

## SYLLABUS

NRS389E.02, Ethics & Sustainability  
University of Montana  
Franklin College of Forestry and Conservation  
Autumn 2022

### Course Information

- Instructor: Ashley Preston
- Blended Format: In-person, Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:00 – 9:00)  
Online, Fridays (asynchronous)
- RM: JRH 202
- Email: Ashley.Preston@umontana.edu
- Office: MC405/CHCB 460A
- Office hours: MC405 MW12:30 - 1:30;  
CHCB460A TuTh by appt. (*usually* in the office TuTh 9-10)
- Teaching Assistant: Marie Watson
- Email: marie.watson@umontana.edu
- Office: CHCB (Clapp Building) 465
- Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am-12pm or by appointment (Zoom or in-person)

### 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?* (web link and .pdf in Moodle)
- J. Rockström & M. Klum, *Big World, Small Planet: Abundance within Planetary Limits*
- Additional articles, videos and podcasts posted and linked on Moodle

### Requirements and Grading

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

### Expectations and Requirements:

The course will meet in-person on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 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.

Late assignments are not accepted and there is no opportunity to make up missed assignments or quizzes without prior arrangement and approval.

### 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

\*Many learning units in Moodle contain links to videos and readings not listed in the schedule. They are recommended/optional and provided FYI.

### Part I: Political Philosophy Sustainability & Earth Stewardship

#### Week 1

- 8/30: Course introduction
- 9/1: Sandel, Chapter 1, “Do the Right Thing”
- 9/2: Assignment
  - Rockström, “Let the Environment Guide our Development” (video)
  - Sandel, “The Lost Art of Democratic Debate (video)

#### Week 2

- 9/6: Ehrlich, “The Population Bomb”
- 9/8: World Population Resources (website) <https://worldpopulationhistory.org/tools-resources/>  
Watch the video and do the readings.
- 9/9: Discussion forum
  - NYTs, Retro Report, “The Population Bomb?” (video)
  - 2021 interview with Paul Ehrlich (video)
  - Human Population Through Time (video)
  - The overpopulation bet: Simon vs. Ehrlich (video)
  - Erle Ellis, “Overpopulation Is Not the Problem” (pdf)

#### Week 3

- 9/13: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism”
- 9/15: Sandel, Chapter 2, “The Greatest Happiness Principle / Utilitarianism”  
J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters 3 & 4
- 9/16: Discussion forum (with replies)
  - LeGuin, “The One’s Who Walk Away from Omelas” (pdf)
  - Brooks, “The Child in the Basement (pdf)

#### 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”
- 9/23: Discussion forum (with replies)
  - Climate Leadership Council, “The conservative case for carbon dividends”
  - Halstead, “A climate solution where all sides win” (video)
  - “What is Libertarianism” (video)
  - Sandel, “What Money Can’t Buy” (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”
- 9/30: **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
- 10/7: Assignment AND 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
- 10/14: Assignment AND optional extra credit
  - McAfee, “More from Less: How We Innovated Our Way into a Healthier Relationship with Our Planet” (2019-20 The Second Enlightenment) (video)
  - Pinker “Is the world getting better or worse?” (video)

### Week 8

- 10/18: Sandel, Chapter 5, “What Matters is Motive/Immanuel Kant”
- 10/20: Sandel, Chapter 6, “The Case for Equality / John Rawls”
- 10/21: No discussion/assignment; watch Netflix video

### Week 9

- 10/25: Charles C. Mann, “Can the Earth Feed 10 billion People?”
- 10/27: Breakthrough Institute, “An Ecomodernist Manifesto”
- 10/28: Discussion forum (with replies) AND optional extra credit
  - Caradona, et al, “A Call to Look Past an Ecomodernist Manifesto: A Degrowth Critique” (PDF)
  - Cassidy, “Can we have prosperity without growth? (PDF)

## 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?”
- 11/4: **Exam #2**

### Week 11

- 11/8: No Class—Election Day
  - 11/10: Peter Singer, “The Place of Nonhumans in Environmental Issues” (PDF)  
Radio Lab, “The Rhino Hunter” (Podcast)  
Piaggio, “Is It Time for Synthetic Biodiversity Conservation?”
  - **Case Study Essay assigned, due 12/14, 5PM**
  - 11/11: Discussion forum (with replies)\*
    - Yong, “New Zealand’s War on Rats could Change the World” (Topic 17: Case Study 1: Gene-drive)
    - Esvelt, “When Are We Obligated to Edit Wild Creatures” (PDF)
- \*No Class Veterans Day but your online discussion/questions will be due as usual

### Week 12

- 11/15: Edward O. Wilson,  
Resources vary: review Wilson/Half-Earth web links and pdfs (Optional: review critiques of the HE thesis/project)
- 11/17: Guttman, “The Ethics of Synthetic Biology: Guiding Principles for Emerging Technologies”
- 11/18: Discussion forum
  - Half-Earth  
Revive and Restore

### **Week 13**

- 11/22: Guttman, “The Ethics of Synthetic Biology: Guiding Principles for Emerging Technologies” (cont’d)  
PSSBI (cont’d)
- 11/24: No Class
- 11/25: No Class

### **Week 14**

- 11/29: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- 12/1: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- 12/2: Assignment

### **Week 15**

- 12/6: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- 12/8: Case Studies in Synthetic Biology for Conservation & Sustainability
- 12/9: **Exam #3**

### **Week 16**

- 12/14: Case Study Essay **Due by 5PM** (submission link in week 11)

## **UM Policies**

### **Course Accommodations Statement (DSS)**

*Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students [DSS]. “Reasonable” means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154, call 243-2243 (voice/TDD), or see <http://www.umt.edu/dss/>. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate modification.*

Make an appointment or stop by (via Zoom) during office hours to talk about your accommodations and how to use them for this course. If you plan on using an accommodation for an assignment, you must let me know in advance. I will do my best to grant the accommodation if it does not undermine the objectives of the assignment. However, you must contact me prior to the due date—even better, prior to the start of the assignment—to let me know if you will need to use an accommodation that allows for an extension on the deadline. I cannot grant a deadline extension retroactively.

### **Important Dates and Deadlines (Registrar’s Office)**

Click on <https://www.umt.edu/registrar/calendar.php> to see the calendar for important dates and deadlines about adding, dropping, payment, withdrawals, etc.

## Student Conduct Code

In an effort to ensure that students are informed about the consequences of academic misconduct, the Academic Officers of The University of Montana have determined that the following statement must be present on every course syllabus. You will be held to these standards in this course.

*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 Student Conduct Code.*

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The U of M's student Conduct Code defines plagiarism as "Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own or the student's own previous work as if it were the student's own original work." Students may be asked for their research or sources at any time. Plagiarism will be handled in strict accordance with the University of Montana Student Conduct Code.

## Email policy at UM

According to the University email policy effective on 1 July 2007, an "employee must use *only* UMM assigned student email accounts for all email exchanges with students, since such communication typically involves private student information." This means that you *must* send any correspondence through your official UM student email account. For more information on setting up and using your official UM student email account contact tech support.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

Missoula College values the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff as an essential strength that contributes to our shared educational mission. Students of all backgrounds and perspectives are recognized and respected in this class. Course content and activities are intended to honor diversity of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, culture, religion, age, disability, socioeconomic status, and all dimensions of diverse human experiences and their intersection. Please notify your instructor if components of this course present barriers to your inclusion. Students can also reach out to Dr. Salena Beaumont Hill in the [Office of Inclusive Excellence for Student Success](#), which provides student support for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students and student groups. To explore making a formal report about discrimination or harassment, please visit the [Equal Opportunity / Title IX office](#). For counseling or advocacy related to discrimination, please visit [SARC](#).