

# SYLLABUS

NRSM 389E.01 & .02, Conservation & Forestry Ethics

## Course Information

- Instructor: Dane Scott
- Autumn 2019
- MWF, Section 1: 9:00-9:50; Section 2, 10:00-10:50
- RM: Forestry 106
- Email: [Dane.scott@umt.edu](mailto:Dane.scott@umt.edu)
- Office: CHCB 406
- Office hours: By appointment
- Teaching Assistant: Christopher McKay
- Email: christopher.mackay@umontana.edu
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- Office hours: TBA

## Course Objectives

Students will demonstrate:

- An understanding of the basic concepts and ideas of several influential ethical traditions and their distinctive approaches to moral reasoning
- A familiarity with the major figures and ideas that shaped modern conservation ethics
- A depth of knowledge on important contemporary ethical issues in conservation, particularly the notions of stewardship and sustainability.
- The ability to identify and analyze ethical issues arising from environmental problems
- The ability to write a clearly organized and well supported argumentative essay

## Required Texts and Course Materials

- Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?*
- J. Rockström & M. Klum, *Big World, Small Planet: Abundance within Planetary Limits*
- Additional articles, videos and podcasts will be posted or linked on the course Moodle page

## Requirements and Grading

- 20 points (20%), Participation and Attendance: Participation grades will be based on attendance and short, written assignments
- 40 points (40%) Essays 1 & 2 (20 pts/each): Students will demonstrate the ability to construct an argumentative essay. You will receive handouts on the requirements, grading, and due dates for the two essay assignments.
- 40 points (40%), Tests 1 & 2 (20 pts/each): The format will be short-answer and essay questions.

**Grading Scale:** 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 88-89 = B+; 83-87 = B; 80-82 = B-; 78 - 79 = C+; 73 - 77 = C; 70 - 72 = C-; 69 - 68 = D+; 67 - 62 = D; 61-60 = D-; Below 59 = F

## Late Work and Make-up Policies

Make-up tests will only be allowed if the instructor is informed *prior* to the test.  
Late papers will be penalized 3 pts/day after the due date.

## OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

### Part I: Theories of Justice, Moral Reasoning and Environmental Issues

#### Week 1

- 8/26: Course Introduction & Sandel, Chapter 1, “Do the Right Thing”
- 8/28: Plato’s *Republic*, “The Ring of Gyges,” “The Allegory of the Cave” & “Ship of State Analogy”
- 8/30: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism”

#### Week 2

- 9/2: Labor Day, No Class
- 9/4: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism,” continued
- & Ursula LeGuin, “The One’s Who Walk Away from Omelas
- 9/6: Peter Singer, “The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues” & [Radio Lab, “The Rhino Hunter” \(Podcast\)](#)

#### Week 3

- 9/9: Discussion day on “Omelas” and “The Rhino Hunter” with short writing assignments
- 9/11: Sandel, Chapter 3, “Do We Own Ourselves / Libertarianism”
- 9/13: Sandel, Chapter 3, “Do We Own Ourselves / Libertarianism”, continued & Adler, “A Conservative’s Approach to Combating Climate Change”

#### Week 4

- 9/16: Sandel, Chapter 4, “Hired Help / Markets and Morals”
- 9/18: Sandel, Chapter 4, “Hired Help / Markets and Morals”, continued
- 9/20: Various readings on libertarian and free-market philosophies and the debate over public lands

#### Week 5

- 9/23: Pinchot, “Principles of Conservation” & Miller, “The Greening of Gifford Pinchot”
- 9/25: Small group debate/discussion and a short writing assignment on libertarian and free-market philosophies and the debate over public lands  
**Essay #1 Assigned, Due 10/4**
- 9/27: Sandel, Chapter 6, “The Case for Equality / John Rawls”

#### Week 6

- 9/30: Sandel, Chapter 8, “Who Deserves What? / Aristotle”
- 10/2: Sandel, Chapter 8, “Who Deserves What? / Aristotle”, Continued
- 10/4: Sandler, “Environmental Virtue Ethics”  
**Essay #1, Due 1**

### Part II: Ethics, Sustainability and Stewardship

#### Week 7

- 10/7: Muir, “The American Forests”
- 10/9: Leopold, “Land Ethics”
- 10/11: **Test #1, Covers Weeks 1-6**

#### Week 8

- 10/14: Leopold, “Land Ethics” & “The Farmer as Conservationist”
- 10/16: Katz, “The Big Lie: Human Restoration of Nature”
- 10/18: Light, “Ecological Restoration and the Culture of Nature: A Pragmatic Perspective”

### Week 9

- 10/21: Vanderheiden, “Radical Environmentalism in an Age of Antiterrorism”
- 10/23: Small group debate/discussion and short writing assignment on radical environmentalism, ecotage and terrorism
- 10/25: Ehrlich, “The Population Bomb” & Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons”

### Week 10

- 10/28: Meadows, et al., “A Synopsis: Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update”
  - 10/30: Mann, “Can the Earth Feed 10 Billion People?”
  - 11/1: Eat-Lancet Commission, “Food in the Anthropocene: Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems”
- Essay # 2 Assigned, Due 11/18**

### Week 11

- 11/4: Small group debate/discussion and short writing assignment on “Can the Earth Feed 10 Billion People?” and “Food in the Anthropocene”
- 11/6: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 1
- 11/8: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 2

### Week 12

- 11/11: No Class, Veteran’s Day
- 11/13: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 3
- 11/15: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 3, continued

### Week 13

- 11/18: Mathevet, Bousquet & Raymond, “The Concept of Stewardship in Sustainability Science and Conservation Biology”
- Essay # 2 Due**
- 11/20: The New Conservation Debate (various readings)
  - 11/22: Small group discussion and short writing assignment on the “New Conservation Debate” & “The Ecomodernist Manifesto”

### Week 14

- 11/25: Piaggio, et al., “Is It Time for Synthetic Biodiversity Conservation?”
- 11/27: No Class, Travel Day
- 11/29: No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday

### Week 15

- 12/2: Yong, “New Zealand’s War on Rats Could Change the World”
- 12/4: E. O. Wilson’s Half Earth (various readings)
- 12/6: E. O. Wilson’s Half Earth (various readings) continued

### Finals Week

- 12/11(Section 1): Exam #2, 8:00-10:00AM
- 12/12 (Section 2): Exam #2, 8:00-10:00AM

### UM Policies

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction for students with disabilities in collaboration with instructors and Disability Services for Students, which is located in Lommasson Center 154. The University does not permit fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with

the [Student Conduct Code](#).