ESM 276—SPRING 2014

SPECIAL STUDIES IN ETHICAL DECISION MAKING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

“There is a big difference between what we have the right to do and what is right.”
Potter Stewart, Associate Justice, US Supreme Court 1958 - 1961

Professor: Laurie Harris
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M - W 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM
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SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS: All assigned reading and handouts should be completed in advance of each class and will form the basis of class discussion. Some handouts will be distributed at the start of class and used during that class. Additional reading assignments will be made as the course progresses and will include in class handouts and online postings. (Note: This outline assumes that the class will meet twice a week and that the topics listed will be covered in the 2 class meetings)

COURSE STRUCTURE: Lectures and discussion format in order to achieve a common understanding of core concepts and principles. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussion, to be prepared to respond to questions and to think creatively about the issues presented. This material is qualitative, not quantitative.

REQUIREMENTS: Class attendance and required readings are mandatory. Students will be asked to prepare assignments for classroom discussion and to ask questions and participate during these presentations. I encourage you to bring any questions that are not answered in class to me during office hours or to schedule an appointment. If you need to miss class for an emergency, please email me and let me know what’s going on.

GRADING: Grades will be weighted on the basis of class participation, including attendance, extra-credit assignments and class work (80%), and a final presentation (20%) required in lieu of a final examination. The presentation must evaluate an issue in environmental ethics assigned and presented to the class as a whole.

All work will be evaluated and graded based on ability to critically analyze the ethical issues raised from both a theoretical and practical perspective, and ability to offer solutions supported by reference to information and cases covered in the texts and in class and through outside materials.

READING MATERIALS:
Required texts:
Watersheds 4—10 Cases in Environmental Ethics Lisa H. Newton & Catherine K. Dillingham; Wadsworth Group, 2006 (copies available in Bren Library)  
Reader, 2007 (available in Bren Library)

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Various materials and news articles to be distributed in class and/or posted online

COURSE OBJECTIVES INCLUDE DEVELOPING FAMILIARITY WITH THE FOLLOWING:
- Concepts and theories of ethics; basic philosophical and applied theories
- Theories of environmental ethics and what is “environmental ethics”
- How to recognize categories of unethical behavior, in particular conflict of interest
- How to identify ethical issues
- How to apply various ethical frameworks to organizational and individual decision-making
- The relationship between the federal judicial structure and regulatory law as it impacts environmental change
- Intergenerational equity

NB: This is a 5 week course and we are necessarily limited in what we can cover by the length of the class

Week 1—Introduction and Overview
Monday March 31 First class—Structure of the course and expectations, discussion of goals;
Ethics and business ethics defined: Historical and philosophical approaches to ethics; individual and organizational ethics; current issues in ethics (see online postings and packet to be handed out)

Wednesday April 2 Discussion of issues in packet from first class; individual decision making; ethical theories, continued
Assigned Reading for Week 1: Watersheds 4: Preface & introduction; Chapter 1 pp. 1 – 15; Reader 2007 (In Bren library): Introduction pp. 1 – 59; Theories of Environmental Ethics
Packet to be distributed on Monday 3/31 for discussion on 4/2

Week 2—Ethical Decision Making
Monday April 7 — Overview of environmental ethics: various theories; analysis; current approaches and issues
Wednesday April 9 — Begin categories of ethical dilemmas; What is an ethical problem? How to recognize and analyze an ethical dilemma
Assigned Reading for Week 2:
Watersheds 4, Chapter 8, pp 141 – 156 ; Reader pp. 153 -207
Assignment: Use newspaper and bring in 1 article as example of conflict of interest and 1 article about an ethical dilemma in the news to present in class 4/14

Week 3—Stakeholders and Frameworks
Monday April 14 Categories of ethical dilemmas, continued; news articles
Wednesday April 16—Frameworks for ethical decision-making within an organization; how to use theories of stakeholder analysis. How stakeholders influence the ethical decision-making process; theories of corporate social responsibility
Assigned Reading for Week 3:
Watersheds 4: Chapter 9 pp 157 - 171 “Fueling the World”; Chapter 5, “Oil on the Rocks” pp 78 – 97; Reader: pp. 207 - 280; Handouts on BP; Assign presentations

Week 4—Making Environmental Decisions Ethically
Monday April 21 Ethical decision making and CSR, continued;
Wednesday April 23 25th Anniversary of The Exxon Valdez—where are we now? Other issues raised by BP and oil drilling? (assigned reports)

Assigned Reading for Week 4:

Week 5—Environmental Ethics in A Global Economy
Monday April 28—Special presentations, continued

Wednesday April 30—LAST CLASS!
Issues of intergenerational equity; issues for the future
Assigned Reading for Week 5:
Watersheds 4: Chapter 2, pp. 16 – 36 Reader pp. 337 – 411

Additional background readings in Ethics:

Justice—What’s the Right Thing To Do? Michael J. Sandel
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009

Beyond Religions Ethics for a Whole World His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Houghton Mifflin, 2011

Earth Democracy (Justice, Sustainability and Peace) Vandana Shiva;
South End Press, 2005


The Righteous Mind Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion
Jonathan Haidt  Random House,  2012

**Blindspot  Hidden Biases of Good People** Mahzarin R. Banaji, Anthony R. Greenwald; Delacorte Press 2012

**Earth in the Balance  Ecology and the Human Spirit** Senator Al Gore; Houghton Mifflin,  1992