Course Discipline and Number: ENVS 105  
Course Title: Environmental Ethics  
Year: 2019-2020  
Credit Hours: 3

Attendance Policy: To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.

Services for Students with Disabilities: It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.

Course Description
At heart, all environmental controversies are composed of ethical dilemmas. For example, how much value should be placed on endangered species? What is the equitable way to control greenhouse gas emissions? What moral obligations do we have to non-human animals? This humanities course will function as a framework for analyzing the belief systems that underlie environmental controversies and discussing application of ethical theories to environmental decisions. Ultimately it will ask the student to articulate their own ethical approach to the natural world. Local and global issues are addressed. Intended for all students, regardless of major field of study. The course may be used for a liberal arts, humanities, or unrestricted elective requirement. It will not satisfy a science elective requirement. ENVS 105 fulfills the SUNY General Education Humanities requirement. Prerequisites: MATH 090 if required by placement testing; prior completion or concurrent enrollment in ENGL 100 and RDNG 116 if required by placement testing. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall and spring semesters.

Course Context/Audience
This class serves as an introductory survey course for all those interested in learning about current environmental problems and the ethical questions surrounding them. The course, which can be used to satisfy Tompkins Cortland Community College liberal arts, humanities, or unrestricted elective, but not a natural sciences requirement, should be useful to students seeking careers involving environmental policy/decision-making and student's interest in global/social awareness. For those with a strong scientific or technical background it can lead to a better appreciation of the social aspects of environmental decision making.

Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations
Writing: WC  College-level writing skills are required. See course prerequisites for details.
Math: M2  MATH 090 if required by placement testing.
Reading: R3  Prior completion or concurrent enrollment in RDNG 116 if required by placement testing.

Course Goals
Students successfully completing this course
1. Acquire college level competence in critical reasoning and personal reflection.
2. Learn critical reasoning by identifying and articulating their beliefs in contrast to the beliefs of others.
3. Personal reflection occurs as students analyze their own ethical beliefs and obligations to the natural world.

Course Objectives/Topics
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective/Topic</th>
<th>% Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the difference between sustainable and non-sustainable societal and political choices.</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>The student will be able to explain the rudiments of environmental ethics and their historical development globally as well as in the United States.</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>The student will be able to think critically about complex issues. This includes the ability to analyze and evaluate arguments and the ability to communicate a position in a coherent and persuasive manner.</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES</th>
<th>HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to</td>
<td>Learning Activities Include:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Analyzing sections of a text in groups and defending interpretations.</td>
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<td>- Using case studies of real world events (e.g. the construction of Tellico Dam) to show a connection between ethical theory and policy implementation.</td>
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<td>- Facilitating a formal debate on policy surrounding controversial environmental issues.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live.</td>
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<td>Include a written assignment that asks students to illustrate how a current event relates to one of the issues in the class.</td>
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<td>Encourage students to engage in local political issues and present their experience to the class.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences.</td>
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**Instructional Methods**
A successful approach might be as follows. Divide the course into three sections: (1) current environmental conditions, (2) ...
ethical theory and the environment, and (3) case studies. In the first section, a cursory overview of major environmental problems such as global warming, biodiversity loss or water scarcity is given. In the second section, reading focuses on ethical theories concerning environmental issues such as anthropocentrism vs. ecocentrism, instrumental value vs. inherent value, reductionism vs. holism and so on. This section gives the students a framework for analyzing and discussing the ethical dimensions of environmental issues. The last section would involve applying the information from sections (1) and (2) to specific case studies. Throughout the course, periodic reading quizzes may be given to motivate reading and attendance. At the end of each section an exam might be given as a way to review material and check student progress and understanding of material. At the end of section (3), students could argue their views on specific environmental problems either in the form of oral presentations or a position paper. Due to the rapidly changing nature of environmental problems, issues which are to be studied should be open to the instructor's discretion.

Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>% Course Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>20-50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentations</td>
<td>0-30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>0-30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position Paper</td>
<td>0-20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/class participation</td>
<td>0-10%</td>
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</table>

Text(s)


Bibliography

The following print materials are good resources, but due to the timely nature of environmental problems, additional materials should be selected by the instructor's discretion.

State of the World

Pearce, Fred. When the Rivers Run Dry, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006).
Starke, Linda, ed. State of the World, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company). This is an excellent series of annual reports on progress toward a sustainable society, runs from 1984 to present.

Ethical Theory and Environment

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Hargrove., Eugene C. Foundations of Environmental Ethics (TX: Environmental Ethics Books


Case Studies


