**Environmental Ethics and Politics - POT 3503 - Fall 2013 (working draft)**

Tuesday periods 6-7, Thursday period 7 Instructor Seaton Tarrant

Classroom: Anderson Hall

Office Hours: seatonius@ufl.edu

Course Description:

Environmental Ethics is the study of human values and relationships with(in) the non-human world. This course will explore possible historical roots of our current environmental situation and contemporary responses from a variety of disciplines and worldviews. We will explore environmental virtues, obligations of environmental citizenship, and “deep” approaches to connecting with the world. We will discuss this body of knowledge with respect to our own personal and collective relationships with the earth.

### Course Objectives:

Students taking this course will:

1. Gain knowledge of a diverse spectrum of environmental ethics issues and scholarship, including the role of religion and distinct cultural worldviews, the impact of ecological and systems sciences, and different approaches to naming and valuing nature.
2. Become familiar with the discourses of ecofeminism, deep ecology, sustainability, environmental justice, environmental pragmatism, and ecological economics.
3. Critically assess, evaluate and utilize interdisciplinary knowledge to reflect upon and discuss the most pressing environmental issues of our time.
4. Demonstrate effective research and writing skills, articulate and defend their own understanding of environmental ethics as it applies to specific environmental issues.

5. Learn to think critically, constructively and collaboratively about the relationship between humans and the planet we inhabit.

Required Texts

Clowney, David and Patricia Mosto, *Earthcare: An Anthology of Environmental Ethics*. (Rowman and Littlefield . (used copies are available for purchase online)

Ausubel, Kenny, *Dreaming the Future: Reimagining Civilization in the Age of Nature*. Chelsea Green Publishers, 2012. (used and e-reader versions available for purchase online)

Online Readings:

Throughout the semester we will pull from online news and information sources as well, including: [Daily Grist](http://gristmill.grist.org/); [GreenTechForum](http://www.greentechforum.net/) ; [EcoGeek](http://ecogeek.org/) ; [Treehugger](http://www.treehugger.com/) ; [Animal Ethics](http://animalethics.blogspot.com/) ; [Switchboard (NRDC)](http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/) ; [Energy Smart Now](http://getenergysmartnow.com) ; [ClimateProgress](http://www.climateprogress.org/) ; [DeSmogBlog](http://www.desmogblog.com/) ; [NYtimes DOT Earth](http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com); Enviroethics.org

Course requirements and grading:

Blog - (15 entries with a comment, worth 1 point each): 15% of final grade

Students will write a blog entry each week, and the minimum word count is 250. Blog entries are graded for completion. I grade them this way so that students feel free to express their opinions and ideas without fear of grade-penalty, not so students can ramble incoherently or repeat themselves over and over. Therefore, I ask you focus not on the word count, but on the quality of thinking and writing. Most important is the time spent reflecting on the issue, prior to writing, and proof reading prior to posting the entry. I reserve the right to withhold credit for blog entries that fail to uphold basic grammar or fail to give due attention and serious thought to the prompts presented by your classmates.

Each week you will also comment on a blog post of a classmate. (You choose which post). Comments have less formal restrictions, though respect and clarity are still required. Everyone should manage their blog settings so they are told when someone comments on their blog. An appropriate blog comment gives substantive support for or criticism against the blog to which you are responding. This is a way to develop conversations and interactions with your classmates. A comment such as “I like your blog.” Or “good work!” is not sufficient.

Each week, you will email me with the pasted text of your blog for that week, along with your comment, and the title of the blog you commented on.

Blog Prompt – (worth 5 points) 5% of final grade

Depending on the number of students in the class, between 1 and 3 students each week will select a current events issue that is relevant to environmental ethics – they will compose a prompt for the student blog based on this issue, which will include hyperlink reference to at least two other online news or information sources relevant to their topic. The quality of this prompt will be assessed based on how well it connects the issue to that week’s readings in the course, how clearly the prompt is written, and how well the prompt provokes creative and insightful discussion among the student’s peers. Each student will compose one prompt. I will give an example of a well-executed blog prompt the first week of class.

When it is your week to compose a prompt you will email me with a copy of the prompt, which I will then distribute to the class.

Participation – (worth 10 points) 10% of final grade

I grade participation based on your contribution to class discussion, your effort to seek out support and assistance from classmates prior to asking the instructor (we will set up an online group for this kind of assistance), and by your attendance in class. I do not take attendance every week, but will, throughout the semester, administer 3 pop quizzes related to that week’s readings. These quizzes (worth 2 points each), along with my overall appraisal of your contribution to the class, form your participation grade. If you are especially shy and uncomfortable sharing in large group settings, come see me early in the semester so we can discuss alternative strategies for you to fulfill this component of your grade.

Students who miss a pop quiz will be allowed one make up, by attending an on-campus event related to environmental issues, and writing a 1000 word paper that clearly explains the issue, the perspective and argument of the speaker, and the student’s own perspective on the issue, relating this discussion to the general themes of environmental ethics as they are presented in class.

While I think it is perfectly reasonable to use laptops to take notes during class, and even research important terms for clarification during class discussion, I also reserve the right to detract points from the participation grade of students I see spending excessive amounts of time staring into their laptops or phones.

Paper Assignments 50 points (worth 50% of your grade)

I have structured the written assignments so that, through the course of the semester, you will work toward a 5000-word paper that has gone through numerous drafts. This means you will get significant feedback on your initial drafts and have the opportunity to improve that work and walk away from the class with a piece of writing you can be proud of. We will discuss possible paper topics in class.

Basically, you will choose one topic from those subjects covered in the first part of the semester for the first part of your paper, and one topic from those subjects covered in the second part of your paper, and work to integrate these themes into a single larger argument that defends your own understanding of environmental ethics. Each part of the paper project should incorporate at least three new references, not including the required texts of the class. This means the final draft of the paper will have at least 15 references besides the required texts.

Written Assignment Part 1 draft 1 (2000 words) **due September 12** – (worth 10 points) 10% of final grade

Written Assignment Part 1 draft 2 **due October 1** – (worth 10 points) 10% of final grade

Written Assignment Part 2 draft 1 (2000 words) **due October 31**– (worth 10 points) 10% of final grade

Written Assignment Part 2 draft 2 **due November 14**– (worth 10 points) 10% of final grade

Final integrated Paper turned in at the end of the semester (5000 words) **due December 1** – (worth 10 points) 10 % of final grade

Mid-Term – 20 points (worth 20% of your grade)

There will be one in-class exam, composed of short answer questions. I will give a specific outline of what is expected of you regarding this exam at least three weeks beforehand. The goal of the exam is to assess your general knowledge of the material covered up to that point, and your ability to compose short answers that utilize this information while reflecting upon specific environmental and ethical current events.

If you are at all worried about your abilities in terms of basic grammar and sentence construction, take the time to familiarize yourself with UF’s Online Writing Lab. <http://www.cwoc.ufl.edu/owl/OWLresourcesonline.html> Fixing basic mistakes and cleaning up your writing as much as possible before it gets to me could make at least a letter grade difference in how well you do in the course. Also, consider working through the writing tutorial at [www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/skills/grammar/grammar\_tutorial/index.htm](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/skills/grammar/grammar_tutorial/index.htm). Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated and will result in failure of the course. Papers are to be submitted via Sakai, and checked with Turnitin.com, the web-based plagiarism-checking program. Late papers, beginning at 12:01 P.M. of their due dates, will be penalized ½ letter grade for each 24-hour period they are tardy.

Honor Code - Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community.  An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage.  For more detail go to: [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm](https://legacy.mail.ufl.edu/OWA/redir.aspx?C=c40b76af75cf4be99acba441787dedad&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.dso.ufl.edu%2fjudicial%2facademic.htm" \t "_blank)

Students requiring accommodations must first register with the Dean of Student's office, Disability Resource Center. The Dean of Student's office will provide documentation that the student will give to the instructor.

Grading Scale:

A 95 – 100% C 73 – 76%

A- 90 – 94% C- 70 – 72%

B+ 87 – 89% D+ 67 – 69%

B 83 – 86% D 63 – 66%

B- 80 – 82% D- 60 – 62%

C+ 77 – 79% E 59% or below

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule or College Basic

distribution credit. See <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Class Schedule

Unit One – Introduction to Environmental Ethics: History and Core Concepts

August 22: Introduction to the Course, Sign Up for Current Affair Blog Prompt

August 27: Leading up to the 20th century

August 29:

*EC 3-35 +* short selections from *Malthus, Darwin, Emerson, Thoreau*

September 3: Valuing Nature

September 5:

*EC 135-192*

Unit Two – The Issues, Part 1

# September 10: Selected readings on Biodiversity

*EC 513-522; 531-558*

September 12: Selected readings on Land and Water

*EC 417-448; 463-485****\*paper 1 due***

September 17: Selected readings on Population

*EC 613-647*

September 19: Selected readings on Waste

*EC 368-405*

Unit Three – Religions and Worldviews, Part 1

September 24: the Abrahamic religions

*EC 43-70*

September 26: non-Abrahamic traditions

*EC 95-114*

October 1: Native American and western-secular traditions

*EC 115-134*

***\*paper 1 draft 2 due***

October 3: possible mid term review

October 8: Mid-term exam – covers units 1-3

Unit Four – Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology

October 10: Naess readings

*EC 193-212*

October 15: deep ecology readings

*EC* 213-242

October 17: supplementary in permaculture

October 22: ecofeminism readings

*EC* 243-282

October 24:

Unit Five – The Issues Part 2

October 29: animal rights

*EC 559-606*

October 31: climate change

*EC 347-359*

\*paper part 2 due

November 5: consumption

*EC 660-684*

November 7: first vs third world

*EC 714-716 + supplementary reading*

Unit 6: Current Trends

November 12: Social Ecology and Environmental Justice

*EC 284-324*

November 14: Environmental Pragmatism

*Selections from Bryon Norton and Andrew Light*

November 19: Ecological Economics

\*new text book

November 21: Sustainability

Excerpt from Thiele, Excerpt from Ehrenfeld

November 26:  **Dreaming the Future part 1**

November 28: Thanksgiving (read Dreaming the Future part 2)

December 3: Dreaming the Future part 3 and open debate

*\*This syllabus is subject to revision, based on the development of the course.*