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Western State Colorado University Extended Studies
Taylor 303, Gunnison, CO 81231 970.943.2885, fax 970.943.7068

Course Information

Course Title: ENV5 297 Special Topics: Land Conservation Ethics

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Schild

3 Credits, undergraduate credit

Class meetings:

Total hours class will meet	95 hours
Day(s) of the week class will meet	varies
Time class will meet:	varies
Start and end date of class	September 20th 2020 – December 8th 2020

Textbook/Materials Information

All readings will be provided in the course packet, handed out at the beginning of the semester.

Course Description

This course will cover contemporary ethical questions concerning humans' relationship to the natural world, including nature conservation, restoration, stewardship, and environmental ethics. Through an experiential and field-based format, we will examine the philosophical and ethical challenges and dimensions to conservation, both domestically in the United States and in Chilean Patagonia. Students will explore essential questions such as:

- What is the value of conservation, wilderness, and nature?
- Are humans part of, or separate, from nature?
- Can we restore nature to a "natural" condition?
- What responsibility do we have to protect, conserve, and restore nature?
- What are the inevitable trade-offs in conservation? Who benefits?

Through field expeditions through diverse natural areas combined with readings, class discussion, hands-on stewardship projects, and reflection, students will gain a comprehensive and applied understanding of the challenges of 21st Century conservation.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course the student will be able to:

1. Develop an appreciation of various historical, cultural, and philosophical differences between conceptions of nature.
2. Understand and be able to trace how different theoretical and/or philosophical approaches may lead to different diagnoses of environmental problems and ways to address these problems.
3. Understand how the concept of wilderness is a shaper of the American point-of-view and modern society and how this conception of nature may differ in Patagonia.
4. Articulate various arguments for conservation, as well as identify inherent trade-offs from conservation decisions.

5. Have an improved ability to think, talk, and write intelligently and reflectively (critically) about issues and positions and arguments discussed in this course.
6. Consider and apply theoretical concepts in the areas of environmental ethics to one's own actions and behaviors.
7. Understand the U.S. public land management system and different management approaches to conservation.
8. Develop basic skills in environmental stewardship, such as trail-building, environmental restoration, and impact mitigation.
9. Articulate one's own personal environmental ethic and idea about their relationship to the natural world.

Grading and Evaluation

Attendance and participation (25%)

Field Journal (20%)

Letter to Representative (15%)

Personal Environmental Ethic Project (40%)

Presentation (10%)

Final Paper (30%)

A: 93-100%

A-: 90-92.9%

B+: 87-89.9%

B: 83-86.9% B-: 80-82.9%

C+: 77-77.9%

C: 73-76.9% C-: 70-72.9%

D+: 67-69.9%

D: 63-66.9% D-: 60-62.9%

F: below 60%

Course Requirements and Assignments

1.) Attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities (25%)

As this course is primarily experiential and field-based, attendance and active participation is critical to your learning and informs your other assignments. In addition, we will be both visiting and working with local government and non-profit organizations, which demands a high level of respectfulness and professionalism. You will be graded on your regular attendance, active engagement, respectfulness to the class community as well as outside visitors, and preparedness for discussions and activities.

2.) Field journal reflecting on readings, activities, and stewardship project (30%)

You will be required to respond to prompts throughout the semester in your field journal. These entries are intended to inspire personal contemplation about your values, connection to the environment, and how the service-learning component of the course has influenced you. In addition, you may be asked to journal about the course readings in preparation for a class discussion.

You will be asked to turn in your journal entry after every assignment and/or prompt. These entries will be evaluated primarily on depth, honesty, clarity, and connection to course material. However, please be mindful of writing mechanics and readability.

3.) Letter to your Representative (15%)

We will be spending almost six weeks traveling through and recreating on U.S. public lands. In particular, we will be in Southern Utah, where there are several contentious land debates occurring between the Federal Government and State of Utah, most notably the Bears Ears National Monument designation. You will be asked to draft a letter to one of your representatives on a land management topic of your choice. In this letter, you should clearly articulate the issue you are writing about, how you have expertise and a stake to write about this issue, and what action you would like them to take. You will be asked to send this letter before we leave for Patagonia in November. You will be evaluated using the rubric provided in your course packet.

4.) Personal Environmental Ethic Project (PEEP) (40%)

This culminating project is your chance to define **YOUR** personal environmental/conservation ethic. This assignment will challenge you to think critically about the way in which you (as an individual and as a member of society) interact with, use, and think of the natural world. This project is composed of two different components: a

short presentation to the class during the semester (10% of your grade), and a 4,000 – 5,000 word paper (30% of your grade), turned in two weeks after the semester concludes.

The following statements and questions can guide your presentation and paper:

- Define and describe your personal environmental ethic.
- How have your opinions been shaped by your experience this summer term or previous life experiences?
- Why do you believe what you believe?
- How does your ethic align with or contradict the ideas of the many authors we read?

Ultimately, your personal ethic is presented in a clear, well-supported, thoughtful and unique way that explains how and why you believe what you believe as well as explaining what ideas and beliefs you are still forming or pondering.

More information about the guidelines, expectations, and evaluation are provided in the PEEP assignment and rubric, included in your course packet.

Course Schedule*

**This schedule is subject to change at any time, depending on instructor evaluation of student skills/understanding/knowledge.*

Date	Topic & Activities	Readings	Location
Week 1 and 2: Framing Concepts of Nature and Value of Wilderness			
Session 1	Welcome & Introductions Introduction to course expectations and format		Leadville, Colorado
Session 2	"Tech Toss" and the value of simplicity	Read excerpt from "Walden"	Wilderness Expedition, Sawatch Mountains, Colorado
Session 3	Value of Wilderness Journal prompt: are humans part of or separate from nature? And what is the value of wilderness to you? Discussion	Stegner, "Wilderness Letter;" Abbey "Freedom and Wilderness;" Williams, "This is your Brain on Nature"	Wilderness Expedition, Sawatch Mountains, Colorado
Session 4	Wilderness for Whom? Journal prompt: how has your own personal background and culture influenced your perception of nature? Discussion	Peterson, "Parks for all;" White, "Black Women and Wilderness;" and HCN "Meet the New Advocates of the West" (look at P&P reader – Merchant)	Wilderness Expedition, Sawatch Mountains, Colorado
Session 5	Trouble with Wilderness Guided reading and Discussion	Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness"	Wilderness Expedition, Sawatch Mountains, Colorado
Week 3-4: Foundations of Environmental Ethics and Conservation			

Date	Topic & Activities	Readings	Location
Session 6	Environmental Ethics Overview Alternative perspective taking activity and discussion	Read Leopold "Thinking Like a Mountain"	La Sals, Utah
Session 7	Alternatives to Wilderness: The Land Ethic and Conservation in the 21 st Century	Read Leopold "The Land Ethic;" The Breakthrough Institute "Conservation in the Anthropocene;" Nijhuis "Can Leopold's land ethic tackle our toughest problems"	La Sals, Utah
Week 5-6: Stewardship and Conservation in Utah (students complete a 10-day service project on BLM lands)			
Session 8	Desert Ecology Class	Excerpts from Audubon Field Guide	Indian Creek, Utah
Session 9	Introduction to US Land Management Jeopardy	US Land Management Primer handout	Indian Creek, Utah
Session 10	Field Visit with Neal Clark – Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance	Case Study: Bears Ears National Monument Readings TBD	Indian Creek, Utah
Session 11	Stewardship Ethics - Fireside chat with BLM and Front Range Climbing Stewards - Journal prompt: Reflect on service work that you have been participating in. What does it mean to be a steward of our environment? How does this conflict with our concept of "Wilderness"?	Marris, "Handle with care;" HCN "Your stoke won't save us"	Indian Creek, Utah
Session 12	Environmental Restoration Journal prompt: How "natural" is Indian Creek? The La Sals? How much do the trails, roads, signs, evidence of climbing, and other people affect the "nature experience" in these places? Consider the damage you've witnessed throughout this course from climber-use. Should we "fix" this damage to return it to its original state, or do we let nature, including human nature, take its course?	High Country News "The Exact Same Place"	Indian Creek, Utah
Week 8-10: Conservation Ethics in Patagonia: Case Study of Parque Patagonia			
Session 13	Background of Parque Patagonia Field visit with Park administrators Intro to Personal environmental Ethic Project	Tompkins, "Land Ethic" – pages 1-5; and Patagon Journal, "Making Conservation History: An Interview with Kris Tompkins"	Parque Patagonia

Date	Topic & Activities	Readings	Location
Session 14	Patagonia Ecology	Excerpts from Patagonia Field Guide	Parque Patagonia
Session 15	Tourism and the Ethics of Place Journal reflection and discussion	Sanders, "The Geography of Somewhere"	
Session 16	Debate: Conservation in Patagonia	The Atlantic, "The entrepreneur who wants to save paradise;" Wakild, "Purchasing Patagonia;" and excerpts from "Conservation Refugees."	Parque Patagonia
<i>Week 11-12: Course wrap-up</i>			
Session 17	PEEP presentations		Piedra Parada, Argentina

Letter to Your Representative – Rubric

Bare Minimum Requirements:

You must satisfy these categories before we will even grade your assignment!

_____ Is your letter **typed**?

Sentence Craft

_____ Are you writing sentences that are grammatically correct?

_____ Is the meaning of your sentences clear and easy to follow?

Proofreading

_____ Does your letter start with an appropriate salutation?

_____ Does your letter conclude with an appropriate salutation?

_____ Are there errors in your letter that spell check could catch?

_____ Did you carefully read through your letter for proofreading errors?

10	9	8.5	7	5	0
Complete, thorough execution of the standard	Strong execution of the standard	Meets the standard	Approaching the standard	Below the standard	Standard is not present in the letter

Argument _____ /3 x 70%

_____ You effectively establish your “expertise” on this topic (i.e. as someone who has spent ~30 days camping in Southern Utah, an informed student of public lands management, etc.)

_____ You clearly articulated the issue you are your writing about and the position you are advocating for.

_____ Your opinion is substantiated with compelling rationale (including statistics, quotes, and other evidence as appropriate to support your opinion)

Organization/Style _____ /5 x 30%

_____ You capture your legislator’s attention right away with a clear statement about your purpose for writing.

_____ You honor the efforts this legislator has made thus far on federal lands issues.

_____ Your ideas flow logically.

_____ Your letter has a clear beginning, middle, and end.

_____ Transitions and “connective tissue” provided for easy understanding of your letter.

Notes:

**Total
Score: _____ %**

Personal Environmental Ethic Project (PEEP!)

The PEEP is ALL ABOUT YOUR personal environmental ethic.

This is your chance to demonstrate your *independent thinking* and how it has **or** has not been shaped by your experience during the HMI Gap semester. We have read some examples of peoples' personal environmental ethics over the course of the semester. Aldo Leopold's *The Land Ethic* and Emma Maris's *Handle with Care* are worth examining as examples of personal environmental ethics.

Details

Your PEEP should be a representation of your own beliefs and ideas. However, we want to understand how this evolution of beliefs and ideas has been influenced by what we've read and participated in during the semester (we encourage you to leverage your journal reflections, Letter to your Representative, participation in the service projects, and the many discussions we have had as you prepare your PEEP!). We also hope you'll reflect on experiences from your life (at HMI or otherwise) to help explain *why* you think *what* you think.

Finally, you will conclude your PEEP by articulating the foundation of a plan for how you will attempt to live according to your ethics after leaving HMI.

- Presentation (10% of your grade). During the second to last week of the semester, you will be responsible for presenting your PEEP to the class. You will have **3-5 minutes** to present your personal ethic in a clear, well-supported, thoughtful, and unique way that explains how and why you believe what you believe as well as explaining what ideas and beliefs you are still forming or pondering.
- Final Paper (30% of your grade). After you have given your presentation to the class, you will write a 4,000-5,000 word paper articulating your ethic and supporting your beliefs. The best papers will provide a balance between critical analysis and your own opinions. Drawing from texts we've read, discussions we've had, and experiences both during the semester and your life to support this analysis and your ideas is a requirement. This paper is due December 30, 2017.

In Summary:

- Present **your beliefs**
- Include a "**should**" statement in some form
- Provide a **rationale** for why you believe what you believe
- Articulate an **action plan**
- Be **creative** (and make sure it enhances your presentation of your ethic!)
- Be **organized** (logical flow, intro, middle, conclusion + effective transitions)
- USE THE RUBRIC** – see the following page – to make sure to adhere to expectations!

PEEP Presentation Rubric

Refer to the rubric for this assignment to have a clear idea of the expectations. Remember: we are *not* grading your ethic and ideas; we are grading your ability to convey your ethic and ideas!

The following categories earn points for adherence to these statements (circle appropriate point value):

Length 3-5 min. = 1 point, under 3 min = 0 points, 4-5 min = .5 points, 5+ min = 0 points

	<Δ	Δ (75%)	√ (85%)	+ (95%)	Points awarded by evaluator
Creativity (30 points)	Student did not incorporate a creative element or creativity was very minimal.	A creative element was present but did not support or enhance the clarity of the student's environmental ethic. OR Creative element may have interfered with adherence to the guidelines of the assignment.	Creative element helped communicate student's environmental ethic.	Creative element supported and enhanced the audience's understanding of student's environmental ethic.	
Organization & Structure (15 points) (consider intro, transitions, conclusion, and logical flow)	Presentation was disorganized/did not have any identifiable progression of ideas and evidence.	Presentation did not follow a clear progression of ideas and evidence (it felt random).	Presentation showed a progression of ideas and evidence, though some pieces felt out of place.	Presentation showed a consistently clear progression of ideas and evidence.	
Expression of Belief & Rationale (30 points)	Student struggled to communicate his/her environmental ethic.	Student presented an inadequate explanation of what s/he believes. Student provided a superficial rationale supporting why s/he believes what s/he believes.	Student presented a clear and compelling explanation of what s/he believes. Student shared a clear rationale supporting why s/he believes what s/he believes.	Student presented a thorough, honest, and thoughtful explanation of what s/he believes. Student articulated a clear and well-reasoned rationale for his/her beliefs that thoroughly traced what (experiences, authors, etc.) informed those beliefs.	
Articulation of an Action Plan (25 points)	Plan was insufficient or nonexistent.	Student offered a plan, but it lacked clarity/sense of relationship to their ethic.	Student offered a coherent plan that effectively matched with their ethic.	Student offered a compelling, well-developed, and SMART-style plan for taking action based on their ethic.	

PEEP Paper Rubric

Refer to the rubric for this assignment to have a clear idea of the expectations. Remember: we are *not* grading your ethic and ideas; we are grading your ability to convey your ethic and ideas!

	<Δ (60%)	Δ (75%)	√ (85%)	+ (95%)	Points awarded by evaluator
Organization, Structure, Grammar & Mechanics (30 points) (consider intro, transitions, conclusion, and logical flow)	<p>Paper was disorganized/did not have any identifiable progression of ideas and evidence.</p> <p>Contains serious problems with grammar, syntax, diction and spelling that make the essay incomprehensible.</p>	<p>Presentation did not follow a clear progression of ideas and evidence (it felt random).</p> <p>Contains significant problems with grammar, syntax, diction and spelling that make the paper difficult to read</p>	<p>Presentation showed a progression of ideas and evidence, though some pieces felt out of place.</p> <p>Has some grammar or sentence structure errors, but none which distract from the author's meaning and purpose</p>	<p>Presentation showed a consistently clear progression of ideas and evidence.</p> <p>Uses precise, clear, fluent, graceful language that expresses complex ideas; contains no substantial errors of spelling, grammar or format</p>	
Expression of Belief & Rationale (15 points)	<p>Student struggled to communicate his/her environmental ethic.</p>	<p>Student presented an inadequate explanation of what s/he believes.</p> <p>Student provided a superficial rationale supporting why s/he believes what s/he believes.</p>	<p>Student presented a clear and compelling explanation of what s/he believes.</p> <p>Student shared a clear rationale supporting why s/he believes what s/he believes.</p>	<p>Student presented a thorough, honest, and thoughtful explanation of what s/he believes.</p> <p>Student articulated a clear and well-reasoned rationale for his/her beliefs that thoroughly traced what (experiences, authors, etc.) informed those beliefs.</p>	
Evidence/Relevance (30 points)	<p>Evidence was either entirely missing or completely unrelated to the personal ethic.</p>	<p>Student included sources, but they were not connected to the personal ethic or seemed to lack relevance.</p> <p>Too much time was spent on either personal beliefs without enough evidence, or vice versa.</p> <p>Student showed limited understanding of ideas and arguments in articles referenced.</p>	<p>Student included sources, but relevance/connection could have been stronger.</p> <p>There was an adequate balance between personal beliefs, quotes from texts, and other evidence.</p> <p>Student showed proficient understanding of ideas and arguments in articles referenced.</p>	<p>Student included relevant and well-connected citations of various sources.</p> <p>There was a strong balance between beliefs, quotes, and other evidence.</p> <p>Student showed a thorough understanding of ideas and arguments in articles being referenced.</p>	

Articulation of an Action Plan (15 points)	Plan was insufficient or nonexistent.	Student offered a plan, but it lacked clarity/sense of relationship to their ethic.	Student offered a coherent plan that effectively matched with their ethic.	Student offered a compelling, well-developed, and SMART-style plan for taking action based on their ethic.	
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