Let us not be arrogant about this Anthropocene Epoch. Nature has not ended and never will. Humans stave off natural forces, but the natural forces can and will return. ... This ought not to serve as an excuse to continue our dominance; rather it should sober us into finding a more lasting fitness for humans on Earth.

—Holmes Rolston III, 2017

When we love the Earth, we are able to love ourselves more fully.

—bell hooks, 2010

Course Catalog Description: Exploration of competing secular and religious views regarding human impacts on and moral responsibilities toward nature and of the key thinkers and social movements in contention over them.

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Role in Curriculum: This course serves as an elective for Religion majors and minors, and provides credit for the department’s ethics emphasis. It also meets the ethics requirement in UF’s Sustainability program and for SNRE students, and provides Humanities General Education, and Writing Rule credit (E2/2000 words or more).

Overview: Climate change, sustainability, industrial waste, and animal rights are just a few important contemporary environmental issues. How can we decide human moral responsibility towards the natural world? How do we evaluate the competing rights of various species? How can we balance conservation and use of natural resources? Should we “manage” wilderness? What kind of ethics motivates radical activists? Students will explore both religious and secular ethical positions with a focus on systems of “environmental ethics” that emerged during the twentieth century, especially after the publication of Aldo Leopold’s “The Land Ethic” in 1949. They will understand different types of ecocentric and biocentric ethics and how they relate to traditional ethical systems. They will develop a deeper knowledge of the range of ethical positions on the environment and approaches to solving environmental problems.

Course Objectives.
1. To understand the historical emergence and development of environmental philosophy and environmental ethics in Western societies, as well as the ways such ethics become entwined with and influenced by developments in religion, literature, and the arts, as illuminated by the Humanities.
2. To understand the range of perspectives on human responsibility to the environment and enable critical thinking and writing about them, including by arbitrating among competing views of environmental facts.
3. To examine the epistemological bases (philosophical, scientific, religious, aesthetic) for different ethical orientations as well as the various methodological approaches to making individual and public environment-related decisions.
4. To become familiar with the contribution of diverse humanities disciplines, especially art history, literary criticism, philosophy, and religious studies, to illuminating environmental ethics and practice.
5. To communicate effectively and logically one’s own moral perspective and views of environmental facts and trends orally and in writing.

Required Texts (purchase)

Quinn, Daniel. *Ishmael.* Bantam, 1992. (Students who have already read Ishmael may read *The Story of B,* by Daniel Quinn).

Recommended Texts:


Requirements:

1. **Attendance and Participation**—20%: Attendance and quality participation are expected throughout the semester. All students are allowed one unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence after the first will result in a five-point deduction from the overall participation grade. Students with five or more unexcused absences will automatically fail the course. Absences will be considered excused only if a written request is submitted in person in advance or if written explanations are submitted with valid documentation. To achieve full credit for participation, students should be consistently prepared, engage in discussion and activities, actively take notes, and offer informed questions and comment. Assigned activities may include oral presentations.

2. **Reading Responses**—10%: Students are required to submit four reflections of varying length (see assignment) on assigned readings (and films), detailing the arguments, evidence, and critical assertions made. If multiple articles are assigned, students should attempt to put the readings in conversation with one another. The reflection should also pose at least two critical questions for discussion. Each reflection must include complete bibliographic references for any cited readings.

3. **Review Essay**—15%: Students must read the assigned book Ishmael. Each student will then prepare a review essay of the book (at least 1000 words). You should analyze the book, describing its overall moral perspective. Make an argument about what you take to be the strengths and/or weaknesses in the book’s assertions. You must cite at least three course readings in text and include complete bibliographic references. Submit a hard copy in class and a Word/pdf document on the course Canvas site to receive credit for the assignment.

4. **Exams**—Midterm (15%), Final (20%): There will be two examinations in the course. The midterm covers all course material up to that point, focusing on key terms, ideas, and theories. The final examination, which will be taken during finals week, will be cumulative.

5. **Final Paper**—20%: Each student will prepare a 2000-2500-word critical analysis of an environment-related issue, which is due in two parts. The project must: 1) describe, in detail, a current environment-related issue; 2) examine the pros and cons of one or more solutions; 3) discuss the issue with respect to one or more ethical systems, drawing on the course materials; 4) explain how religious or philosophical world views inform the various positions on the issue. In conjunction with the final paper, a research proposal is required, outlining the proposed topic. Additionally, a list of five annotated sources must be submitted. A draft of the issue analysis will be submitted first (1500 words or more), satisfying parts 1 and 2 of the assignment. The instructor will provide feedback. Students must incorporate the feedback and complete an additional ethical analysis of at least 500 words (parts 3 and 4); All parts are combined and submitted with a cover sheet in research paper format. You must submit a hard copy of the draft and final paper in class and a Word document on the course Canvas site to receive credit for the assignment.

6. **Extra Credit**: Extra Credit: There will be extra credit opportunities announced in class or via the Canvas Announcements feature. Students are asked to enable forwarding from Canvas to their e-mail. Extra credit opportunities usually involve attending an event on campus or in Gainesville that engages environmental ethics. Students then will write an essay and reflection on the event that incorporates thoughtful reference to at least three course

Last updated: 7 Jan 2019
readings, with references. These extra credit write ups must be turned in no later than the final exam. The points may help students raise their overall grade. Essays will be judged by the same criteria as for other class writing assignments.

**Grading Rubrics for Writing Assignments:**

**Reflections:** The length of reflections varies and is included on the Canvas site. Each reflection must do the following: detail the arguments, evidence, and critical assertions made in the course readings, films and websites they are reviewing. The reflection should also pose at least two critical questions for discussion. With the exception of the footprint reflection, the following standard will be used: 10 points are possible: 2 for submitting at appropriate length; 3 for detailing the arguments, evidence and critical assertions made in the assigned readings or film; 2 for putting the readings in dialogue; 2 for appropriately citing sources and including complete references, 1 for posing critical questions.

**Review Essay:** The review essay concerning the assigned book *Ishmael* will be graded on the following principles: Grading rubric as follows:

1. Describe the moral perspective of the book (25 points).
3. Refer to and properly cite at least three course readings in support of your argument (25 points).
4. Submit at the required length in 12-point font, double spaced, 1-inch margins (10 points).
5. Use APA formatting for citations and reference list (10 points). If you refer to any sources outside of the class readings, which is optional, you should also list the sources in a reference list at the end of your paper.

**Draft Issue Analysis:** An issue review of at least 1500 words that describes an environmental issue, including competing points of view, and solutions, including an assessment of the pros and cons of the solutions presented. The paper is a draft of the final paper and will be given feedback by the instructor. It will make up the first portion of the final paper. The issue review will be graded as follows:

1. Clearly describes the environmental issue being reviewed, including competing points of view (25 points).
2. Assesses the pros and cons of one or more solutions (25 points).
3. Appropriately cites sources with in-text, author-date format (25 points).
4. Includes a reference list of all cited sources, using APA style (25 points).

You must submit a hard copy of the draft and final paper in class and a Word document on the course Canvas site to receive credit for the assignment.

**Final Paper:**
1. Clearly describes the environmental issue being reviewed, including competing points of view (20 points).
2. Evaluates the issue in light of one or more ethical systems (20 points).
3. Shows how religious or philosophical systems relate to positions on the issue (15 points).
4. Assesses the pros and cons of one or more solutions (15 points).
5. Format: Printed double-spaced, in 12-point font, with standard one-inch margins all around (10 points).
6. Bibliography contains at least five scholarly print items (meaning university press books, academic journal articles, and similar) and is presented in APA style (10 points).

Papers are due on the due date, at class time. Late papers will be penalized and may not be accepted. I will not take off points for grammar or style, but will point out errors or ways to improve writing.

*Use of Technology:* Electronic devices may only be used for note-taking during class or participation in course.

*Disability Policy:* Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations (including those involving the use of technology) is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All such discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities will need to also contact Disability Support Services.

*Syllabus Agreement:* I reserve the right to change any of the reading assignments or the ordering of the lectures. The grading principles and requirements, however, will not change. The electronic versions of assignments and the syllabus are considered the most current.

*Grading Policies*

- A 94 to 100
- A- <94 to 90
- B+ <90 to 87
- B <87 to 84
- B- <84 to 80
- C+ <80 to 77
- C <77 to 74
- C- <74 to 70
- D+ <70 to 67
- D <67 to 64
- D- <64 to 61
- F <61 to 0

There is no A+ grade; grades are not rounded up. For example, a 93.85% is an A-, not an A; grades are consistent with UF policy: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

*Academic Dishonesty:* Students engaged in any form of academic dishonesty, including
but not limited to plagiarism, and as defined under the “Academic Misconduct” section of the Student Discipline Code, may fail the course and will be subject to other disciplinary measures.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading and Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1: Why do We Need a New Ethics?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon. Jan. 7&lt;br&gt;Syllabus and Student Learning Goals Intro. to Environmental Ethics</td>
<td><strong>Reading and Assignments</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Kawall 2017, “A History of Environmental Ethics”&lt;br&gt;Before class: Go to Ecological Footprint Network <a href="http://www.footprintnetwork.org">www.footprintnetwork.org</a> and determine your personal footprint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Fri. Jan. 11</td>
<td>Intro. to Environmental Ethics (cont.)</td>
<td>DesJardins ch. 1, “Science, Politics and Ethics”&lt;br&gt;Due in class: Reflection of 350-400 words on your personal footprint.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon. Jan 14</td>
<td>Ethical Theories Past and Present</td>
<td>DesJardins ch. 2, “Ethical Theories and the Environment”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Wed. Jan. 16</td>
<td>State of the World: Toxics and Pesticides</td>
<td>Carson biography (ERN) and selections from <em>The Silent Spring</em> and other writings; Discuss: Complete Reference assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Mon. Jan. 21</td>
<td>No Class: MLK Day</td>
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**Unit 2: Expansion of the Sphere of Moral Consideration**
## Syllabus: Environmental Ethics

### Prof. Erin Prophet

**Last updated:** 7 Jan 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Jan. 28</td>
<td>Nonanthropocentrism and Animals</td>
<td>DesJardins ch. 5: “From Anthropocentric to Nonanthropocentric Ethics”, sections 5.1 to 5.5; Due in class: Reflection 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. Feb. 4</td>
<td>The Land Ethic</td>
<td>DesJardins ch. 8, “The Land Ethic.” Due in class: Reflection 3 on animal rights and “Blackfish.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed. Feb. 13</td>
<td>Wilderness</td>
<td>DesJardins ch. 7, sections 7.1-7.3 (pp. 149-162, international edition)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. Feb. 15</td>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>DesJardins ch. 7, sections 7.4-7.7, pp. 163-173; Recommended: <a href="https://www.gaiatheory.com">Gaia hypothesis 2018</a> In class: wilderness debate Due in class: Reflection 4 on Week 6 readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. Feb. 18</td>
<td>Reshaping our Culture</td>
<td>Ishmael or The Story of B (first 3 chapters)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Feb. 20</td>
<td>Review for midterm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. Feb. 22</td>
<td>MIDTERM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
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**Unit 3: Prioritizing:** Whose Values?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading and Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Colonialism</td>
<td><strong>Guha 1989, “Third World Critique”;</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Feb. 27</td>
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<td>Fri. Mar. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 4-8</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Class cancelled</td>
<td>(Work on paper research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Mar. 11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Ecofeminism</td>
<td><strong>Merchant 2005, ch. 8, “Ecofeminism.”</strong></td>
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<td>Wed. Mar. 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. Mar. 15</td>
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<td>Mon. Mar. 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Ethics of Care and Indigenous Movements</td>
<td>Whyte and Cuomo 2017, OHEE 20; <strong>hooks 2010.</strong></td>
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<td>Wed. Mar. 20</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Fri. Mar. 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Food and Environment</td>
<td>**Kemmerer 2015, Eating Earth, Ch. 1, pp. 5-27. Watch: “Food, Inc.” (exc.) Due in class: Annotated sources for final paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Mar. 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Food Activism</td>
<td><strong>Kemmerer 2015, Eating Earth, Ch. 1, pp. 28-42. In class: food systems debate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed. Mar. 27</td>
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<td>Fri. Mar. 29</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Radical Environmentalism</td>
<td>Radical Environmentalism, ERN; Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front, ERN; <strong>Foreman and Haywood 1987 (selections);</strong></td>
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<td>Mon. Apr. 1</td>
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<td>Wed. Apr. 3</td>
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<td>Fri. Apr. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading and Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Unit 4: Religion, the Sacred, and Environment</td>
<td>Day 1: Topic: Selections from the following are Required Reading:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon. Apr. 8</td>
<td>Unit 1-3 Discussion</td>
<td>*Cafaro, Philip. “Valuing Wild Nature.” Pages 125–135 in *The Oxford Handbook of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selections from the following are Required Reading:


Last updated: 7 Jan 2019


**Optional Reading**


**Films and Documentaries**

We will watch short excerpts from a number of films and documentaries in class. Two films are required watching outside class and should be discussed in the succeeding reflection: “Merchants of Doubt” and “Blackfish.” See below and on Canvas for a list of other films of interest.

**Environmental Situations**

Last Call: the untold reasons of the global crisis (2012) [About the Club of Rome's Limits to Growth and subsequent]

Last updated: 7 Jan 2019
Growthbusters (2011)
Greedy Lying Bastards (2012)
Gasland Part II (2013)
Gasland (2010)
An Inconvenient Truth (2006)
The Story of Stuff (2008); see also The Story of Stuff website
Food Inc (2008)
The 11th Hour (2007), with Leonard DiCaprio, Thom Hartmann
Red Gold (2008), 55 minutes, about Bristol Bay
Southbound (1996) [Deforestation in SE USA]
Cowspiracy (2014)
Merchants of Doubt (2014)
Chasing Ice (2012)
Chasing Coral (2017)
The Cove (2009)
Blackfish (2013)

Radical Environmentalism
The East (2013)
If a Tree Falls: A story of the Earth Liberation Front (2011)
Edward Abbey: A Voice in the Wilderness (1993)
Dave Foreman, Radical Environmentalism talk, the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh (1990)
Earth First!, on 60 Minutes (1990)
DamNation (2014)
Wrenched (2014)

Environmental Thought/Thinkers/Movements/Ethics
Seeds of Vandana Shiva (2018)
Holmes Rolston Lecture on Leopold, Greenfire, and Earth Ethics (2013)
Greenfire (2011) [Aldo Leopold]
American Values / American Wilderness (2006)
Lessons from the Rainforest (ca. 1993) [Lou Gold]
The Faithkeeper [Oren Lyons with Bill Moyers]
Gaia-Goddess of the Earth (1986) PBS|Nova

ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS:
Mother: Caring for Seven Billion (2013)
I am (2011)
Truck Farm (2011)
Thinking like a Watershed (1998)
Yellowstone to Yukon (1997) [The Wildlands Project]
Green Plans (1995)
Ecopsychology-Restoring the Earth | Healing the Self (1995)

Websites
Academic Organizations and Initiatives Involved in Environmental Ethics
The International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE)
International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture
International Association for Environmental Philosophy (IAEP)
Center for Environmental Philosophy
Centre for Applied Ethics
Environmental Ethics (Journal)
Environmental Values (Journal)
Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale University
Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture

Additional resources, such as links to podcasts, music, slideshows, video, music, and websites, will be made available during the course. Students are encouraged to send the instructor their own ideas for resources.