

# Syllabus: Environmental Ethics

PHI 336.001

MWF 2:00 – 2:50pm  
CB 334

Fall 2016

Contact Information	Required Texts and Documents
<p>Bob Sandmeyer, Ph.D. ph. 257-7749 <a href="mailto:bob.sandmeyer@uky.edu">bob.sandmeyer@uky.edu</a></p> <p>Canvas: <a href="http://uk.instructure.com/">http://uk.instructure.com/</a></p> <p>Office: 1429 Patterson Office Tower</p> <p>Office Hours: Mon/Wed: 10:00am – 10:50pm Mon/Wed: 1:00pm – 1:50pm</p> <p><i>I'm also available by appointment, if these times are inconvenient to you. Contact me by email to arrange a time convenient to us both.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Articles placed in the Canvas Library (Files: Library)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ See the "Daily Schedule" in Canvas for the day-by-day schedule of readings. (Pages: Daily Schedule)</li></ul></li><li>Leopold, Aldo. <i>A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949. [ISBN: 9780195059281]</li><li>Handouts in the Canvas (Files: Handouts)</li></ol>

## Course Description

What is our place in the nexus of life? Do we have any ethical obligations toward living beings not of our own species, or to populations, to species as such, or even to systems of living beings? What essentially defines our moral relation either to our own kind or to other non-human living systems? How is value defined? Are all values defined solely by reference to ourselves or our kind, or is there a realm of value that extends beyond the human domain? How far does the line of moral considerability extend? Does wild nature, itself, for example, have value in and of itself? And if so, when wild areas are degraded by human activity, is it really possible or advisable to restore such an area without essentially changing its character as wild? How can we live and work in such a way as to sustain the world all living things require? Indeed, what does sustainability mean?

All these questions will be addressed and considered in six distinct units over the course of the semester. The first unit demarcates the basic ethical stance we will examine this semester. This is the land ethic advanced, first and foremost, by Aldo Leopold in his book *A Sand County Almanac*. Our aim in this unit is to understand the structure and content of Leopold's argument. Indeed the overall aim of this class is to understand the concept of a land ethic, to analyze its strengths and weakness, to demarcate its limits, and to investigate the philosophical concepts it implies. A concept central to the land ethic, for instance, is anthropocentrism, i.e., the idea that the human being is the center of the moral universe and/or the singularly entity in this world valuable in and of itself. The land ethic is non-anthropocentric. But what does this entail, i.e., what are the ethical consequences of this standpoint? In Unit Two we will study the concept and philosophical roots of anthropocentrism. Unit three comprises an analysis of distinct non-anthropocentric ethical viewpoints. These three units form the subject matter of the midterm. After the midterm, we will study the human place in nature (unit four), the concept of sustainability (unit five), and

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conclude the class by asking whether wild nature as such can be restored (unit six). The final exam has a cumulative and non-cumulative component.

The schedule of readings and homework can be found in Canvas (**Pages: Daily Schedule**). This class does not use a "textbook" in the traditional sense. In an effort to practice sustainability principles, we will read the primary source materials of the class, either selections or full articles, in PDF format. These documents are available in the class **CANVAS** site (**Files: Library**). In addition to these PDF documents, we will read the whole of Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, and you will be asked to write a 5-7 page thesis defense paper about it. Details of this assignment will be made available in Canvas (**Files: Handouts**).

The graded elements in this class are four. You will take two exams: (1) a midterm exam and (2) a final exam consisting of (a) a take-home cumulative essay question and (b) in class exam similar to the midterm but covering only those units after the midterm. (3) You will write a 5-7 page thesis defense paper. In actuality, this assignment includes a number of elements: (a) the submission of topic question, statement of provisional thesis, and a planning outline, (b) submission of a revised thesis statement and working outline of the paper, (c) submission of a first draft with a works cited page and an outline of the submitted paper, and (d) optionally or if required, submission of a final paper draft with a works cited page. (See the Thesis Defense Paper handout in Canvas for specifics.) Additionally, (4) given that the class is run predominately by question and answer, regular attendance and active class participation comprise the fourth graded element. The breakdown of these four graded elements and their weight in the total score is indicated below.

### Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this class, students will be able to:

- define the concepts central to environmental ethics
- explain and defend one's own ethical standpoint according to these ethical concepts
- explain the difference between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric ethic theories
- discriminate and assess claims regarding moral considerability
- articulate and evaluate alternative ethical stances from traditionally underrepresented groups
- understand and evaluate one's own concrete interaction to their surrounding world, especially in reference to the concept of sustainability

### Grading

Given the limited functionality of the Canvas grade book system, the grade book online will be used solely to indicate scores received for individual assignments. Students will be provided with a cumulative Midterm Evaluation of course performance (soon after midterm exam) based on criteria laid out below. These cumulative reports will contain a breakdown of grades earned to date.

#### In-Class Exams

- Midterm 25 % (Date: October 10<sup>th</sup>)
- Cumulative Final 50 % – (Date: Wednesday, 12/14, at 1:00pm)

**Thesis Paper Assignment** 25 % (see Thesis Paper handout for details)

#### **Active Participation**

- Student participation is essential to the success of the class. Students should come prepared to answer basic questions about the scheduled reading each class.
- Expectations within the classroom:

#### **Grading Scale**

A = 100% - 90%  
B = 89% - 80%  
C = 79% - 70%  
D = 69% - 60%  
F = ≤59%

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- Students are encouraged and, in point of fact, required to critique the views expressed in the readings, by the professor, or by their peers in class or online. This critique requires, however, respectful engagement. Uncivil and disrespectful discourse or behavior contradicts the very requirement of critique and, as such, will not be tolerated. If after a first warning, any student continues such behavior, expulsion from the class may result.
- Electronic devices, e.g., cellphones, computers, tablets, are allowed to be used in class. However, these devices may be used for only class related activities. If after a first warning any student continues to use an electronic device for non-classroom activities, the student may be banned from using any such devices in the class.

### Attendance

- Regular attendance is required and a necessary condition to succeed in this class.
  - The professor will take roll regularly in class on the basis of a class seating chart established at the beginning of the semester.
    - Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance in class. The professor will provide attendance reports at midpoint and near the end of term during the semester, but lack of knowledge either of these attendance rules or of the student's own attendance status is no excuse.
  - *Excused absences will not count against the student unless excessive* (see below).
    - Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible, or within one week after the absences. S.R. 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor.
      - Either a [Tier 2 or a Tier 3 document](#) provided to the student by [University Health Service](#) is appropriate verification for an excused absence for illness.
    - Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than one week *before* the absence. Information regarding dates of major religious holidays may be obtained through the religious liaison, Mr. Jake Karnes (859-257-2754).
- *If any student misses 4 or more classes unexcused (i.e., more than one week of classes unexcused), then he/she will receive a 50% deduction and automatically fail the class.*
  - Tardiness, especially if repeated, may result in a 5% deduction of the total grade.
- Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (i.e., with excuse) per university policy SR 5.2.4.2.

### **Academic Integrity**

If the professor determines that a student or group of students has cheated on any exam or has plagiarized any part of any assignment, at a minimum he/she/they will receive a grade of zero for the assignment without the possibility of redoing the assignment. *Typically, though, evidence of cheating results in course*

*failure*. If the case is especially egregious, the issue will be directed to the appropriate University Dean and the student will receive a grade of XE/XF for the course.

Cheating not only robs other students of a fair grade, it also fundamentally threatens the mission of this institution of higher education. Unfortunately, cheating and plagiarism – though not frequent – does exist here at UK. By taking this class, you accept the injunction not to cheat in any way and comport yourself with integrity and honor throughout the semester. You also agree to have all or some of your assignments uploaded and checked by anti-plagiarism or other anti-cheating tools.

Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Part II of Student Rights and Responsibilities (available online <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgement of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it be a published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or something similar to this. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone. When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources of information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is a form of plagiarism. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain (Section 6.3.1).

### **Accommodations**

If you have a documented disability which requires academic accommodations, please contact the professor as soon as possible. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide the professor with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center. If you have not already done so, please register with the Disability Resource Center (Suite 407 of the Multidisciplinary Science Building, 725 Rose Street, 859-257-2754, [dtbeac1@uky.edu](mailto:dtbeac1@uky.edu)) for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities.

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### **Final remark**

This syllabus is a contract between the professor and student. Each student is required to complete a "Syllabus Quiz" in Canvas by the beginning of class, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. Completion of the syllabus quiz indicates the student understands and accepts the terms of this syllabus, i.e., the expectations and requirements laid out herein.

# PHI 336.001 Fall 2016 Schedule

MWF 2:00 am - 2:50 pm, [334 Whitehall Classroom Bldg](#)

Day	Date	Class	<u>due on day listed</u> <b>Reading/Homework</b>
			"Handout" = Canvas:Files:Handouts "Library" = Canvas:Files:Library
<b>Unit One: Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic</b>			
8/24	Wed	First Day: Syllabus; Who is Leopold?	Handout: Syllabus Leopold: "Thinking Like a Mountain" ( <a href="#">Location of Wolf Shooting</a> , ca. Sept. 22, 1909))
8/26	Fri	The Land Ethic	Leopold: "The Land Ethic" (with particular attention to the first half)
8/29	Mon	The Land Ethic ( <i>continued</i> )	reread "The Land Ethic" (with particular attention to the second half)
<i>8/30 Last day to add</i>			
<b>Unit Two: Philosophical Roots of Anthropocentrism</b>			
Supplementary Assignment: read the Part I (pages vii-ix, 3-92) of Leopold's <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> by Friday, 9/16			
8/31	Wed	Francis Bacon (1561—1626, British)	Library: <a href="#">Bacon - Arts &amp; Sciences</a>
9/2	Fri	<b>Class cancelled</b> (please do the quiz & assignment, though)	<a href="#">Online Quiz - Syllabus</a> (due by 2:00 p.m. today) <a href="#">Selfe Picture Assignment</a> (due by 2:00 p.m. today)
9/5	Mon	<i>Labor Day</i>	
9/7	Wed	René Descartes (1596—1650, French)	Library: <a href="#">Descartes - Beast-Machine</a>
9/9	Fri	John Locke (1632—1704, British)	Library: <a href="#">Locke - Of Property</a>
9/12	Mon	The Western tradition	Library: <a href="#">White - Historical Roots</a>
9/14	Wed	Pope Francis	Library: <a href="#">Pope Francis - Encyclical laudato si</a>
9/16	Fri	John Stuart Mill (1806—1873, British)	Library: <a href="#">Mill - Nature</a>
<b>Unit Three: Non-anthropocentric Conceptions</b>			
Supplementary Assignment: read the Part II (pages 95-162) of Leopold's <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> by Wednesday, 10/7			
9/19	Mon	Animal liberation ( <i>equal consideration of interests</i> )	Library: <a href="#">Singer - Animal Liberation</a>
9/21	Wed	Animal rights ( <i>concept of intrinsic value</i> )	Library: <a href="#">Regan - Animal Rights</a>
9/22	Thur	<b>Movie Showing: Green Fire - 5pm at W.T. Young Auditorium (approx. 2 hours)</b>	
9/23	Fri	open discussion (psychocentrism)	
9/26	Mon	Biocentrism	Library: <a href="#">Taylor - Respect for Nature</a>
9/28	Wed	Ecological animalism	Library: <a href="#">Plumwood - Animals and Ecology</a>
9/30	Fri	open discussion (biocentrism)	
10/3	Mon	Duties	Library: <a href="#">Midgley - Duties Concerning Islands</a>
<b>Midterm Exam (&amp; Writing Assignment)</b>			
10/5	Wed	Review for Midterm: Units One through Three	Handout: * Study Guide for Midterm
10/7	Fri	Review for Midterm	
<i>October 10-21 - Midterm grading window. 10/17 Midterm.</i>			
10/10	Mon	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
10/12	Wed	Class discussion: paper writing - argument	Library: <a href="#">Seech - Thesis Defense Papers</a> * <b>Online Seech-Thesis Defense Paper Quiz</b> (due by 2:00 p.m. today) Handout: Thesis Paper Assignment

			(see handout for complete details of PAPER assignment)
10/14	Fri	Leopold Paper Assignment Details	(bring Seech article and Thesis Paper handout)
10/17	Mon	Review Midterm Exam	Paper Assignment: <b>THESIS PLAN</b> due at 2:00pm
10/19	Wed	<i>No class: <a href="#">SPEP Conference</a></i>	
10/21	Fri	<i>No class: <a href="#">SPEP Conference</a></i>	
<b>Unit Four: The Human Place in Nature</b>			
Supplementary Assignment: read Part III, i.e., the whole of Leopold's <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> , by Friday, 11/6			
10/24	Mon	The action of man upon nature	Library: <a href="#">Marsh - Man and Nature</a>
10/26	Wed	Nature ( <i>natura naturata &amp; natura naturans</i> )	Library: <a href="#">Emerson - Nature</a>
10/28	Fri	Sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields	Library: <a href="#">Thoreau - Walking</a>
10/31	Mon	open discussion (romantic conceptions of nature)	
11/2	Wed	Philosophical roots of the Park Service	Library: <a href="#">Muir - Readings</a>
11/4	Fri	Philosophical roots of the Forest Service	Library: <a href="#">Pinchot - Fight for Conservation</a>
11/7	Mon	Getting back to nature	Library: <a href="#">Cronon - Trouble with Wilderness</a>
11/9	Wed	open discussion (land management in the US)	
11/11	Fri	Review unit	Paper Assignment: <b>DEFENSE STRUCTURE</b> due at 2:00pm
<b>Unit Five: The Concept of Sustainability</b>			
11/14	Mon	Sustainable development: the conventional definition	Library: <a href="#">Brundtland Report</a>
11/16	Wed	Political ecology: critique of conventional definition	Library: <a href="#">Guha--Martinez-Alier – Poverty and the Environment</a>
11/18	Fri	Traditional ecological knowledge	Library: <a href="#">LaDuke - Traditional Ecological Knowledge</a>
11/21	Mon	no class (available for meetings all afternoon)	Paper Assignment: <b>WORKING DRAFT</b> due at 11:59pm
11/23	Wed	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	
11/25	Fri	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>	
11/28	Mon	The idea of a local economy	Library: <a href="#">Berry - Local Economy</a>
11/30	Wed	Achieving a sustainable economy - two ideas	Library: * <a href="#">Hawken - Declaration of Sustainability</a> * <a href="#">Elkington - Making Capitalism Sustainable</a>
12/2	Fri	Review sustainability unit	Library: <a href="#">Yanarella et. al. - Green vs. Sustainability</a>
12/4	Sun	<i>Working Drafts returned</i>	
<b>Unit Six: Restoration of Nature</b>			
12/5	Mon	Faking nature	Library: <a href="#">Elliot - Faking Nature</a>
12/7	Wed	Human restoration of nature	Library: <a href="#">Katz - Big Lie</a> Handout: Study Guide for Final - Parts A & B
<b>Final Exam</b>			
12/9	Fri	Review for Final	
12/9	Fri		Paper Assignment: <i>optional FINAL DRAFT</i> due at 11:59pm
12/14	Wed	<b>(A) Take-home</b> final exam essay due at 12:30pm <b>(B) In-class</b> final exam: 1:00pm-2:05pm (CB 334)	