

Course Description:

This course will be a study of the various ethical issues arising as humans interact with the environment. We shall proceed by examining classic cases in environmental ethics, surveying local environmental issues, and developing an environmental ethic in the context of environmental policy issues.

Go to the online version of this syllabus at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/Syllabus/Spring/3180s10.doc>

Course Learning Outcomes¹ (Objectives):

- to acquire a basic and clear understanding of philosophical ethics and environmental philosophy (D1; U8);
- to acquire a basic and clear understanding of environmental policy issues and controversies (D3; U1);
- to develop skills in written and oral presentations on controversial issues (D2; U4);
- to develop an appreciation for ethical reasoning and engagement with local environmental issues (D3; U8)
- to develop skills in cooperative education and collaborative action (D3; U8)

Required Texts:

Lisa Newton and Catherine Dillingham, *Watersheds 4: Ten Cases in Environmental Ethics* (ISBN: 0-534-52126-6)
James Sterba, *Earth Ethics*, 2nd ed. (ISBN: 0-13-014827-X)

Office Hours and Contact Numbers:

My office is located in 148 Farber Hall (the old Student Health Center behind Palms). The times you may find me there are M-F 11:00-12:00. You can reach me there or leave a message at 333-5949. You can also reach me through e-mail at

asantas@valdosta.edu

Grades:

Course grades will be determined on the following basis:

Unit Assignments and Reports	50%
Final Project	25%
Participation and Attendance	25%

Special Needs:

Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (voice) and 219-1348 (tty).

Participation and Attendance:

Attendance is required. I will be taking roll every day and assign *part of your grade* on the basis of *how many days* missed. The rest of your participation grade, as I mentioned above, will be determined partly by your peers, and partly by me. What I'll be looking for, besides regular attendance, and encourage each of you to look for as well, are the following:

conscientious class presentations	responsible attitude towards learning
contribution to discussion	respectful treatment of your peers
effort to improve and grow	attentiveness to the course materials and to each other

*A Word on Cell Phones:

Cell phones are thieves of attention and attentiveness. I do not allow their use in my classes. They are to be *silenced* and *no texting* should be conducted during class time. If you must make use of one, you must step out of the room. If I must remind you of this, you will be *asked to leave* the class.

Readings:

You will be expected to read assigned materials carefully. Remember, the class will be a lot more interesting if you have prepared for it. That means reading and **understanding** the material. Since the readings will sometimes be difficult, it is necessary to read them

¹ Corresponding Departmental and University Outcomes are indicated with letters 'D' and 'U' respectively.

more than once. See “Guidelines” Web page for more help: <http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/guide.html>

Reading Deadlines can be found through the main Course Index:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/Syllabus/Spring/3180%20Schedule%20S10.doc>

Unit Assignments

Unit I Case Assignments:

Part of the Unit I requirements will be for each group to prepare *at least two cases* out of Newton's *Watersheds 4* text. This assignment will involve both a written *and* oral component and will be done in groups.

Unit II Papers and Presentations

During Unit II of the course, you and your group will be required to prepare several chapter reports. *At least two* of them will be in-class *presentations*; *at least two* will be *papers*. These reports will be on theoretical issues in environmentalism from the Sterba *Earth Ethics* text.

You will have to coordinate format details with your partners and other groups well in advance. Extra research and inclusion of personal experiences are expected.

Unit III Community Outreach Projects:

You will be required to participate in at least one community outreach exercise. These projects will be designed to help you understand environmental ethics in the context of the local community. It will involve organizing either a class **field trip** to an area of local environmental interest and/or arranging for a **guest speaker** (to either visit the class or serve as a guide for a given field trip). I'll also be providing you with a list of possible sites to visit and guest speakers.

All Unit assignments and due date schedules can be found at my main online course index:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/3180 Index.htm>

Final Project:

During the third and final unit of the course, everyone will be working on a final project. You will elect to work individually, in small groups, or in a large group—details will be worked out as the class develops. All topics and deadlines will be approved of by the instructor before the final product is completed. You will be given **two options**:

Option I: Westview Productions: One option for the final project of the class will involve a public presentation of the materials we have discussed and learned during our course of study. This idea, called *Westview Productions*, a concept born of experiences of students who have taken this class and others like it. The philosophy behind this way of learning is based on the work of students at Valdosta State University in the 1990's. It has shown to be an effective way of allowing students to gain hands on experience while absorbing the material that is presented to them in the classroom. This project will be able to take a variety of forms, from panel discussions, to short films, to information booths at the Earth Day Festival.

Option II: Term Paper: Your final project requirement can also be fulfilled by electing to write a term paper. If you choose to do this, I ask that you choose a problem related to environmentalism, give every side fair consideration and then propose and defend a solution of your own. Your paper can take the form of an essay, a reasoned and defended proposal for a new policy, a criticism or defense of an old policy, or even something like a proposal for a code of environmental ethics for some workplace. If you deal with environmental issues in your workplace or major field of study, I strongly urge you to make your project something that addresses to those issues in a way that contributes positively to your workplace and/or studies. Those pursuing this option need to download and fill out this form:

Undergraduate Research Symposium: As you may already know, the College of Arts and Sciences conducts every year a symposium which showcases undergraduate student research. Given the importance of environmentalism, I really would love to see someone from this class who is writing a term paper have a paper accepted for presentation at the symposium. If you're interested in doing this, please come see me for details.

All Final Project information, Assignments and Forms can be found at my main online [Course Index](#):

<http://www.valdosta.edu/~asantas/3180 Index.htm>

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:

The VSU Student Code of Conduct in the [Student Handbook](#) states:

Plagiarism is prohibited. Themes, essays, term papers, tests, and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them. When direct quotations are used, they must be indicated, and when the ideas of another are incorporated in the paper they must be appropriately acknowledged. (p. 59)

Anyone found guilty of academic dishonesty—offering someone else's work as their own—will receive an 'F' in the course. In addition, current VSU policy dictates that all instances be reported to the administration for disciplinary action.

