GREENING THE DRAKE CAMPUS: ECOLOGICAL ETHICS LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY
Religion 140/Honors 155
Spring, 2000, Tu-Th 2:00-3:15 pm
Drake University

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Office Hours: Tu-Th 3:30-5:00;
Wed 10-12; or by appointment
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COURSE STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the emerging field of environmental and ecological ethics and the spectrum of philosophical responses to the questions, issues and dilemmas posed by the contemporary global ecological crisis. We will examine fundamental issues such as how human beings should relate to the rest of nature, the historical roots of the ecological crisis, and the intersection of ecological and social justice issues in various responses to the ecological crisis. In addition we will focus on the Drake campus and research the question of what it would take to make Drake more ecologically sustainable in its practices as a community. Through a combination of discussion, lectures, readings and research, each student will be encouraged to both clarify one's own personal stances as well as understand perspectives and contexts radically different from one's own.

In fulfilling a mission of challenging and preparing students for productive careers, active leadership and responsible citizenship in the global and diverse community of the 21st century, Drake is a university where students of all fields develop environmental literacy, an awareness to become caring and competent stewards of the planet, and operations are committed to ecologically sustainable and responsible practices.

- The Drake Environmental Mission Statement

Universities are still preparing students for professional careers in the industrial-commercial world even as this world continues its planetary destruction.
- Thomas Berry, The Great Work.

TEXTS

Daniel Quinn, Ishmael.
David W. Orr, Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World.
Sarah Hammond Creighton, Greening the Ivory Tower: Improving the Environmental Track Record of Universities, Colleges, and Other Institutions.
Reading Packet (available in the Religion Office, Medbury 206)

REQUIREMENTS

- Regular class attendance and participation that demonstrates a grasp of the reading assignments
- Facilitation with two other students of a class discussion
- Environmental autobiography reflection/analysis paper
- Regular contributions to class web-site discussion forum, culminating in a web-site portfolio
- Group research project, presentation, and written report on the "greening" of the Drake campus
- 8 hours of "ecological immersion" and a short reflection paper on the experience
- Plant journal
- Essay midterm and final exams
# Assignments and Classes

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<td><strong>Recommended Readings</strong></td>
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<td>1/18</td>
<td>TU</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction: Laying out themes and structure of the course</td>
<td>Rasmussen (Packet #1)</td>
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<td>1/20</td>
<td>TH</td>
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<td>The Panorama and Challenges of the Ecological Crisis</td>
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<td><em>Introduce Environmental Autobiography worksheets</em></td>
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<td>1/25</td>
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<td><em>Bring Environmental Autobiography worksheets</em></td>
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<td>What is Education For?</td>
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<td>Greening Drake: Getting Started I</td>
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<td><em>Sign up for Group Projects</em></td>
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<td>Environmental Autobiography Due</td>
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<td>Raising Questions: The Place of Humanity</td>
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<td>Takers vs. Leavers: The Rise of Agriculture and Destruction/Alteration of Ecosystems</td>
<td><em>Ishmael</em>: 151-263</td>
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<td>Orr: 85-95; 125-152</td>
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<td><em>Bioregionalism Quiz</em></td>
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<td><em>Hand out Ecological Inventories Worksheet</em></td>
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IV. Ethical Responses to the Ecological Crisis

2/29   TU  13  A Spectrum of Approaches to Ecological Ethics  Merchant (Packet #10)

3/2    TH  14  Bioregionalism  Merchant (Packet #11)
              Discuss Ecological Inventories  Dodge (Packet #12)
              Sierra articles (P #14)  Snyder (Packet #13)
              Dinsmore (Packet #15)

A. Ecological Reform

*3/7   TU  15  Capitalist Economics:  Reilly (Packet #16)
              The Problem or the Solution?  T. Berry (Packet #17)

*3/9   TH  16  Stewardship: The Judeo-Christian Heritage  Hall (Packet #18)
              Check-In on Group Research Projects  Nash (Packet #19)

B. Radical Ecology

3/14   Tu  17  Deep Ecology  Duvall (Packet #20)
              (Guest speaker)  Guha (Packet #21)

3/16   Tu  18  Discuss Ecological Immersion Experiences  Duvall (Packet #20)
              (Issue Forum Invitations)  Guha (Packet #21)

3/20-24  SPRING BREAK

3/28   Tu  19  Ecology and Gender: Ecofeminism  Warren (Packet #22)
              Ecofeminism Now! video  Birkeland (Packet #23)

Turn in Ecological Immersion Papers

*3/30  TH  20  Social and Socialist Ecology  Bookchin (Packet #24)
              Hand Out Midterm Exam Questions  O'Connor (Packet #24)

*4/4   Tu  21  Environmental Justice  Wenz, Bullard, LaDuke (Packet #25)

4/6    TH  22  Midterm Exam
V. Group Reports on Greening the Drake Community

4/11 TU 23 Groups #1 & 2

4/13 TH 24 Groups #3 & 4

4/18 TU 25 Groups #5 & 6

4/20 TH 26 Debrief Group Projects, Plan Group Papers and Community Forum

*Hand out Web-site Portfolio instructions*

4/25 TU 27 Planning for Community Form

*Group Papers and Summaries Due*

4/27 TH 28 Planning for Community Forum

*Hand out Environmental Autobiography Revisited worksheet

7:00-8:30 PM: Earth Day Town Forum with Drake Community

5/2 TU 29 Debrief Community Forum; Environmental Autobiographies Revisited

*Hand out Final Exam Essay assignment

*Turn in Plant Journal*

5/4 TH 30 Wrap-Up: Constructing an Ecological Ethic

5/5 F Free Study Day

*Web-site Portfolios Due 4:00 pm in Medbury 206*

*Student-led Discussions

Web-site entry due by 11:00 am on the Readings

GRADING POLICY

1. Class attendance and participation: expected
2. Reflection/Analysis Paper on Environmental Autobiography (10%)
3. Eight hours of "ecological immersion" and reflection paper (5%)
4. Group Project consisting of:
   a) Group Research and Class Presentation (10%)
   b) Group Paper (15%)
5. Student Facilitation of Class Sessions (5%)
6. Plant Journal (5%)
7. Web-site Portfolio (15%)
6. Midterm exam (20%)
7. Essay final exam (15%)
Note Re Papers: Papers are due in class on or before the date listed in the syllabus. Unless you have made a prior agreement with me, I will take off one grade level (A becomes A-) for each class day an assignment is late. Papers with an undue number of errors of punctuation, spelling, or grammar will be returned ungraded for correction. Written work will be evaluated in terms of your accuracy of exposition of the author's position, depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, clarity of writing, and ability to address issues raised in the class and in readings on the topic at hand. Grades given reflect the following criteria of judgment:

General standards for grading papers and essays:

A: Excellent depth of critical analysis, thoughtfulness of reflection, and writing style; demonstrate creativity and mature analytical skills in going beyond the primary requirements of the assignment
B: Good to Very Good: thoughtful reflection, good analysis, clear writing style
C: Satisfactory; meet minimum requirements of assignment but not much more
D: Unsatisfactory, but some effort to meet minimum requirements
F: Failure to meet minimum requirements

More specifically:

A Obvious understanding of article or problem
Clear explanation of all that needs explaining
Good argument — e.g., takes seriously possible objections
Completion of all aspects of the assignment
Displays original thought — i.e., is not merely an articulate restatement of either the reading or class discussion

B Does all for an A but not as well (some minor flaws — perhaps not as original, not as clear or thorough, etc.)

C Does the assignment and does not obviously misunderstand crucial elements
Provides some semblance of an argument
But either no demonstration of complete and clear understanding of any of the elements of the assignment OR argument does not take the opposing view seriously

D Fundamental misunderstanding of article or issue
OR
Very poorly written — paper filled with grammatical errors.

F Shows no understanding of argument
OR
Does not follow assignment. Quality of work is irrelevant in this case
OR
Plagiarized portion of paper

If you are unclear regarding the nature of plagiarism, find and read the following WWW sites:

http://west.cscwc.pima.edu/~bfieroplagsm.htm
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html

Attendance: Because this class is built around participation and discussion, regular attendance and participation in the class is expected. More than three (3) absences will result in losing any benefit of the doubt on your final grade. More than six (6) absences will result in one grade reduction. More than nine (9) absences will result in a failing course grade. Late arrivals in class will count as an absence. (Note: If you have a valid reason for missing several classes, such as illness or other conflicting commitments, you still must speak with the instructor).
DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Class attendance and participation**: The seminar format of the class emphasizes student leadership in running and facilitating class sessions. Students are expected to come to class having done the reading and ready to engage in discussion of the issues raised.

2. **Environmental Autobiography**: We will go over this exercise in class. Worksheets to guide your reflection and analysis will be handed out in class on January 20. We will use these to discuss our environmental autobiographies on January 25. You will then have the opportunity to write up both your reflection and analysis following the model of the Spiral of Praxis. *(Recommended Length: 6-8 pages, typed double-spaced). (Paper Due: February 8)*

3. **Web-site Forum Discussion and Portfolio**: A significant portion of class discussion on the readings will take place through the class web-site discussion forum. Your entries should respond thoughtfully to the issues raised in the readings for the designated classes *(underlined on the syllabus)*, and should seek to advance the discussion of the issues. For each of the designated set of readings you should give a critical response to the readings and respond thoughtfully to at least one of your classmates’ postings. Your entries will be strengthened to the extent that they (a) discuss and assess the readings in light of the broader themes being discussed in class, and (b) engage the comments of your classmates’ entries (and thus advance the class’s overall discussion). At the end of the semester all of your entries will be assessed together as a portfolio of your critical engagement with the material throughout the semester. Your entries should be sent to the class e-mail discussion list preferably the night before class, but no later than 11:00 am the day of class. The portfolio cover essay will be assigned in class Thursday, April 20 and will ask you to synthesize your learnings from your portfolio and evaluate the quality of your responses. Your portfolio is due in Medbury 206 by 4:00 pm Fri, May 5.


4. **Ecological Immersion and Reflection Paper**: Each class member will do a minimum of eight hours of "ecological immersion"--participation with a group or in an activity focused on environmental issues. We will discuss options in class. Some possibilities would include collecting native prairie seed for prairie restoration projects, attending a "pasture walk" with Practical Farmers of Iowa to learn about sustainable agriculture, or participating in an urban environmental education workshop. Afterward write a 2-page reflection/analysis paper describing the activity and analyzing the underlying ethical and philosophical values and assumptions. Can you place the approach within the different ecological spectrums we explore during the semester? *(Due March 28)*

5. **Group Project**: The group projects will each focus on a different aspect and/or practices of the Drake community and what it would take to make Drake a more ecologically sustainable community. The project is divided into three sections:

   a) **Group Research and Presentation**: based on your research, an oral report and discussion of (1) the current situation at Drake in the area you researched, and (2) your recommendation for what Drake should do to be more ecologically sustainable in this area.

   b) **Group Paper**: A written analysis of the research presented in the oral presentation. Use the Spiral of Praxis as a guide for your analysis, and thus include sections on:

   1) The current situation at Drake
   2) Historical and social analysis of why
   3) Relevant ethical issues at stake
   4) Alternatives and likely consequences
   5) Assessment of the alternatives and consequences in lights of relevant ethical principles
   6) Your recommendations.
This section of your paper should be a **maximum of 15 pages**. Following this, write a **2-page summary** that briefly states the current situation, where problematic areas/practices lie, and your recommendations for what can/should be done. The summaries from each group will be bound together to present to the Drake community in a "town forum" on April 25th as recommendations for making Drake a more ecologically-sustainable community. *(Due: April 25)*

6. **Facilitating Class Discussion:** The primary purpose of this assignment is not to give a report on the readings (which presumably everyone will have done), but to facilitate good, stimulating class discussion on the issues presented in the readings. Be clear about what main points you want to cover and how you want the class to address them, but also leave room for others to raise issues and questions. Feel free to be creative in your format design to encourage active participation by everyone.

7. **Plant Journal:** Research has shown that developing an intuitive, direct experience of the world is essential in helping us to understand it. In this class, each student will keep a "plant journal." You are asked to pick a plant -- anything from a blade of grass to a tree -- and to sit with that plant three or four times a week over the semester. You can interact with your plant or simply observe it. Record your experiences and observations in your journal. *(Due: May 2)*

8. **Environmental Check-in:** Each Tuesday at the beginning of class students will have an opportunity to give a brief 5-6 minute overview of a current ecological issue or example of how individuals and communities are trying to live out a constructive environmental ethic. The Instructor will distribute a sign-up sheet. *(Optional)*

**Inclusive Language Policy in Written Work:** Wherever possible, try to avoid the use of false (male) generics in your written work. If you mean only male members of humankind, use terms such as man and men. If, however, you mean both male and female, work to use gender-inclusive language such as human, humankind, humanity, and human beings.