The broad focus in the course will be the examination of three different bases of theoretical and practical concern for the environment, or, in other words, three broad views that have been offered to explain why the environment matters: anthropocentrism, intrinsic value, and ecocentrism.

In Anthropocentric, or human-centered, theories, nature is valued ultimately as an instrument of human ends. Those ends may be economic or aesthetic or they may be the ends of health, recreation, comfort or convenience. The anthropocentric view is captured by the expressions "natural resources," and "resource conservation and management. These theories, it is argued, have their origin in views of nature inherited from the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the Scientific Revolution and are supported by a market-based economy. Anthropocentrism is the basis of most U.S. environmental policy.

Contrary to anthropocentric views, which regard nature instrumentally, or in terms of its use-value, intrinsic value theories maintain that nature is valuable in and of itself and, as such, is morally considerable. Intrinsic value theories such as those offered by animal liberationists Peter Singer and Tom Regan and constitutional lawyer Christopher Stone, are modeled on liberal political theory which bases rights and protections on certain characteristics possessed by (human) individuals. The novelty of the arguments offered by Singer, Regan, Stone and others is that they extend the liberal paradigm beyond its original target group of humans. Not surprisingly, a major task of intrinsic-value theory, like that of its progenitor, liberal political theory, is the adjudication of rights claims or claims of interest.

An ecocentric theory (short for ecosystem-centered) is wholistic rather than individualistic. In this way, it is at odds with both human-centered theories that give moral priority to human members of the biotic community and with rights-based theories that give moral priority to individual living organisms (e.g., humans, lab animals, mammals, livestock) over the ecosystem itself.

The main proponents of ecocentrism, (J.Baird Callicott, Holmes Rolston, and "deep ecologists" Arne Naess, Gary Snyder and George Sessions) take as their inspiration the "land ethic" proposed by Aldo Leopold in the final chapter of his A Sand County Almanac. Rejecting the anthropocentric assumption that humans have "dominion" over nature, the land ethic regards Homo sapiens as simply one among other mutually dependent species that make up the biotic community. Deep ecology advocates a shift of philosophical attention away from environmental ethics to ontology -- a systematic understanding of the being of other forms of life and of the "ecological self" rather than the human ego. The environmental holism advocated in ecocentric theories is most akin to Native American and some Asian conceptions of nature. We will explore writings in both of these areas in order
to better understand wholistic paradigms and to highlight as well the argument that some of the epistemological and metaphysical assumptions of the western moral tradition have contributed to our present environmental crisis.

Within this context we will also discuss the ecofeminist claim that patriarchal biases at the heart of the western moral tradition undermine its ability to provide a framework for resolving the problems of environmental degradation. Despite the diversity of ecofeminist viewpoints that ground this belief, it is generally accepted that one cannot address the ethics of the environment without also addressing the concerns of other sub-dominant groups -- women and racial minorities in particular.

Discussion of the anthropocentric view will focus on the notion of stewardship as it emerged from the Judeo-Christian tradition and the scientific revolution, the notion of nature as transformative (Thoreau), and the question of obligations to future generations (of humans). Discussion of intrinsic-value theories will focus on questions of moral considerability, the adjudication of rights claims, and the calculation of the sphere of moral interests. The discussion of ecocentrism and ecofeminism will focus on fundamental challenges to epistemological and metaphysical assumptions that undergird western science and philosophy (such as the idea of progress) and on a "communitarian" conception of moral relationships.

Final grades will be based on class participation and three written assignments. The class participation grade will count 20% and will be based on the student's overall contribution to class discussion and one class presentation. Two 5 page textual analyses will each count 20%. The final 10 to 15 page paper will count 40%. Because the class is a colloquium, students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material. Class attendance is required. Unexcused absences will not be regarded favorably.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**


A PACKET OF SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL ON RESERVE AT LAUINGER WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: (In the syllabus below, these articles are indicated by: (Lauinger)


Heilbroner R. What has posterity ever done for me? *NY Times Magazine* 1-19-75.


DOCUMENTARIES:

"From the Heart of the World: Elder Brother's Warning." Nature Series, 88 minutes.

"Amazonia: The Road to the End of the Forest" Canadian Broadcasting Co. (The human, animal and environmental consequences of the deforestation of the Brazilian rainforest) 120 minutes
"Rachael Carson's *Silent Spring* The American Experience. 90 minutes

"The Wilderness Idea: John Muir, Gifford Pinchot and the First Great Battle for Wilderness" (58 min) Florentine Films. The battle between Muir and Pinchot over the construction of a dam that would turn the Hetch Hetchie Valley into a reservoir.

"Wild by Law: The Redefinition of American Progress" (58 min) Florentine Films. The history of the 1964 Wilderness Act

**Schedule of Classes and Readings**

**September 6**

Introduction to the readings and to the themes of the course. Differentiating environmental ethics and ecophilosophy; applied ethics and "moral ontology." Looking at some of the most pressing environmental problems.

**September 13**

Do we need a new environmental ethic?

Film: "From the Heart of the World: Elder Brother's Warning" Nature Series: The only remaining pre- Columbian tribe of South American Indians allows a BBC reporter to come to their village so that they can send a message to the world about the damaging effects of pollution.

**Readings:**


**September 20**

Anthropocentrism, The problem of the commons and the roots of environmental crisis.

1) Norton BG. Chapter 7: Anthropocentrism, in *Why Preserve Natural Variety*?


5) Dobel P. The Judeo-Christian stewardship attitude toward nature.
September 27:
Obligations to future generations (of humans)

1) Heilbroner R. What has posterity ever done for me? *NY Times Magazine* 1-19-75. (Lauinger)


3) Golding M. Obligations to future generations. *The Monist* 1972;56. (Lauinger)


5) Norton BG. Chapter 10 Transformational Values, in *Why Preserve Natural Variety*?

October 4
**FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE**
Moral extensionism, the promotion of non-human species to a position of equal moral status with human "rights" or "interest-bearers". The liberal paradigm and the moral domain.

Readings:
1) Singer, "Animal liberation" p. 22-32 in *Zimmerman*

2) Regan, "Animal rights, human wrongs" p. 33-48 in *Zimmerman*

3) Norton BG. Chapter 8, Nonanthropocentrism I, in *Why Preserve Natural Variety*?

October 11
Moral extensionism - going farther to determine who "counts" morally speaking. The criterion of moral considerability. How to adjudicate rights claims or claims of interest.

Readings:
1) Goodpasture, "On being morally considerable" p. 49-65 in *Zimmerman*

October 18
Liberalism and ecocentrism: Some theoretical dissonance between individualistic and wholistic theories.

Readings:
1) Sagoff, Animal liberation, environmental ethics: Bad marriage, quick divorce” p. 84-94 in Zimmerman

2) Leopold, “The land ethic” p. 95-109 in Zimmerman

3) Norton BG. Chapter 9 Nonanthropocentrism II, in Why Preserve Natural Variety?

October 25
Aldo Leopold and the “Land Ethic”

Readings:
1) Callicott, “The conceptual foundations of the land ethic” p. 110-134 in Zimmerman


November 1
Ecology and the moral point of view: The lessons of Carson’s Silent Spring

Readings:
1) Silent Spring, chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 17

2) Ray, Dixy Lee & Guzzo L. The blessings of pesticides. From Trashing the Planet Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1990. (Lauinger)

3) Rolston, “Challenges in environmental ethics” p. 135-157 in Zimmerman

- Film: "Rachal Carson’s Silent Spring" The American Experience. 90 minutes.

November 8
** SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE**
Rethinking Western Metaphysics and Epistemology -- American Indian ecology

Readings:
2) Callicott, "The metaphysical implications of ecology" p. 51-66 in *Callicott and Ames*

**November 15**
Rethinking Western Metaphysics and Epistemology -- The Taoist World View

**Readings:**

2) Tu Wei-Ming, "The continuity of being" p. 67-78 in *Callicott and Ames*

**November 22**
Rethinking Western Metaphysics and Epistemology -- The Taoist World View

**Readings:**
1) Ames, "Putting the *Te* back into Taoism" p. 113-144 in *Callicott and Ames*.

2) Neville, "Units of change- units of value" p. 145-149 in *Callicott and Ames*

**November 29**
Eco-feminism, and social justice

**Readings:**
1) Warren, "Introduction" p. 253-267 in *Zimmerman*

2) Warren, "The power and promise of ecological feminism" p. 320-341 in *Zimmerman*


**December 6**
Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology

**Readings:**
1) Naess, "Simple in means, rich in ends" and The deep ecological movement: Some philosophical aspects" p. 182-192 in *Zimmerman*


3) Plumwood, "Philosophy and the critique of rationalism" p. 284-309 in *Zimmerman*