For most of its history human beings have been concerned with nature (they had to make a living from it) but did not have to think about it, as such. Nature was perhaps the realm of the Gods or earth-spirits. It was not something people had to think about a lot.

Today the situation seems to be inverted. Pollution, climate change, population growth, resource exhaustion and other, similar, factors unite to force us to pay attention to the world. When we do we don’t like what we see. Above all, we don’t like having to be proactive about it. Aren’t there enough problems? Why do we have to deal with these too?

When a set of problems rears its ugly head, whether of race, or religion, or of man’s relations to nature, philosophy is sure to follow. It may seem bad thing to some, but it is surely inescapable. Philosophy may be many things, but it is overview. And when problems arise that involve serious implications, people go looking for overviews. Or oppose their old overviews to the new one.

This course will be a survey of some of the main environmental overviews of nature. Some of these are new, others are old. The course will cover both, beginning with Nineteenth Century authors who, began to think seriously about man’s relations to nature. And nature’s to man.

Among these are Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Alfred North Whitehead, and Also Leopold. Ancient, Native American, and Oriental views of nature will also be discussed.

This course will also be an overview of the history of ecology as a science; its history as pre-science, its first emergence as a science in the 19th century, its subsequent development into what we know today as scientific ecology with its dual axioms; interconnection and interdependence.

Scientific ecology will be reconsidered examined also in terms of its offshoots, restoration ecology, “deep ecology” and “social ecology”.

REQUIREMENTS

This course will involve two hour examinations and one final examination. Any graduate student sitting in on the course will be required, in addition, to write a term paper.

Each examination will consist of an objective part and an essay part. The objective part will consist of True-False, Multiple choice and fill-in-the blank components and will account for 33% of the grade.

TEXTBOOKS


LATE/MAKEUP POLICY

Extensions are not granted, except in the case of illness or loss of a family member. If work cannot be submitted for these reasons, the student can resolve the situation with the professor after returning to the course. Documentation can be provided in office hours, by appointment or at the next class the student is able to attend, at the student’s discretion. A makeup arrangement will be worked out by mutual agreement based on the student’s needs.

GRADING POLICY

This course is graded according to the requirements specified and weighted below. Discussion postings receive a numerical grade; class presentations and the research paper receive a letter grade. Letter and numerical grades are translatable on the following scale:

A = 90%+
B = 80-89%
C = 70-79%
D = 60-69%
F = 0-59%
CLASS SCHEDULE

Aug. 25 Syllabus and Discussion
Aug. 27 Introduction and Discussion
Sept. 1 Buchsbawm, Basic Ecology
Sept. 3 Buchsbawm, Basic Ecology
Sept. 8 Buchsbawm, Basic Ecology
Sept. 10 Gunter, The Big Thicket
Sept. 17 Gunter, The Big Thicket
Sept. 22 Preparation for the First Hour Exam
Sept. 24 First Hour Examination
Sept. 29 Texas Land Ethics
Oct. 1 Texas Land Ethics
Oct. 8 Texas Land Ethics
Oct. 13 Intro to Metaphysics
Oct. 15 Intro to Metaphysics
Oct. 20 Intro to Metaphysics
Oct. 22 Intro to Metaphysics
Oct. 27 Science and the Modern World
Oct. 29 Science and the Modern World
Nov. 3 Science and the Modern World
Nov. 5 Science and the Modern World
Nov. 10 Preparation for Second Exam
Nov. 12 Second Hour Examination
Nov. 17 Topic: Restoration Ecology (reading matter to be supplied)
Nov. 19 Topic: Deep Ecology (Reading matter to be supplied)
Nov. 24 Topic: Social Ecology (reading matter to be supplied)
Dec. 1 Preparation for Final Exam
Dec. 3 Preparation for Final Exam

Dec. 10 Final Exam Thursday 1:30 – 3:30