This course is an examination of contemporary environmental problems from the philosophical perspective. Do we have a moral obligation to the natural world? If so, is it to individual living things or to nature as a whole? How do moral positions influence environmental policy and activism? Are traditional theories within moral philosophy of any help in these problems, or must we develop a radically new conception of the relationship between humanity and nature? What are the different ways we can perceive and value the natural surrounding world? We will start from our immediate personal experience of the environment and move outward to consider suburbia, the city, the wilderness, and the world.

Why should we preserve natural diversity? Should we increase it artificially? How has our attitude toward nature developed as part of the suburbanization and commodification of our culture? Can business help solve our problems, or is it the problem? What kind of role to activists play in making us aware of the situation? How do we listen to them, how do we join up, and how do we make a difference? What is the connection between the built environment and the way we conceive the environment? Can our society really live in any way closer to nature than we do now—or is nature just an idea that we made up, which we change whenever we need to? We’ll see.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

A course reader, available for download from the professor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

One five page paper on an assigned topic. One substantial research paper, twenty pages, on the topic of your choice approved by me. Both papers need to be substantially researched, based on original thought, not mere collages of cut-and-paste web page snippets. One in-class thirty minute presentation per student. Regular class attendance and participation in class discussion.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan. 26   The Land Ethic Meets Suburbia
Feb. 2    Deeper Ethics and the Regional Plan
Feb. 9    no class
Feb. 16   *Encounters with the Archdruid*
Feb. 23   How to Argue for a Better Way of Life
           The Basics of Ethical Theory
           **first paper assignment given...**
Mar. 2    Tragedy of the commons, Hardin.
           Everglades Case Study.
Mar. 9    Hydropower Case Study.
           Wind Power Case Study. **first paper due**
           **second paper assigned**
Mar. 16   *Spring Break*
Mar. 23   Garrett Hardin
           Botkin
           Wilderness: Turner, Soule
Mar. 30   no class
Apr. 6    Population. McKibben??
           E.O. Wilson, the global context of biodiversity.
           Ethics of Climate Change
Apr. 13   What’s Wrong With Environmentalism today?
Apr. 20   The new sense of community...
Apr. 27   to be announced
May 4     Final presentations...
           **Second paper due.**
**New York Times Magazine** 2004 Special on Suburbia


“Rutland Walmart,” “Smart Suburbs,” “The Crossings,” “First Suburbs Consortium,” “Coast Dairies,” “Mountains to Sound Greenway,” from


Douglas Scott, “A Brief History of Wilderness Time”

Thomas Michael Power, “Gifts of Nature in an Economic World,”

Michael Soule, “Should Wilderness be Managed?”


“Population: General Considerations,” from *Environmental Ethics Textbook*


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nordhaus and Shellenberger</td>
<td>from <em>Breakthrough</em></td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin, 2007</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gus Speth</td>
<td>from <em>The Bridge at the End of the World</em></td>
<td>Yale University Press, 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Garvey</td>
<td>from <em>The Ethics of Climate Change</em></td>
<td>Continuum, 2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>