NRES 212 - A Primer in Environmental Ethics

General information- Spring term 1 credit class.
Time and Location- W from 1100-1150
Instructor- Mae Sexauer Gustin, Professor, NRES Dept Office location- FA 126, email- mgustin@cabnr.unr.edu , phone-784-4203, Webpage- www.cabnr.unr.edu/gustin.Office hours-Monday 2-3

Course Description: Provide a comprehensive introduction to environmental ethics and controversies along with the basic philosophical issues underlying the issues.

Course Objectives: To cover the philosophy underlying environmental ethics along with discussion of controversies regarding human use of natural resources and place human values within the context of maintaining sustainable life on this planet. Environmental ethics is essentially a “systematic account of the moral relationship between human beings and their natural environment.” (Desjardins, J. 2013) Explore the human moral responsibility for our planet and other human beings.


Schedule: (readings that should be read for that class are in parenthesis)
Week 1- Relevance of Philosophy for addressing environmental concerns
Week 2- Traditional philosophy and ethics-why this does not apply to environmental ethics (Chapter 1 Science, Politics, and Ethics and Tragedy of the Commons)
Week 3 – Philosophical ethics- Philosophers and terminology (Chapter 2-Ethical Theories and the Environment)
Week 4- Applied ethics- land preservation (Chapter 3- Ethics and Economics: Managing public lands)
Week 5- Applied ethics –pollution control (Chapter 3)
Week 6- Environmental ethics and economics (Chapter 3)
Week 7- Sustainability and responsibility (Chapter 4 Sustainability and Responsibilities to the Future)
Week 8- Test
Week 9- Anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric ethics (Chapter 5 Responsibilities to the Natural World: From Anthropogenic to nonanthropogenic ethics)
Week 10- Biocentrism (Chapter 6-Biocentric ethics and the inherent value of life)
Week 11- Wilderness and ethics (Chapter 7-Wilderness, Ecology, and Ethics)
Week 12- The land ethic (Chapter 8-The Land Ethic)
Week 13- Radical –Deep ecology (Chapter 9- Radical Environmental Philosophy)
Week 14- Ecofeminism (Chapter 9)
Week 15- Environmental justice (Chapter 10 and 11)
Week 16- Final exam
Grading:

Grading for this class will consist of 2 tests that will be multiple choice and short answer. This will be 80% of the grade. The rest of the grade will constitute the student’s ability to respond to questions asked randomly of students in the class. Each student will be called upon at least 4 times with each response worth 5% each.

All assignments will be given a letter grade (A-F) which will be weighted according to the percentage above. (A>90, B+=87.5 to 90, B=87.5 to 82.5, B-=80 to 82.5, C+=77.5 to 80, etc.

All students are expected to maintain high standard of intellectual honesty. Anyone involved in academic misconduct (i.e. plagiarism, cheating) will receive no credit for that assignment/test. Repeat offenses will result in a failing grade for the class.

Late assignments will not be accepted and make up tests will not be given unless the student has a very good excuse for having a late assignment or missing a test that is given to the instructor prior to the exam.

Silver Core Objectives:

This course satisfied CO12 (Ethics): Students will demonstrate understanding of the ethical principles in general or in application of specialized knowledge, results of research, creative expression, or design processes. Students will demonstrate an ability to recognize, articulate, and apply ethical principles in various academic, professional, social, or personal contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of NRES 212 students will be able to:

SLO 1: Students will be able to discuss and analyze the multifaceted philosophical issues associated with environmental decisions and actions. The structure of the weekly assignments provides a format for discussion of the multifaceted topic in the book discussed each week.

SLO 2: Students will be able to critique and assess environmental decisions from a philosophical and ethical point of view. The class covers philosophy as well as ethics and we will have discussion and critiques each week.

SLO 3: Students will be able to organize, analyze, and debate issues regarding environmental ethics, and place details within a broader context. The discussion format provides a platform for debating issues that are important at local, regional and global issues.

SLO 4: Students will be able to judge their individual environmental ethics as a human being. Everyone comes from different backgrounds so their individual ethics will differ. This class will raise this issue and I expect the discussion to controversial. Students in this class must be respectful of their peers and listen to their opinions. In addition, this is good for students who will be dealing with different people when they get jobs.
UNR RULES and REGULATIONS

Statement on Academic Dishonesty: "Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog."

Statement of Disability Services: "Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations."

Statement on Audio and Video Recording: "Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded."

Statement for Academic Success Services: "Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (775) 784-4422, Tutoring Center (775) 784-6801, and University Writing Center (775) 784-6030. These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student."

Student Absences: By NSHE policy in Title 4 Chapter 20 A, Section 3, paragraph 1, http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Handbook/T4-CH20%20-%20General%20Policies%20Regulating%20Students%20and%20Student%20Government.pdf "There are no official absences from any university class. It is the personal responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor regarding absence from class. In the event that a student misses a class because of an official university function or event or because of serious personal issues, the Office of the Vice President for Student Services may, at its discretion, send an explanation to affected faculty. The instructor shall make the final determination on whether the missed work can be done at a time other than during the regularly scheduled class period."

Religious Holy Days: It is the policy of NSHE (Title 4 Chapter 20 A, Section 3, paragraph 2, http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Handbook/T4-CH20%20-%20General%20Policies%20Regulating%20Students%20and%20Student%20Government.pdf "To be sensitive to the religious obligations of its students. Any student missing classes, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holy days should, whenever possible, be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holy day absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor in advance in writing, if the student intends to participate in a religious holy day which does not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the assignment at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the institution which could not reasonably have been avoided."