Syllabus: Environmental Ethics

PHI 336.001 MWF 2:00 – 2:50pm CB 204 **Fall 2017**

Contact Information	Required Texts and Documents
Bob Sandmeyer, Ph.D. ph. 257-7749 bob.sandmeyer@uky.edu Canvas: http://uk.instructure.com/ Office: 1429 Patterson Office Tower Office Hours: Mon/Wed: 1:00pm – 1:45pm Mondays: 3:15pm – 4:15pm *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.*	1. Articles placed in the Canvas Library (Canvas: Files: Library) ➢ See the "Daily Schedule" in Canvas for the day-by-day schedule of readings. (Canvas: Pages) 2. Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949. [ISBN: 9780195059281] 3. Handouts in the Canvas (Canvas: Files: Handouts)

Welcome to PHI 336, Environmental Ethics. Over the course of the semester, we will study the theory of our ethical relation to the nonhuman world, the social and political contexts in which these ethical theories work, and various expressions of the idea of sustainable economic development.

Before I go on to describe the course more fully, I want to emphasize the importance of the readings in this, a philosophy class. Philosophy is unlike other subjects in the humanities, and its methodology is distinct from those you find in the social and the natural sciences. Philosophers are concerned with reasoned argumentation fundamentally. We spend a good deal of our time offering, analyzing, and critiquing arguments for or against particular positions. Consequently, readings tend to be dense, and they demand a good deal of rigorous attention by the reader. Developing your skill at reading and comprehending these sorts of texts is a central objective in this class, perhaps the most important learning outcome in the class. For this reason, I have kept the length of each reading assignment small, typically 10 pages or so. 10 pages can take up to an hour or two to read understandingly. One of the most important skills to develop when reading difficult texts such as these is to read with questions in mind. That is to say, reading and comprehending a difficult text involves asking questions of the text. To develop this skill, I have created a reading quiz for almost every reading assignment. Completing these quizzes on a regular basis will get you in the habit of reading with questions in mind. Further, class lecture and discussion as well as the class tests will be based in large measure on these reading quizzes. I will make the reading questions for every assignment available to you at the time of that assignment in the Canvas: Files: Quiz Archive folder. I recommend you print these out and answer them as you read through the assignment. The questions are true/false, multiple choice, and multiple answer questions; they typically closely match passages in the text, itself. Once you complete the reading, you will then be required to go online and submit your answers via a Canvas quiz. Every quiz allows for two attempts, in case you make any errors on the first try. Only the highest score counts toward your grade. The reading quizzes are the most substantive grading element in this class. Over the course of the semester, there will be

approximately 20 reading quizzes; the grade for this element constitutes 40% of the grade earned in the class as a whole. So as to reduce the burden of this exercise, the assignment will be graded on a square root curve. See below for details about this curve. Given the importance of these reading quizzes for your success in the class and for your grade, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of completing every quiz in a timely manner.

In our first unit, titled "Ethics – Basic Theories," we'll read a particularly influential essay in the field of environmental ethics, Aldo Leopold's essay, "The Land Ethic." We will then compare this ethical theory against influential ethical theories in the tradition, specifically, against Aristotelian virtue ethics, Kantian ethics of duty, and utilitarian theory rooted in the work of Jeremy Bentham. On the one hand, this comparative approach will allow us to gauge the unique expansion of ethics proposed by environmental ethicists. On the other, it will allow us to examine other non-anthropocentric ethical theories that have developed out of these traditions. This first unit on basic ethical theories will take up about half of the semester. You can expect a "midterm" test (named as such only because it occurs at the midpoint of the semester) at the conclusion of this unit. This first test will constitute 15% of the total grade; see below for more details about this first test.

During this first unit, I will also assign the first of two writing assignments, the "Ethical Action" assignment. In his "Land Ethic" essay, Leopold asserts that "an ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from anti-social conduct." So over the course of the first half of the semester, I will ask you to impose some ethical restriction on some aspect of your life that defines your social conduct and to reflect on this restriction. While this assignment is in effect, you will journal every week about the impact and the significance of this ethical decision on your actions. At the conclusion of the assignment, you will produce a final finished product of 5 to 7 typed pages summarizing your action and the ethical significance of this. This 5-7 page paper is not as onerous a project as might initially seem. We will devote four days of class explicitly devoted to this project; and the paper you write, in reality, will be developed on the basis of your journal entries. This first assignment will constitute 15% of the total grade: 5% for the journal, 10% for the paper. I will provide more details about this assignment the second week of class.

Directly after the first unit, I will be away for three class periods as I have obligations at two conferences (one of which is the International Association for Environmental Philosophy). During this sabbatical from class, you will complete your second writing assignment. You will read the whole of Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* and write a 3 page paper on the book. In his preface, Leopold indicates that he welds together three concepts throughout the work: an ecological, an ethical, and a cultural concept. Essentially I want to know how he "welds" these concepts together, and how well united these concepts are in the work. Is there an internal bond connecting these concepts, or are they only extrinsically, perhaps artificially, joined together in the work? This second writing assignment will constitute 10% of the total grade. I will provide more details about this assignment before the "midterm" test.

With that, the heavy lifting in the class will be done, but we still have two more units to complete. During the first of these, "American Lands – Social & Political Contexts," we will examine the ideas underlying the system of public lands management in the United States. Here we will examine two case studies that provide us vantage points by which to think through the social and political context in which our ethical ideas are situated. During the final unit, "Sustainable Development – Concept & Critique," we will study various

expressions of the idea of sustainable economic development and problems inherent to it. Each of these units concludes with a test. The second and third test will constitute 20% total of the total grade, 10% each. See below for more details about these tests.

Canvas

You will need to spend some time familiarizing yourself with the Canvas portal for this class (**https://uk.instructure.com/**). Once in Canvas, you will find links to all content on the site in the banner to the left. Pay special attention to the following:

- **Daily Schedule**: To access this, click the **Pages** link. The Daily Schedule is one of the most important pages in the site. It details the topics, reading assignments, and graded assignments due each class. Consequently, you will want to consult this before and after every class.
- **Library**: Rather than have you purchase a traditional textbook at great expense, I am making copies of important articles available to you. All of these PDF files can be found by clicking the **Files** link. Typically, readings per class are difficult but short. You will need to schedule at least one to two hours for each reading assignment.
- **Reading Quizzes**: As noted, I've assigned a reading quiz for nearly every reading. These quizzes are designed to help you understand the readings and to identify the most important passages. Consequently, I strongly recommend that you print out the pertinent reading quiz *before* reading the assignment and answer the questions as you read through the assignment. You can then use this print out as your key, when you go online to take the quiz. You should also bring your completed reading quiz to the class for which it is assigned, since we will use the reading questions as the basis for our discussion of the text in class. Keep your archive of questions for the duration of each unit, for this will help you prepare for the tests as well.
    - Each reading quiz is due *before* the class during which we will discuss the assignment. You can take each quiz up to two times; only the highest score will count. A **reading quiz archive**, i.e., an archive of all reading quiz questions, is available by clicking the **Files** link. (Quizzes come available at the time the reading is assigned and is available there for the rest of the semester.)
- **Handouts**: All handouts in the class can be found by clicking the **Files** link. For instance, I have placed a copy of this syllabus here.

Learning Outcomes

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

- employ skills necessary to read complex and dense texts comprehendingly
- explain and defend one's own ethical standpoint according to basic theories & concepts
- articulate and evaluate alternative ethical stances from traditionally underrepresented groups
- speak intelligently about the system of public lands protection in the United States and the philosophical ideas underlying the mission statements of the main public lands management agencies in the federal government
- 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 raw scores received. I will provide Excel templates (Canvas: Files: Grading Templates), which you may use to keep track of your grade and/or calculate your total grade. Additionally, I will provide you all with a cumulative midterm evaluation (soon after the "midterm" test). This midterm evaluation grade will provide a rough indication of your grade in the class to that point in the semester.

Reading Quizzes (40% of total grade)

- approximately 20 quizzes over the course of the semester
- Grading formula used for calculating your reading quiz score
  - Variables
    - x = total correct on reading quizzes
    - y = highest total score earned in class
    - z = (x/y)
  - Square Root Curve formula
    - $\sqrt{z}$ x 100
  - Click here for a chart detailing the effect of this curve on a standard 100 point scale

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

In-Class Tests (35% of total grade)

- Three Unit Tests
  - Ethics – Basic Theories (at "midterm" 15.0 % (10/16)
  - American Lands: Social & Political Contexts 10.0 % (11/13)
  - Sustainable Development – Concept & Critique 10.0% (12/11 - 3:30pm)
- Preparation for and Composition of Tests
  - A study guide will be provided for each test which contains:
    - select reading questions from the reading quizzes, a subset of which will be used on the exam
    - a number of essay questions, a subset of which will be used on the exam
  - Each test will last 50 minutes; none is cumulative in scope.
- Grading formula used for calculating test scores
  - Variables
    - x = score earned on test
    - y = total possible
  - Standard grading formula
    - x/y x 100

Writing Assignments (25% of total grade)

- Two Writing Assignments
  - Ethical Action Journaling and Writing Assignment (15%)
    - Journal
    - 5 – 7 page product
    - a grading rubric will be provided separately
  - Leopold "Three Concepts" Assignment (10%)

- 3 page paper
- a grading rubric will be provided separately

Class Attendance and Participation

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. The purpose of the reading quizzes is to facilitate this preparation.
- Expectations within the classroom:
  - 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 barred from using any such devices in the class.

Attendance

- Regular attendance is required and a necessary condition to succeed in this class.
  - It is the responsible of students to maintain a good attendance record.
  - Students will not be allowed to make-up any assignment, test, or quiz due to an unexcused absence.
  - *Excused absences will not count against the student.*
    - 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).
  - The professor will take roll on a semi-regular basis in class in order to gauge class attendance numbers.
- Students should strongly consider withdrawing from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (i.e., with or without excuse) per university policy SR 5.2.4.2.

Academic Integrity

Everyone understands that while cheating may be tempting, in all cases it is wrong. Bear in mind, this is an ethics class. Do not cheat on the reading quizzes and tests! Do not plagiarize from others in your written assignments! If the professor determines that a student or group of students has cheated on any quiz or test, or that a student 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 you agree to comport yourself with integrity and honor throughout the semester. You also agree to have all or some of your assignments 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 that requires academic accommodations, please schedule an appointment and/or see me during scheduled office hours as soon as possible. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC coordinates campus disability services available to students with disabilities. It is located on the corner of Rose Street and Huguelet Drive in the Multidisciplinary Science Building, Suite 407. You can reach them via phone at (859) 257-2754 and via email at drc@uky.edu. Their website is: http://www.uky.edu/DisabilityResourceCenter.

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 end of the first week of classes. 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.

Planned Reading Schedule (This is no substitute for the **Daily Schedule** available on Canvas. Use the **Daily Schedule!**)

Day	*Date*	*Class*	due on day listed *Reading/Homework*
*Click **Canvas Reading Quiz** links to take the online reading quiz.* *Goto **Canvas: Files: Quiz Archive** to print out the reading questions.*			*"Handout" = Canvas:Files:Handouts* *"Library" = Canvas:Files:Library*
8/23	Wed	First Day Introductions & Syllabus	Leopold - Thinking Like a Mountain Practice Quiz: 00 Practice Quiz (in class) Handout: Syllabus
8/25	Fri	Why Environmental Ethics?	Syllabus Quiz: 00 Syllabus
Ethics - Basic Theories			
8/28	Mon	**The Possibility of an Ecological Ethic** (Leopold) I	Leopold: The Land Ethic, pp. 201-214 Canvas Reading Quiz: 01 Leopold
8/29 Last day to add			
8/30	Wed	An Ecological Ethic (Leopold) II	Leopold: The Land Ethic, pp. 214-226 Canvas Reading Quiz: 02 Leopold Handout: First Assignment - Ethical Action
9/1	Fri	No Class	
9/4	Mon	Labor Day - Academic Holiday	
9/6	Wed	Discuss Ethical Action assignment in light of an ecological ethic	
9/8	Fri	**Virtue Ethics** I (Aristotle)	Library: Aristotle - NicoEthics, pp. 17-22 (to #13) Canvas Reading Quiz: 03 Aristotle
9/11	Mon	Virtue Ethics II	Library: Aristotle - NicoEthics, pp. 22-25 Canvas Reading Quiz: 04 Aristotle
9/13	Wed	An environmental virtue ethics	Library: Cafaro - Thoreau, Leopold, Carson Canvas Reading Quiz: 05 Cafaro
9/15	Fri	Discuss Ethical Action assignment in light of virtue ethics	
9/18	Mon	**Ethics of Duty** (Kant) I	Library: Kant - Groundwork (pp. 46-51) Canvas Reading Quiz: 06 Kant Handout: Kant's Ethics of Duty *Recommended*: * Runes' *Dictionary of Philosophy* * Trullinger - Conspectus
9/20	Wed	Duty Ethics (Kant) II	Library: Kant - Groundwork (pp. 51-56 - to line) Canvas Reading Quiz: 07 Kant
9/22	Fri	Ethics of Duty (Kant) III	Library: Kant - Groundwork (pp. 56-64) Canvas Reading Quiz: 08 Kant
9/25	Mon	Indirect Duties to Animals (Kant)	Library: Kant - Indirect Duties Canvas Reading Quiz: 09 Kant
9/27	Wed	Animal Rights	Library: Regan - Animal Rights Canvas Reading Quiz: 10 Regan
9/29	Fri	open	
10/2	Mon	Discuss Ethical Action assignment in light of the ethics of duty	
10/4	Wed	**The Principle of Utility** (Bentham)	Library: Bentham - On the Principle of Utility Canvas Reading Quiz: 11 Bentham
10/6	Fri	Animal Liberation	Library: Singer - Animal Liberation (to dotted line) Canvas Reading Quiz: 12 Singer

10/9	Mon	Ecology, Animal, Ethics	Library: Plumwood - Animals and Ecology (to dotted line) Canvas Reading Quiz: 13 Plumwood
10/11	Wed	Discuss Ethical Action assignment in light of utilitarianism	Handout: Study Guide for Midterm
10/13	Fri	Taking Stock and Exam Prep	
10/16 Midterm			
10/16	Mon	**Test on Ethical Theories**	
10/18	Wed	No Class	Leopold Reading Assignment
10/20	Fri	No Class	
10/23	Mon	No Class	
10/25	Wed	Review & Recap: Ethical Theory	
American Lands - Social & Political Contexts			
10/27	Fri	Background: John Locke on private property	Library: Locke - Of Property (excerpt) Canvas Reading Quiz: 14 Locke
10/30	Mon	First case study: the Hetch Hetchy controversy	Library: Smith - Value of a Tree Canvas Reading Quiz: 15 Smith
11/1	Wed	open discussion in class	
11/3	Fri	Second case study: the wilderness act	Library: Wilderness Act
11/6	Mon	William Cronon's critique: the social construction of nature	Library: Cronon - Trouble with Wilderness (excerpt) Canvas Reading Quiz: 16 Cronon
11/8	Wed	open discussion in class	
11/10 Last day to withdraw			
11/10	Fri	Public land protection in the US: the federal system	
11/13	Mon	**Test on American Lands: Social and Political Contexts**	
11/15	Wed	Review & Recap American Lands	
Sustainable Development - Concept & Critique			
11/17	Fri	Brundtland: historical background & thesis	Library: Gudmusson et. al. - Sustainable Development Canvas Reading Quiz: 17 Gudmusson
11/20	Mon	John Elkington's triple bottom line theory	Library: Elkington - Making Capitalism Sustainable Canvas Reading Quiz: 18 Elkington
11/22	Wed	Thanksgiving Break - Academic Holiday	
11/24	Fri	Thanksgiving Break - Academic Holiday	
11/27	Mon	Winona LaDuke & traditional ecological knowledge	Library: LaDuke - Traditional Ecological Knowledge (excerpt) Canvas Reading Quiz: 19 LaDuke
11/29	Wed	Pope Francis' environmental letter	Library: Encyclical Summary Canvas Reading Quiz: 20 Encyclical
12/1	Fri	Wendell Berry's concept of two economies	Library: Berry - Two Economies
12/4	Mon	The contemporary problem: human action today	Library: Jonas - Altered State of Human Action (excerpt)
12/6	Wed	open discussion	
12/8	Fri	Test preparation	
12/11	Mon	**Test on Sustainable Development - Concept & Critique**: 3:30pm - 4:20pm	

(This is no substitute for the **Daily Schedule** available on Canvas. Use the **Daily Schedule!**)