
S. Clayton, "Learning to Care About Animal Conservation"



11.01.22 **EXAM 2 - in class**

11.03.22 How Far Should We Go to Bring Back Lost Species? Pleistocene Rewilding & De-extinction

- **C:** H. Greene, "Rewilding our Lives"
D. Nogués-Bravo, et al., "Rewilding is the new Pandora's box in conservation"
S. Brand, "The Case for De-Extinction: Why We Should Bring Back the Woolly Mammoth"
B. Minter, "The Perils of De-extinction"



11.08.22 Ethics & Industrial Agriculture: *Our Daily Bread*

- **EWWE:** Chapters 1-2

**Discussion Forum 8 (original post due by noon on 11/7; reply due by noon on 11/8)*

11.10.22 No class – Veteran's Day

11.15.22 Industrial Agriculture & Animal Welfare

- **EWWE:** Chapters 3-4

**Discussion Forum 9 (original post due by noon on 11/14; reply due by noon on 11/15)*

11.17.22 Industrial Agriculture & Eating Ethically

- **EWWE:** Chapters 5, 8, 10,12



11.22.22 Eating Ethically & Alternative Agriculture

- **EWWE:** Chapters 14, 16-18

**Discussion Forum 10 (original post due by noon on 11/21; reply due by noon on 11/22)*

11.24.22 Thanksgiving (no class)



11.29.22

Global Climate Change (GCC)

- **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"

12.01.22

The Ethics of GCC

- **MG:** S. Watt-Cloutier, "The Inuit Right to Culture Based on Ice and Snow"
B. McKibben, "Something Braver than Trying to Save the World"
D. Jamieson, "A Life Worth Living"
J. Garvey, "Climate Change is a Moral Problem for You, Right Now"
P. Singer, "A Fair Deal"



****FINAL EXAM ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6th, 12:10 PM – 2:00 PM (same room)**