

# Environmental Philosophy

Philosophy 5700

Spring 2017

**Course Description:** This seminar explores foundational questions in environmental philosophy. We will consider conceptual approaches to the environment, as well as to the relationship between humans and the environment. We will also consider different approaches to protecting the environment, principally between the contrastive approaches of conservation and preservation. Finally, we will consider the philosophical underpinnings of food and agriculture, including foraging and hunting. Primary focus will be given to classic texts, as opposed to contemporary scholarship. This is a two-credit seminar, with the possibility of an additional credit for the practicum; details below.

**Professor:** Dr. Fritz Allhoff  
Friday 12:00-2:00; 3006 Moore Hall  
387-4503 (w)

**Seminar:** Friday 2:00-4:30; Moore 3014

## Texts:

- Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (Counterpoint, 1996).
- Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Mariner, 2002).
- Jerry Dennis, *The Living Great Lakes: Searching for the Heart of the Inland Seas* (St. Martin's, 2004)
- Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax* (Random House, 1999).
- Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (Ballantine, 1970).
- Roderick Frazier Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Yale University Press, 2014).
- Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (Penguin, 2006).
- Henry David Thoreau, *Walking* (Cricket House Books, 2010).
- Richard Whelan (ed.), *Self-Reliance: The Wisdom of Ralph Waldo Emerson as Inspiration for Daily Living* (Crown, 1991).
- Fred D. White (ed.), *Essential Muir: A Selection of John Muir's Best Writings* (Heyday, 2006).

**Electronics:** Aside from anything necessary for presentations, please leave laptops, tablets, and smartphones outside of the seminar room; bring hard copies of readings.

<b>Grading:</b>	Attendance/Participation	20%
	Reaction Papers	20%
	Facilitation	10%
	Final Paper	50%

**Attendance/Participation:** Students are required to attend each seminar and to participate. If students miss a seminar, they may turn in a 1000-word reaction to the assigned readings (half exegetical, half evaluative) at the beginning of the following seminar to avoid a zero for the previous week. They may do this, at most, two times.

**Reaction Papers:** Over the course of the seminar, students are required to submit four reaction papers; again, these should be 1000 words, half exegetical, half evaluative. Reaction papers submitted for missed seminars will be counted toward attendance/participation, not this requirement. Students may not submit a reaction paper for the week of their presentations. Reaction papers are due to my mailbox—i.e., not by email, not to my office—by noon on the day of seminar.

**Facilitation:** Students will be assigned to facilitate (i.e., co-teach) one seminar—or substantive fraction thereof—over the course of the semester. Facilitators will not merely trace through the assigned reading, but will provide context, promote discussion, and incorporate secondary sources.

**Final paper:** Students will write a final paper, which should be no fewer than 4,000 words, exclusive of footnotes and bibliography. Papers need not be traditional research papers (i.e., “philosophy” papers), but could explore other formats, including narratives, memoirs, fiction, etc. However, all paper topics and formats must be pre-approved by the professor.

Papers should be submitted in 11 point font for the body—10 point for the footnotes—with Calibri or Cambria preferred. Both the body and footnote text should be fully justified. Spacing should be double, except for block quotes in single.

**Practicum:** For an additional credit, students may register for PHIL 5700, “Environmental Philosophy Practicum”. This will be a trip to Wilderness State Park (Carp Lake, MI) April 28-30. We will identify the themes, readings, and assignments in due course.

**Statement on Academic Honesty:** You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog (pp. 25-27) that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	1/20	Introduction	<i>The Lorax</i> , "Walking"
2	2/3	Emerson	<i>Self-Reliance</i>
3	3/3	Leopold	<i>A Sand County Almanac</i> , § I, II, or III, and § IV
4	3/17	Muir	<i>Essential Muir</i>
5	3/24	Carson	<i>Silent Spring</i> , §§ 1-10 (half of students) §§ 11-17 (other half)
6	3/31	Berry	<i>The Unsettling of America</i> , §§ 1-4
7	4/7	Nash	<i>Wilderness and the American Mind</i> §§ 1-5 (half of students) §§ 6-9, 13, Epilogue (other half)
8	4/14	Dennis	<i>The Living Great Lakes</i> §§ 1-8 (half of students) §§ 9-16 (other half)
9	4/21	Pollan	<i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i> , Part III