

New Course Proposal

1. Details

- a) Course Title: Environmental Ethics: Through the lens of diversity
- b) Sponsor: Dr. David Clowney, Department of Philosophy and Religion
Dr. Patricia Mosto, Department of Biological Sciences
- c) Credit Hours: 3 credit hours
- d) Course level: Freshman Rowan Seminar/ Undergraduate
- e) Curricular Effect: Rowan Seminar, General Education elective, History, Humanities, Languages bank
- f) Prerequisites: none
- g) Suggested Time and Scale of Implementation:
Effective Fall 04.
- h) Resources:
Present faculty are adequate. Both of the faculty members sponsoring this course have ample expertise to teach it, and will co-teach it, requiring 3 credit hours each. Library resources are minimally adequate, but in need of considerable improvement. Over time, we hope that additional materials can be purchased for the Campbell Library.

2. Rationale

There is a need to increase the number of interdisciplinary courses offered for freshman seminar, in particular those addressing issues of diversity and democracy. This course is proposed as part of the freshman experience. Both Environmental Studies and Ethics have received increasing emphasis in higher education in the last few years. This course has been designed to deal with diversity issues within the context of environmental ethics.

3. Essence of the Course

a. Course overview:

This is a multidisciplinary course that addresses ethical issues and concerns regarding the environment. Among these issues and concerns are the relationships between individual, society and the natural environment; the importance of diverse attitudes and world-views for understanding and responding to environmental challenges;

and the need for changes in those attitudes and world-views. The selected readings and a variety of assignments and discussions will help students to think about the profound ethical, political, economic, religious, scientific, and technological implications of these environmental challenges.

This course addresses environmental issues as they interact with the diverse dimensions of gender, religion, society, economics, aesthetics, philosophy and politics. Weekly discussion will guide the students to identify the ethical dimensions of local and global environmental issues. Students will consider the implications and challenges of an environmental ethic based on a respect for nature as well as think in diverse ways of resolving some of the environmental issues pressing our endangered earth today. Case studies and “in the first person” articles will allow students to engage with the material in a more personal way. A service-learning project on “The Greening of Rowan” will bring issues close to home.

b. Course Objectives:

- ❖ To increase understanding of the intricate, dynamic, and diverse interactions between humans and the environment
- ❖ To gain a local and global perspective on environmental issues
- ❖ To understand the diverse relationships between different social groups in regards to their environmental impact
- ❖ To help students how to think, share and relate among themselves about environmental issues while respecting their differences
- ❖ To promote ethical awareness by debating ethical issues as they pertain to the course material
- ❖ To expose “stereotypes” and deconstruct them within the context of human environmental impact
- ❖ To learn problem solving through the use of case studies
- ❖ To search and read literature pertaining to the subject matter
- ❖ To develop responsible citizens
- ❖ To enlighten students on “how to make a difference”

Freshman students will benefit from this holistic learning approach because their voices will be heard, their differences will be respected, integrated and validated in the way the course will be taught, as well as by the presence of two faculty from different disciplines, with different views. The diverse views of faculty and students can only enhance the intellectual experiences as the community of learners participates in a constructive interdisciplinary exchange. The analysis of social, religious, political, economic and environmental diversity can only benefit the students in their search for global understanding.

c. Sample Topical Outline/Content:

- **Week 1** - Introduction –*Why do we think the way we do? What’s ethics and why study it? Human beings, others form of life and ethics. A framework for ethical reflection. A brief history of the environmental movement in the western world.* D. Clowney & P. Mosto
- **Week 2** - World views – Abrahamic religions – *Book of Genesis*, Francis Assisi: *The Canticle of Brother Sun*, Thomas Aquinas: *Differences Between Rational and other creatures*, Lynn White: *The historical roots of our ecological crisis* – Movie: *God’s Earth*.
- **Week 3** - World views – Other religions – *Brihad-Aranyake Upanishad: Creation of the World from the Self* (Hindu), Kenneth Kraft: *The Greening of the Buddhist Practice*, Eagle Man: *We are all related*– Invited speaker: *Maria Rosado*
- **Week 4** - Valuing Nature – Paul Taylor: *The ethics of respect for nature*, Holmes Rolston III: *Are values in nature objective or subjective* – “In the first person: *Eugene Hargrove*”
- **Week 5** - Social ecology and Environmental justice – Murray Bookchin: *What is social ecology*, Robert Bullard: *Justice and environmental decision making* – Case study: *NIMBY*
- **Week 6** - Deep Ecology and biocentrism – Arne Naess: *The deep ecological movement*, Bill Duvall, George Sessions: *Deep Ecology* – “In the first person: *an activist student*”
- **Week 7** - Ecofeminism – Karen Warren: *The power and promise of ecological feminism*, Vandana Shiva: *Development, Ecology and Women* – Case study: *changes in ecology after ecofeminism*
- **Week 8** - Land ethics – Aldo Leopold: *The Land ethics*, Garret Hardin: *The tragedy of the commons* – Invited speaker: *John Hasse*
- **Week 9** - Animal rights –Peter Singer: *All animals are equals*, Carl Cohen: *The case for the use of animals in biomedical research*– Case Study: “*Growing Old Lucy*”
- **Week 10** - Global population expansion – Charles Southwick: *Our global condition: a clash of concepts*, Garret Hardin: *Lifeboat ethics*– Case study: *Easter Island’s Example*
- **Week 11** - Biodiversity – Charles Southwick: *The crisis in biodiversity*, Holmes Rolston III: *Duties to endangered species* – Case Study: *40 years after Silent Spring*
- **Week 12** - Consumption and Sustainability – Deane Curtin: *Green Marketing*, Jennifer Everett: *A fair ecological footprint* – Case Study: *Costa Rica*
- **Week 13** - Business and the environment – Green technologies – Barbara Ehrenreich: *The global assembly line*, Amory Lovins: *A road map for natural capitalism* – Case Study: *The Herman Miller Corporation*
- **Week 14** - Environmental policy – William Baxter: *The case for optimal pollution*, Paul Steidlmeier: *The morality of pollution permits* – Discussion cases; *Smog, cancer, water issues*
- **Week 15** – Presentation on “*The Greening of Rowan*”

Readings: Compilation of an anthology based on selected bibliography related to class material by D. Clowney and P. Mosto

d. Course Requirements and Evaluating Procedures:

This course will be taught in a combination of lecture and seminar format. Students will be required to read materials before class, be prepared to discuss the class topics with their peers and the faculty and engage in case study analysis and debates. Students will be taught how to read from primary literature, what to get out of each of the papers helped by prior questions, and how to “map” their learning. Students will be asked to work collaboratively as well as individually. They will be required to write weekly journals entries in response to their readings as preparation for class discussions. In teams, students will conduct a service-learning project on The Greening of Rowan. We will develop a plan for implementation and supervision of this project in consultation with the Rowan Center for Service Learning and Volunteerism. Students will be evaluated on participation, journal writing, quizzes and presentation of the service learning project.

e. Course Evaluation

The Freshman Seminar Coordinator and the Respective Departments will routinely review the course to assess its success in meeting the goals and objectives of Freshman Seminar

4. Results of Consultation N/A

5. Additional Information: None

6. Catalogue Description: see attached page.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

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Environmental Ethics: Through the lens of diversity

(Prerequisites: none)

This is a multidisciplinary course that addresses ethical issues and concerns regarding the environment; the relationships between individual, society and the natural environment; the importance of different attitudes and world-views for understanding and responding to environmental challenges; and the need for changes in those attitudes and world-views. Students will be encourage to think about the profound ethical, political, economic, religious, and technological implications of these environmental challenges.