

SYLLABUS

NRSM 389E.01 & .02, Ethics & Sustainability
University of Montana
Franke College of Forestry and Conservation
Autumn 2020

Course Information

- Instructor: Dane Scott
- Format: Online and scheduled, in-person meetings (Section 1, 9:00-9:50AM, Section 2, 10:00-10:50AM)
- RM: Forestry 106
- Email: Dane.scott@umt.edu
- Office: CHCB 406
- Office hours: By appointment
- Teaching Assistant: Christopher McKay
- Email: christopher.mackay@umontana.edu
- Office: TBA
- Office hours: By appointment

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify, define and evaluate basic concepts and forms of reasoning associated with influential ethical theories.
- Identify, describe and evaluate basic scientific, ethical and policy issues and concepts associated with the challenge of creating sustainable societies.
- Write clear, concise and carefully organized argumentative essays.

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*
- Charles J. Kibert, Leslie Thiele, Anna Peterson & Martha Monroe, *The Ethics of Sustainability* (PDF, posted on Moodle)
- Additional articles, videos and podcasts will be posted and linked on Moodle

Requirements and Grading

- Quizzes and short essay questions: 40%
- Discussion forums: 20%
- Essays #1: 20%
- Essay #2: 20%

Expectations

Student should plan for weekly graded, assignments in the form of quizzes, short essay questions and/or discussion forums. These assignments will have due dates. The online quizzes and short essay questions are not listed on the course schedule, so it important for students keep pace with the course material and plan for weekly assignments. There will be no midterm or final.

The due dates for the two essay assignments are listed on the schedule below. These assignments are designed to satisfy the learning outcomes UM's, general education writing requirement:

- Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources
- Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate
- Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline
- Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work
- Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline
- Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy

UM policies and safety measure for classrooms are listed at the end of this syllabus.

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

Course Outline and Schedule

Part I: Ethics and the Dilemma of Sustainability: Population and Consumption

Part II: Technology, Conservation and Sustainability

Part III: Political Philosophy, Conservation and Sustainability

Part IV: Stewardship and Professional Ethics

Part I: Ethics and the Dilemma of Sustainability: Population and Consumption

Week 1

- 8/19: Video: Johan Rockström, “Let the Environment Guide our Development” Kilbert, et al. *Ethics and Sustainability*, Chapter 1, “The Sustainability Context”
- 8/21: Sandel, Chapter 1, “Do the Right Thing”

Week 2

- 8/24: Videos: American Museum of Natural History, “Human Population Through Time” & The American Experience Film, “Earth Day 2009”
- 8/26: Paul Ehrlich, “The Population Bomb” & Video: NYTs, Retro Report, “The Population Bomb?”
- 8/28: Garret Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons” & “Carrying Capacity as an Ethical Norm” SPLC, “Garret Hardin”

Week 3

- 8/31: Fendley, “Eugenics is Trending. That’s a Problem” & Erle Ellis, “Overpopulation Is Not the Problem”
- *Group A: In-person, review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/2: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 1, Preface, Ten Key Messages, 1. Our New Predicament,” 2. “Planetary Boundaries”
- *Group B: In-person, review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/4: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 1, 3. Big Whammies, 4. Peak Everything
- *Group C: Online review & discussion session on Zoom*

II. Technology, Conservation and Sustainability

Week 4

- 9/7: Labor Day, No Class
- 9/9: Kilbert, et al. *Ethics and Sustainability*, Chapter 2, “The Technological Challenge”
- 9/11: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 2
- **Quiz & Short Essay Questions**

Week 5

- 9/14: Rethinking Consumption Videos: “Explaining the Circular Economy,” Sustainability and Systems Thinking,” “The Paradox of an Eco-Conscious Company,” “More From Less: How We Innovated Our Way Into a Healthier Relationship with Our Planet”
- *Group A: In-person, review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/16: Charles C. Mann, “Can the Earth Feed 10 Billion People?”
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/18: Breakthrough Institute, “Ecomodernist Manifesto”
- *Group C: Online review & discussion session (Zoom)*

Week 6

- 9/21: Piaggio, “Is It Time for Synthetic Biodiversity Conservation?”
- **Essay #1, Assigned, due 10/2, 5PM**
- 9/23: Guttman, “The Ethics of Synthetic Biology: Guiding Principles for Emerging Technologies”
- 9/25: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability

Week 7

- 9/28: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 9/30: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/2: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- *Group C: Online review & discussion session (Zoom)*
- **Essay #1, Due by 5PM**

III. Political Philosophy, Conservation and Sustainability

Week 8

- 10/5: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 3
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- **Quiz & Short Essay Questions**
- 10/7: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism”
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/9: Ursula LeGuin, “The One’s Who Walk Away from Omelas” & David Brooks, “The Child in the Basement”
- *Group C: Online review & discussion session (Zoom)*

Week 9

- 10/12: Peter Singer, “The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues”
- [Radio Lab, “The Rhino Hunter” \(Podcast\)](#)
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/14: Sandel, Chapter 3, “Do We Own Ourselves / Libertarianism”
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/16: Private Property & the Debate over Public Lands
- *Group C: Online review & discussion session (ZOOM)*

Week 10

- 10/19: Sandel, Chapter 4, “Hired Help / Markets and Morals”
- 10/21: Sandel, Chapter 6, “The Case for Equality / John Rawls”
- 10/23: Adler, “A Conservative’s Approach to Combating Climate Change”
- Video: Ted Halsted, “A climate solution where all sides win”
- **Quiz & Short Essay Questions**

IV. Stewardship, Conservation & Professional Ethics

Week 11

- 10/26: Pinchot, “Principles of Conservation”
- Video: [“Seeking the Greatest Good”](#)
- Charles Wohlforth, “Conservation and Eugenics”
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/28: The New Conservation Debate
- **Essay #2 Assigned, due 11/6, 5PM**
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 10/30: Sandel, “Chapter 8, Aristotle
- *Group C: Online review & discussion session (Zoom)*

Week 12

- 11/2: Leopold, “Land Ethics” & “The Farmer as Conservationist”
- *Group A: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 11/4: Jennifer Welshman, “The Virtue of Stewardship”
- *Group B: In-person review & discussion session (FOR 106)*
- 11/6: Clare Palmer, Stewardship, “A Case Study in Environmental Ethics”
- *Group C: Online review & discussion session (Zoom)*
- **Essay #2, due 5PM**

Week 13

- 11/9: The Ecological Society of America, “Earth Stewardship”
- 11/11: No Class, Veteran’s Day
- 11/13: Sandel, Chapter 5, “What Matters is Motive/Immanuel Kant”
- **Quiz & Short Essay Questions**

Week 14

- 11/16: Critical Discussions of Professional Codes of Ethics
- *Group A: In-person discussion and review session (FOR 106)*
- 11/18: Critical Discussions of Professional Codes of Ethics
- *Group B: In-person discussion and review session (FOR 106)*
- *Group C: Online discussion and review session (Zoom)*

UM Safety Measures for Classrooms

- Mask use is required within the classroom
- Each student is provided with a cleaning kit. The expectation is that students will clean their personal work space when they arrive for class, and before they leave the classroom
- Classrooms may have one-way entrances / exits to minimize crowding
- Students should be discouraged from congregating outside the classroom before and after class

- Specific seating arrangements will be used to ensure social distancing and support contact tracing efforts
- Class attendance will be recorded to support contact tracing efforts
- Drinking liquids and eating food is discouraged within the classroom (which requires mask removal)
- Information on the nearest “refill” stations for cleaning supplies/hand sanitizer if applicable
- If the class is being recorded, students must be notified of the recording
- Stay home if you feel sick and/or if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms
- If the student is sick or displaying symptoms, please contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330
- Up-to-Date COVID-19 Information from the University of Montana
 - [UM Coronavirus Website](#)
 - [UM COVID-19 Fall 2020 website](#)
- Strongly encourage students to remain vigilant outside the classroom in mitigating the spread of COVID-19

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](#).