

SYLLABUS

NRSM 389E.01 & .02, Ethics & Sustainability
University of Montana
Franke College of Forestry and Conservation
Autumn 2021

Course Information

- Instructor: Dane Scott
- Blended Format: In-person, Mondays & Wednesdays (.01, 9:00-9:50, .02, 10:00-10:50), Online, Fridays (asynchronous)
- RM: Forestry 106
- Email: Dane.scott@umt.edu
- Office: TBA
- 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 a clear, concise and carefully organized 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 and linked on Moodle

Requirements and Grading

- Exams: 40%
- Questions & discussion forums: 40%
- Essay: 20%

Expectations

- The course will meet in-person on Mondays and Wednesdays, and online on Fridays. Students are expected to attend class and keep up to date on the course materials and assignments. Plan for weekly, graded assignments in the form of questions and/or discussion forums, or exams. These will be posted on the course's Moodle page on Fridays. The three exams will be taken online. There is one essay assignment.

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: Political Philosophy Sustainability & Earth Stewardship

Week 1

- 8/30: Course introduction
- 9/1: Sandel, Chapter 1, “Do the Right Thing” & Kilbert, et al. *Ethics and Sustainability*, Chapter 1, “The Sustainability Context”
- 9/3: Online, questions and discussion forum
 - Videos: Rockström, “Let the Environment Guide our Development” \
 - Sandel, “The Lost are of Democratic Debate

Week 2

- 9/6: Labor Day
- 9/8: Ehrlich, “The Population Bomb”
- 9/10: Online questions and discussion forum
 - NYTs, Retro Report, “The Population Bomb?” (video)
 - 2021 interview with Paul Ehrlich (video)
 - Erle Ellis, “Overpopulation Is Not the Problem”

Week 3

- 9/13: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle /Utilitarianism”
- 9/15: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle /Utilitarianism”
- 9/17: Online, questions and discussion forum
 - Singer, “The Ethics of Climate Change” (video)
 - LeGuin, “The One’s Who Walk Away from Omelas”
 - Brooks, “The Child in the Basement

Week 4

- 9/20: Sandel, Chapter 3, “Do We Own Ourselves /Libertarianism”
- 9/22: Sandel, Chapter 4, “Markets and Morals” & Adler, “A conservative’s approach to combating climate change”
- 9/24: Online, questions discussion forum
 - Climate Leadership Council, “The conservative case for carbon dividends”
 - Halstead, “A climate solution where all sides win” (video)

Week 5

- 9/27: Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons” & “Lifeboat Ethics”
- 9/29: Nijhuis, “The Tragedy of the Commons is a False and Dangerous Myth”
- 10/1: Exam #1

Week 6

- 10/4: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 1, Preface, Ten Key Messages, 1. Our New Predicament,” 2. “Planetary Boundaries”
- 10/6: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 1, 3. Big Whammies, 4. Peak Everything
- 10/8: Online, questions discussion forum
 - Kate Raworth, “A healthy economy should be derived to thrive, not grow” (video)
 - “Explaining the Circular Economy” (video)

Week 7

- 10/11: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 2
- 10/13: Rockström & Klum, *Big World, Small Planet*, Section 3
- 10/15: Online, questions discussion forum
 - McAfee, “More from Less: How We Innovated Our Way into a Healthier Relationship with Our Planet”

Week 8

- 10/18: Sandel, Chapter 5, “What Matters is Motive/Immanuel Kant”
- 10/20: Sandel, Chapter 6, “The Case for Equality / John Rawls”
- 10/22: Online, questions discussion forum

Week 9

- 10/25: Charles C. Mann, “Can the Earth Feed 10 billion People?”
- 10/27: Breakthrough Institute, “Ecomodernist Manifesto”
- 10/29: Online, questions discussion forum
 - Caradona, et al, “A Call to Look Past an Ecomodernist Manifesto: A Degrowth Critique”
 - Cassidy, “Can we have prosperity without growth?”

Part II: Technology, Conservation and Sustainability

Week 10

- 11/1: Keith Kloor, “Battle for the Soul of Conservation Science” & Soule, “What is Conservation Biology?”
- 11/3: Peter Kareiva and Michelle Marvier, “What Is Conservation Science?”
- 11/5: Exam #2

Week 11

- 11/8: Peter Singer, “The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues”
- [Radio Lab, “The Rhino Hunter” \(Podcast\)](#)
- 11/10: Piaggio, “Is It Time for Synthetic Biodiversity Conservation?”
- 11/12: Online, questions discussion forum
 - Yong, “New Zealand’s War on Rats could Change the World”
- **Essay assigned, due 12/14, 5PM**

Week 12

- 11/15: Edward O. Wilson, *Half-Earth: Our Planet’s Fight for Life*
- 11/17: Guttman, “The Ethics of Synthetic Biology: Guiding Principles for Emerging Technologies”
- 11/19: Online, questions discussion forum
 - Half-Earth

Week 13

- 11/22: Guttman, “The Ethics of Synthetic Biology: Guiding Principles for Emerging Technologies”
- 11/24: No Class
- 11/26: No Class

Week 14

- 11/29: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- 12/1: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- 12/3: Online, questions discussion forum

Week 15

- 12/6: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- 12/8: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- 12/10: **Exam #3**
- 12/14: Essay Due by 5PM

UM Safety Measures for Classrooms

- Mask use is required within the classroom.
- If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330.
- If you are required to isolate or quarantine, you will receive support in the class to ensure continued academic progress.
- UM recommends students get the COVID-19 vaccine. Please direct your questions or concerns about vaccines to Curry Health Center.
- Where social distancing (maintaining consistent 6 feet between individuals) is not possible, specific seating arrangements will be used to support contact tracing efforts.
- Class attendance and seating will be recorded to support contact tracing efforts.
- Drinking liquids and eating food is discouraged within the classroom.
- Please be advised that the guidance provided in these updates may change or appear to be contradictory from week to week; we'll always base the information we provide on the most current guidance from the Missoula City-County Health Department (MCCHD) and CDC. In addition to these email updates, please visit the [UM Coronavirus website](#) for updated information. For the official guidance on instruction, please visit the [Deliver Quality Instruction](#) portion of the [COVID Operations Plan for 2021](#).

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](#).