

**GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

COURSE: PH 2660: PHILOSOPHY OF THE ENVIRONMENT
COURSE OUTLINE: 1992-93 F.

INSTRUCTOR: John O. Langenbach
PHONE: Office: 539-2992, Room #C 401
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to bring both traditional and modern philosophical theories and methods to bear on the environmental issues of today. The primary focus will be on our relationship to the environment: as it was in the past, as it now is and as it might be in the future. Environmental problems such as Pollution, Overpopulation and resource exhaustion and allocation will be considered in the light of their Ethical, Aesthetic and Metaphysical ramifications.

Examination of the topics covered will be through both close textual reading and personal observations as recorded in the form of an Environmental Journal.

The opportunity for an in depth inquiry into the very nature of "nature" is unique; through this process we will come to understand the inherent difficulty in making sense of a topic which is ordinarily taken for granted. Philosophically delving into the problems attendant to Environmental concerns will expose us all to such interesting topics as: the conflict between self and others, the limits of objective knowledge, the scope of our moral reach, despair in the loss of things other than ourselves and the attenuation of selfhood.

Although nature serves as an exemplar for our moral conduct it is not apparent that its processes properly direct our behaviour. Since it would appear that the ill treatment of nature shows roughly the same forces that act to corrode human relationships, we might properly expect to find moral imperatives greeting us from behind every tree. Students completing this course should be able to evidence a high degree of understanding of the issues involved in a philosophical study of the environment as well as an equally well developed sense of the difficulty of resolution of the problems attendant to these issues.

TEXTS: Collingwood, R.G. The Idea Of Nature London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
Evernden, Neil. The Natural Alien: Humankind and Environment Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1985.
Leopold, Aldo. A Sand County Almanac New York: Ballantine, 1970.
McKibben, William. The End of Nature New York: Random House, 1989.

Additional material will be assigned from the L.R.C.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Three fifteen hundred word essays, each worth 25% of the final mark. An ongoing environmental journal worth 25% of the final mark.

GRADING CRITERIA:

1. Though marks on essays are based primarily on philosophical merit, an essay will be penalized for errors in composition since clarity and coherence are of the utmost importance to the exposition of a philosophical position. Conceivably, an essay could receive a failing grade if it were sufficiently poorly written.
2. Rewrite Policy: One rewrite on your first assignment will be allowed contingent upon the original paper being submitted on time.
3. Late essays will be docked one stanine per day of lateness. Unless extenuating circumstances are proven.
4. Students showing steady progress throughout the course will be given the benefit of the doubt in the calculation of final grades.

INSTRUCTORS COMMENTS ON WRITTEN WORK

I will make comments on your written assignments via the use of an audio cassette tape. Students who wish to receive comments must provide me with a blank audio cassette. Though I will grade your essay on grammar, composition, etc. I will not comment on it or correct it. If you are having serious difficulties with writing I suggest you report to the Writing Lab for help.