

**Depaul University
School for New Learning**

Environmental Ethics: Human Values, Culture and the Environment

**Fall 2003
Naperville Campus
Saturday, 9-12 PM**

Faculty: Dr. Sylvia Hood Washington, MSE, Ph.D., ND
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Textbooks:

Environmental Ethics, an Anthology, edited by Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston, III

Radical Ecology, the Search for a Livable World by Carolyn Merchant

The Rights of Nature, a History of Environmental Ethics by Roderick Frazier Nash

Course Description: For thousands of years humans, from the time they were able to make the first tools to the production of nuclear technologies, have changed and in many cases radically altered their environment. Their perceptions (values and culture) with respect to the human relationship (and or responsibility) to the environmental spaces in which they lived and or the global commons (like space and the oceans) for the benefit of their current or future society has been critical in influencing the way in which the integrity of the environment and global commons has been impacted. This ten week course will provide a survey of various environmental ethics that have emerged during human history among Western and non-Western cultures; and how these divergent environmental ethics have shaped and influenced not only planetary but space ecosystems. This course will also examine the consequences of environmental ethics on past current and future human societies from economic, political, social and environmental health perspectives. This course is an excellent elective for business, education, religion, sociology/anthropology and science/engineering focus area who seek to understand the foundations and ramifications of human ethics, values and culture on decisions and policies which impact the global environment (or ecosystems).

Vincentian Values: This course will promote the Vincentian values of the Depaul Community **which seeks to ennoble the God-given dignity of each person.** This religious personalism is manifested by the members of the DePaul community in a sensitivity to and care for the needs of each other and of those served, with a special concern for the deprived members of society. DePaul University emphasizes the development of a full range of human capabilities and appreciation of higher education as a means to engaged cultural, social, religious, and ethical values in service to others.

Faculty: Dr. Washington is an environmental scholar with over 20 years of combined experience as an environmental scientist, engineer and historian. Dr. Washington spent the first 10 years as an environmental chemist and engineer in corporate America and with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) implementing and reviewing environmental policies and regulations which had a direct impact on human health and ecosystems. Dr. Washington's doctoral work in environmental history and environmental health focused on the history and current public health ramifications of environmental inequalities on marginalized communities as a function of race, gender and class. She is a nationally recognized environmental justice historian who is currently preparing her first environmental justice monograph for publication.

Competencies: A3C, A4, S3C, S4 & FX

Reflection and Meaning, A3C: Can examine a social issue from an ethical perspective.

Ethics in the Contemporary World, A-4: Can analyze a problem using two different ethical systems.

Science, Technology and Society, S-3-C: Can understand the scientific and social dimensions of an environmental issue.

Interconnections in the Natural World, S-4: Can describe and explain connections among diverse aspects of nature.

Environmental Studies, FX: Can understand and explain the interdisciplinary nature of environmental issues and problems in contemporary society.

Learning Experience and Course Evaluation

Students will be evaluated by an environmental ethics (internet based) project, project presentation, a final paper (10 pages) and class participation. Students will select and research a current or past environmental issue or problem like deforestation, animal rights, wetlands, mercury, lead poisoning, asthma or environmental racism and examine it from at least two environmental ethical perspectives. In examining their environmental problem students must demonstrate an understanding of the underlying technical and scientific principles or activities which produced and or ameliorated the problem. Students are strongly encouraged to select local environmental problems and to use people and organizations familiar with these problems as resources for both the project and the paper. Students must comply with the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

Environmental Ethics Project Journal (50%): The student project for this course entails developing an environmental log book which will be reviewed every two weeks by the instructor. Cooperative and collaborative learning is strongly encouraged in this course. Up to 4 students may work on the same environmental project as long as their log books

reflect individuality. Students are expected to develop an environmental journal (FX) which first identifies an environmental problem of interest and the potential ethical issues surrounding this problem. At the end of the course the journal will contain internet as well as traditional based research material about their selected problem; interviews or assessment statements from scientists (S-3-C) and or community and or environmental activists (S4) involved in the problem; and their own reflections (A3C) about the ethics surrounding this problem (A4). The log book will count for 50% of the course. All competencies should be reflected in this work.

Environmental Ethics Project Presentation (20%): Students (a maximum of 4 presenters) are expected to make a 20 to 30 minute presentation to the class which describes at least two ethical issues (A-4) arising from science and technologically induced environmental problems. Students must describe the science or technology which created the environmental impact on a society (S-3-C and FX) and its related ecosystem (S-4). The presentation should also include the student's reflections and understanding of the problem (A-3-C). All competencies should be reflected in this work.

Environmental Ethics Project Paper (20%): Each student is required to write a paper which describes the interrelationship between science, technology and the impacted ecosystem (S-3-C) which is part of the environmental problem that they have selected (S-4 and FX). This paper must also describe at least ethical issues which student believe (A-3-C) pertain to this problem (A-4). The paper should be no more than 10 pages in length not including title page, notes or bibliography. The paper can be written in APA or Chicago Manual of Style format. At least 5 references are needed from the paper and they can be drawn from the project log. All competencies should be reflected in this work. *Students are expected to adhere to the University's policy on plagiarism.*

Class Participation (10%): Students are expected to attend every class session and should notify the instructor when they are unable to attend the course. Class participation will be evaluated by weekly in-class essays or reflection papers that should be written from the perspective of at least two of the course competencies (A3C, A4, S3C, S4 & FX). Each essay will count for 1% of the grade.

Academic Integrity Policy

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are therefore detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. All members of the university community share the responsibility for creating conditions where violations of academic integrity are curtailed. In particular:

Students must abstain from any violations of academic integrity and set examples for each other by assuming full responsibility for their academic and personal development, including informing themselves about and following the university's academic policy;

Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution.

Cheating is any action that violates university norms or instructor's guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. This includes but is not limited to unauthorized access to examination materials prior to the examination itself; use or possession of unauthorized materials during the examination or quiz; having someone take an examination in one's place; copying from another student; unauthorized assistance to another student; or acceptance of such assistance.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a. The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgment that it is someone else's.
 - b. Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgment.
 - c. Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
 - d. The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.
- Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university from taking further punitive action including dismissal from the university.

Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct is any action that deliberately undermines the free exchange of ideas in the classroom or threatens the impartial evaluation of the students by the instructors or advisor. This includes but is not limited to attempts to bribe an instructor or advisor for academic advantage, and persistent hostile treatment of, or any act or threat of violence against, an instructor, advisor or other students.

Course Schedule

September 13: What is Environmental Ethics?

Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics, An Anthology*, Chpts. 1 & 2; Laura Westra and Bill Lawson, *Faces of Environmental Racism, 2nd Edition*, Forward, ix-xiii; and Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, Chapter 3 (Environmental Ethics and Political Conflict).

September 20: Who Counts in Environmental Ethics?

Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics, an Anthology*, Chpts. 4 (Not for Humans Only) and 6 (The Ethics of the Respect for Nature) and Roderick Nash, *The Rights of Nature*, Chapt. 1 (From Natural Rights to the Rights of Nature).

September 27: Science, Technology and Nature Pt. I

Guest Lecturer, Nancy Metzger, Center for Neighborhood Technology
Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, Chpts. 1 (The Global Ecological Crisis) & 2 (Science and Worldviews) and , Chapter 4 (Deep Ecology).
Environmental Journal Due.

October 4. Science, Technology and Nature Pt. II

Film: *Dark Circle (82 Minutes)* & Class Discussion
Donald Worster, *Natures's Economy. A History of Ecological Ideas*, “ Part VI: The Age of Ecology: Science and the Fate of the Earth”, pp. 342-434

October 11: : Science, Religion and Environmental Ethics

Guest Lecturer, Sr. Dawn M. Nothwehr OSF , Catholic Theological Union
Nash, Rights of Nature, Chpt. 4 (The Greening of Religion); Jeanne Kay, “Concepts of Nature in the Hebrew Bible” in *Franciscan Theology of the Environment, An Introductory Reader*, pp.23-46
Environmental Journal Due.

October 18: Ethics of Environmental Justice Pt. I

Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics, An Anthology*, Chpts. 34-38: 34 (Feeding People versus Saving Nature), 35 (Saving Nature, Feeding People and Ethics), 36 (Integrating Environmentalism and Human Rights), 37 (Environmental Justice) and 38 (Sustainability and Intergenerational Justice).

October 25: Ethics of Environmental Justice Pt. II

Guest Speaker, Cheryl Johnson, People for Community Recover, Altgeld Gardens

Environmental Justice Activist

Film: *We All Live Downstream* (28:50) & *Class Discussion*

Laura Westra and Bill Lawson, *Faces of Environmental Racism, 2nd Edition*, Chpts. 3 (Living for the City: Urban United States and Environmental Justice), 4 (Just Garbage) and 5 (Black Trash)

Environmental Journal Due.

November 1: Environmental Ethics Project Presentations

Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, Chpt. 6 (Social Ecology) and Nash, *Rights of Nature*, Epilogue (Abolitionism, Environmentalism and the Limits of American Liberalism).

November 8: Environmental Ethics Project Presentations

Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, Chpt. 6 (Green Politics) and Nash, *Rights of Nature*, Chpt. 5 (The Greening of Philosophy). Environmental Journal Due.

November 15: Ethics and Sustainability

Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, Chpt. 9 (Sustainable Development) Light and Rolston, *Environmental Ethics, An Anthology*, Chpt. 25 (The Ethics of Sustainable Resources).

Nov. 22: Final Papers Due. Final Environmental Journals Due.

Environmental Resources

Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund

www.ilenviro.org

American Bottom Conservancy

americanbottom@hotmail.com

Business and Professional People in the Public Interest

www.bpichicago.org

Environmental Law and Policy Center

www.elpc.org

Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter

<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/>

Center for Neighborhood Technology

www.cnt.org

Citizens for Conservation

www.savelivingspace.org

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.state.il.us/>

National Council for Science and the Environment.

<http://www.cnie.org/>

[Center for Science and Environment](#) (an organization in India that presents developing country perspectives on environmental problems, both global and in South Asia)

[Christian Aid Reports](#) (a compendium of hard hitting reports presenting a developing country perspective on a variety of issues such climate change, genetically modified food, economic globalization).

[Environmental News Network](#) (a variety of articles related to the environment and environmental policy).

[Encyclopedia of the Atmospheric Environment](#) (contains numerous cross-referenced entries on a wide range of facts related to the atmosphere, acid rain, ozone depletion, climate change, etc.)

[Foreign Policy In-Focus](#) (contains reports and critical analyses on the foreign policy United States and its role in global affairs in particular on environmental issues and economic globalization---sponsored by the Interhemispheric Resource Center and the Institute for Policy Studies)

[Nautilus Institute](#) (website that has news releases and reports on the Asian environment as impacted by globalization)

[Newsbatch](#) (a useful gateway to websites on a number of major policy issues---click on environment)

[US Department of State Global Issues](#) (gateway to information on a variety of environmental issues, such as population, biotechnology, climate change. Click on environment for further options on a variety of environmental topics)

[Eldis News Sources](#) (Links to numerous current major international newssources, including some that specialize on environmental developments)