Calendar Description

This course focuses on human attitudes toward environments. Students will be introduced to some of the major perspectives within the field of environmental ethics and will learn to recognize how human beliefs and values shape relationships with the more-than-human world. Students will gain a theoretical grounding from which to critically assess environmental issues and their cultural, geographic, political, and economic dimensions and will become familiar with major debates within the field, as well as the public realm. In addition, students will learn to recognize and engage in practical applications of environmental ethics.

Instructor
Dr. Traci Warkentin
Office: HN 1046
Department Office: HN 1006
Department Tel: (212) 772-5443

Course consultation: Tuesdays 16:00 – 17:30, or by appointment (twarkent@hunter.cuny.edu)

Course Management

In this course both the instructor and students are considered teachers and learners actively engaging and interacting with each other through lectures, readings, discussions and activities. Together we will study, critique, remember, imagine and create the learning environment. It is expected that all the course readings will be done and classes actively engaged in through participating fully in the discussions and activities presented. Assignments will ask students to critically consider their role in the relationship created between learner and learning context.

Time and Location
Tuesdays 12:45 – 15:35 HN 1004

Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to some of the major perspectives within the field of environmental ethics. An investigation of, and engagement with, varying approaches to human relationships with the more than human world will provide students with a theoretical grounding with which to begin to form and articulate their own practicable environmental ethic, and will also enable them to assess and appreciate their own and others normative, epistemological and metaphysical assumptions, through which to better understand differing moral attitudes and further enable generative dialogue around environmental issues. Such an understanding will enable students to undertake informed action on environmental issues and to better grasp the reasoning, or lack thereof, underlying environmental activism and advocacy.

Course Objectives

Upon the completion of this course, students will:
1. have knowledge of the main theoretical perspectives and approaches within environmental ethics
2. be able to critically examine those perspectives and their corresponding value assumptions
3. have a working understanding of their personal environmental ethics and moral values, and how
they translate into action and everyday practices
4. have an appreciation of the myriad ethical and multi-cultural perspectives within environmental issues, their practical complexity and the epistemological, spiritual and political dimensions involved.

Organization of the Course
The course will be conducted in a seminar format. It is essentially a discussion-based course. Each seminar will consist of an interactive lecture, which includes formal presentations by the Instructor throughout which questions, comments and discussion will be encouraged and facilitated. Lectures will be supplemented with audio and visual materials (including materials from websites, powerpoint presentations, video and film clips). Also, there may occasionally be small group exercises related to the themes of the lecture and readings. All seminars are based on the readings for that date. Participating in these discussions and a familiarity with the required readings are central to success in this course. Readings listed under a particular date are assigned for class discussion for that date.

Evaluation
The grade for the course will be based on the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Project Proposal</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Indiv) Project Research Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; Reading Quizes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note on Participation
As a seminar course, a substantial proportion of your mark will be based on your interaction with your peers as well as your instructor. The goal of this course is to encourage a collaborative and creative working and learning environment—your engaged participation is therefore a vital component to its success. Participating in discussions will be difficult if the readings are not done ahead of time. They are integral to each seminar including presentations, discussions, and small group assignments. You will be expected to demonstrate your knowledge and critical assessment of class readings, thoughtfulness regarding issues raised in readings, and to draw connections between theoretical ideas and specific issues in all of these venues. Evaluating participation is always a subjective process; however, the following elements will be taken into account when determining the participation mark:

- **Quality of Participation** - This means coming to class prepared, having done the required readings and actively engaging in various activities including class discussions, asking questions during informal presentations/lectures, and taking part in small group and individual in-class exercises. This also means actively respecting your peers and contributing positively to the group dynamic, for example, by being courteous and respectful of others, not dominating conversations and discussions, allowing others to speak and be heard.

- **Reading Quizes** – There will be pop quizzes throughout the course to evaluate student comprehension of the required readings. They will be held at random.

Graduate Student Discussants
Graduate students are expected to act as a discussant for a minimum of one class, which involves preparing questions for the class and taking the lead in the discussion that day. Please consult with the instructor about
your preferred date/topic, or one will be assigned to you.

**Required Reading**

Additional required readings will be made available online via Blackboard.

*Please note: this is a reading intensive course. There will be a minimum of 50-100 pages per week, sometimes more. The required readings are mandatory and students are expected to have read them and to be prepared to discuss them in class. Failure to do so will negatively impact grades.*

**Schedule of Topics**
The following list of lecture topics is subject to change.

- **February 2**  Introduction to Environmental Ethics
- **February 9**  Morality and Moral Argument
- **February 16**  Applied Environmental Ethics: Eating, Agriculture and Biotechnology
- **February 23**  Anthropocentrism
- **March 2**  Individualism and Questions of Rights
- **March 9**  Ecocentrism and Bioregionalism
- **March 16**  Eco/Feminisms
- **March 23**  MID-TERM EXAM
- **March 30**  SPRING RECESS – NO CLASSES
- **April 6**  Multi-Cultural Perspectives & Environmental Justice
- **April 13**  Science, Politics and Policy
- **April 20**  Ethics and Aesthetics of Living
- **April 27**  Group Presentations
- **May 4**  Group Presentations
- **May 11**  Course Wrap-up

**Attendance, Grading and Lateness Policies:**
As stated earlier, the participation of each student is vital to the whole learning community. Students must be present to participate, thus attendance will be taken for every class and fieldtrip. Consideration on compassionate grounds will be given to students who must miss a class due to extenuating, personal circumstances and/or medical reasons.

Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, the assignments must be received by the Instructor on the due date specified for the assignment. Assignments must be handed in directly to the Instructor. In the interests of fairness, scores will drop 5% for each day after the due date that an assignment is turned in, except for excused medical reasons when supported by written documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter). No late assignments will be accepted more than one week late.

Academic Honesty:
Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. Plagiarism, dishonest, or cheating in any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations.