

NRM F303X, Environmental Ethics and Actions

Course Syllabus, Spring Semester 2019

F01 9:45-11:15 AM Tuesdays & Thursdays, Murie 103/105
F02 2:00-3:30 PM Tuesdays & Thursdays, Irving 201

David Valentine, Instructor
Professor of Forest Soils
309 O'Neill Building

Phone: 474-7614
Email: dvalentine@alaska.edu

Textbooks:

DesJardins, Joseph R. 2013. Environmental Ethics: An introduction to environmental philosophy, 5th edition. Wadsworth, Boston, MA. 282 p.

Brown, Marvin T. 2003. The Ethical Process: An approach to disagreements and controversial issues, 3rd edition. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ. 88 p.

Additional readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site.

Office Hours: Generally TR 11:30-1:30 and by appointment. I maintain an “open door” policy to maximize student access. If I'm in my office, you're welcome to stop by for assistance. If you have trouble finding me, feel free to make an appointment.

NRM 303 is an upper division class. While you will be expected to learn some facts and ideas, the emphasis will be on exploring, thinking, and reflection based on assigned readings. These will be developed through class discussions in which active student participation is expected.

Disabilities: If you have a physical or learning disability, please advise the instructor in writing of any necessary special consideration by the beginning of the 2nd week of class. We will do everything reasonable possible to accommodate you in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and university policy.

E-mail: I occasionally may need to contact you between class periods via e-mail. If you prefer to use an e-mail address other than your UA address, you will need to set up e-mail forwarding.

Description: Exploration of the history of modern Western views of the relationship between people and nature, alternative foundations for an environmental ethic (utilitarianism, spiritual activity, rights-based and respect-based ethics) and practices of such ethics in business, profession and general lifestyle today.

Course goals: Through exploration of the breadth of environmental ethics as a discipline and its application to environmental issues, students will learn:

- to identify and be able to describe the major principles, values, and assumptions underlying alternative positions on environmental issues and ethical approaches.
- to consider/develop/and present arguments for one's own view of environmental ethics and engage in ethical analysis of public and private issues.
- to explore the relationship between ethical theory and ethical action: as a basis for individual behavior, public policy and professional codes for environmental and resource managers.

Instructional Objectives as part of the UAF Core Curriculum

- to develop understanding of how individuals come to hold the values they proclaim
- to gain appreciation of the method by which these values influence practical activity of different peoples.
- to gain an understanding of the differences in value systems, both within the Western tradition and between it and non-Western cultures.
- to gain an understanding of the dilemmas of moral choice affecting individuals in complex societies.

Blackboard: This course will make extensive use of Blackboard (<http://classes.alaska.edu>) for archiving class notes and reading materials, submitting assignments, taking quizzes, retrieving grades, and updating your course progress. Please check it regularly for announcements and updates, paying particular attention to the Assignments link as I update it week by week to help you keep track of readings and assignments.

Assignment submission: Unless specifically stated otherwise, all assignments should be turned in using Blackboard's assignment submission feature. Please DO NOT use any other electronic means of submission (e.g., e-mail). Late assignments will be penalized 10% of the assignment value per day, up to a maximum of 50%.

Grading: Letter grades will be assigned based on the fraction of total points obtained in the class: 90-100 = A, etc. Modifiers (+ or –) typically will be assigned for scores within 2 points of the letter grade cutoffs.

Course grade will be based on the following components:

Points	Component
100	Class participation (Attendance + Engagement)
100	Midterm Exam
100	Final Exam
200	Quizzes & Homework
100	Term Paper
600	Total

Incomplete grades: We will follow the University of Alaska Fairbanks Incomplete Grade Policy: “The letter “I” (Incomplete) is a temporary grade used to indicate that the student has satisfactorily completed (C or better) the majority of work in a course but for personal reasons beyond the student’s control, such as sickness, has not been able to complete the course during the regular semester. Negligence or indifference are not acceptable reasons for an “I” grade.”

Class Participation accounts for ~1/6 of your grade, reflecting the importance I place on both your presence in class and your engagement with the topics. Absences occasionally are necessary, so you may miss up to two class sessions without penalty. Each additional absence, for whatever reason, will incur a ~4 point penalty from the total points available for your class participation grade.

Class sessions are primarily an opportunity to discuss the assigned readings in a thoughtful, informed manner. It is only through such dialogue that ideas can be fruitfully explored. The terms "informed" and "thoughtful" are emphasized. To this end it will be imperative that students read and, equally important, ponder the assigned reading material prior to each class. To guide (coerce) you to do this, I will employ two strategies. First, I will at times randomly call on students to offer their thoughts on or analysis of the assigned readings. Beginning in about the 3rd week, I will ask students to introduce and summarize each of the readings for class in order to get discussion going. Together with your general engagement in class discussions, these will comprise the engagement quality of your class participation grade.

Example: If you miss four classes and I evaluate the quality of your engagement in class as a mid “B”, your class participation grade would be $(100 - 8) * 85\% = 78/100$ points.

I reserve the right to exercise judgment in final grading in light of individual student circumstances and notable changes in progress and performance. Students will be penalized for late assignments (10% per day) or missed exams. Students dissatisfied with their progress or performance should initiate contact with the instructor

Ethical Expectations: Plagiarism and other serious violations of the UAF honor code will earn a failing grade for the course. Please go to Assignments for week 1 in Blackboard, read the “Ethical Expectations” document, and then complete the survey indicated.

Student protections and services statement: Every qualified student is welcome in my classroom. As needed, I am happy to work with you, disability services, veterans' services, rural student services, etc to find reasonable accommodations. Students at this university are protected against sexual harassment and discrimination (Title IX), and minors have additional protections. As required, if I notice or am informed of certain types of misconduct, then I am required to report it to the appropriate authorities. For more information on your rights as a student and the resources available to you to resolve problems, please go the following site:
www.uaf.edu/handbook/

NRM 303 Topic Schedule 2019

Week	Topic
1	Introduction / Scope /Mechanics
1/15-1/17	What is Ethics? What are yours?
2	Relativism / Science & Ethics
1/22-1/24	Moral Reasoning & Dialogue
3	Ethics & Clear Thinking
1/29-1/31	Fallacies
4	Human Nature and Moral Psychology
2/5-2/7	
5	Ethics: Origins & Perspectives
2/12-2/14	Ethics, Humans, & Values
6	Ethics & Economics
2/19-2/21	Optimism, Pessimism, and Risk
7	Sustainability, Duties to Future Generations
2/26-2/28	Ecological Footprints
8	REVIEW
3/5-3/7	MID-TERM EXAM
3/12-3/14	SPRING BREAK
9	Expanding the Circle: Moral Standing, Moral Agents
3/20-3/22	The Moral Status of Animals, STNG
10	Biocentric Ethics
3/27-3/29	Respect for Nature; Respect for Life
11	Cultural & Religious Traditions: Spirit & Nature.
4/3-4/5	Environmental Justice
12	Ecocentric Ethics
4/10-4/12	The Land Ethic
13	Contemporary Movements: Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism
4/17-4/19	Affluenza & Greed vs Jobs & Need
14	Ethics of Climate Change
4/24-4/26	Course wrapup and review

Final Exam Schedule

Section F01: 8-10 a.m., Tuesday, April 30

Section F02: 3:15-5:15 p.m., Thursday, May 2