

**BIO 338 A Bioethics: SWS**  
Winter 2004

Prerequisites: Junior standing, ENG 150 (C or better)

CATALOG COPY---Examination of the values, ideas, and technologies that humans have used, are using, and may use in the future with respect to environmental issues. Students who take BIO 338 may not also earn credit for BIO 328.

GENERAL EDUCATION---THIS IS AN ETHICS THEME COURSE: Courses in the Ethics Theme involve the study of moral imagination, moral judgment, and moral action. As such, you will be engaged in an examination of your ideals and how those ideals relate to your various social roles. An important aspect of this course will be your engagement in a dialogue with your instructor, your readings, and with other students enrolled in the course.

The course engages students in the practical application of common ethical dilemmas met today in humans' relationship to nature and the earth. Emphasis is on humans as citizens of the larger biotic community and the "public consequences" of human choices. As these dilemmas are studied, students will be involved in expanding their information base and working with a variety of ethical frameworks for decision making. General education skills objectives will be developed through class texts, assigned readings, Web searching, reading of pertinent literature, assigned writing, and classroom presentations and discussions.

SWS Course: This course is designated SWS. Completion of WRT 150 and/or WRT 305, as appropriate, with a grade of C or better (not C-) is the prerequisite. SWS credit will not be given to a student who completes this course before completing the prerequisite. SWS courses adhere to certain guidelines. Students turn in a total of at least 3000 words of writing. Part of that total may be essay exams, but a substantial amount of it is made up of finished essays, reports, or research papers. The instructor works with the students on revising drafts of papers, rather than simply grading the finished piece of writing. At least four hours of class time will be devoted to writing instruction. At least one third of the final grade in the course is based on the writing assignments.

Blackboard: To access the course web site, go to GVSU's home page and click on the "Current Students" link. Next, click on the MyGVSU (Blackboard) link. Once you have signed-on, go to the link for 'Courses in which you are participating'. Your USERNAME and PASSWORD are the same as your GVSU network login. If you do not know your username or password go to [www.student.gvsu.edu](http://www.student.gvsu.edu), click Reset / Change Your Password. Please take note what your user name is before you reset your password. If you are unsuccessful in resetting your password phone 331-2101 for assistance. Please check to be sure GVSU has your correct email address! Otherwise you will not receive email messages from your classmates and your instructor. To change your email address, go to [www.gvsu.edu](http://www.gvsu.edu), Current Students, Logon, Personal profile, Email, MyEmail---update it if it is the wrong address.

Course texts: T. D. Goldfarb. 2003. Taking sides; Clashing views on controversial environmental issues. Dushkin. Tenth Ed. (10E)  
T. D. Goldfarb. 2000. Sources; Notable selections in environmental studies. Second Ed. Dushkin. Second Ed.

Course objectives:

- ? Present clear and objective information concerning environmental-ethical issues through lectures, discussion, and readings.
- ? Encourage students to improve their analytical skills through reading, group work, discussions, and writing.
- ? Create a forum to allow participants the opportunity to openly and to freely discuss environmental-ethical issues.
- ? Help participants to clarify their own values and ethics as they relate to humans and the earth.

Course grading:

Group work & Readings presentations.....	25%
Small papers.....	10%
Term paper.....	15%
Term paper presentation.....	10%
Exam.....	15%
Final exam.....	25%

Group work:

You must be a responsible member of your group. At the end of the semester's group work, evaluation within groups will occur and will be a part of the group work grade for each individual. In addition to your readings grades, your group work grade will include:

- 1) the quality of your peer evaluations for papers.
- 2) your contribution to group functioning.
- 3) the quality of your group presentations.

The readings:

To reduce your reading load and to increase your opportunity for involvement, the issues and readings will be assigned to groups. This means that periodically you will be reading and preparing for classroom discussion on a topic. Your group should be prepared to share the main ideas of your assigned reading, the values you perceive the author(s) using, and their motivation for taking the stance they do. Your group should also be prepared to lead class discussion. Time allotted for each reading will be 25-30 minutes. Use your Sources book, Issues book, the Web, and other readings to provide perspective for your presentation. **Please also watch for newspaper and other articles that pertain to the issues to be discussed.**

Small papers:

You will be required to write and re-write two small (maximum 500 word) papers that follow the attached guidelines. When you hand in your small papers, turn in your first draft and the peer reviews along with your final draft.

Term Paper:

Your term paper should be an in-depth analysis of your topic and must include original thinking as well as an ethical dimension. A list of acceptable topics is attached. To avoid excessive duplication of topics, you must sign up for your topic. If you wish to write on something outside of the list, please see me for approval before starting. For your paper, look at the historical (and pre-historical) origins of the issue, the implications across socioeconomic groups and across various countries in the world, and the implications for species other than just humans. This paper should be written to demonstrate that you have extensive background and have thought the issue through from many perspectives. Read about your topic so you have evidence to support your thesis. There are valuable ideas and background information in your textbooks for the course. References should be used as needed although this paper should not be a "report on the issue"; it is critical to write your essay using the attached guidelines. This paper must be typewritten, double-spaced and may be of any length--longer is not necessarily better. You will receive the average of six grades for the final paper: clarity, strength, and expression of thesis; quality and quantity of evidence supporting the thesis; organization; originality of thought; effectiveness of the

overall argument; style and usage (grammar, punctuation, word choice, etc.). Due dates are on the course outline.

**Presentation:** Prepare and deliver a formal in-class presentation based on your term paper. You will have a total of 15 minutes for this presentation. The time should be allotted as follows: 3 minutes for introduction to the problem, 3 minutes for opposing perspectives, 4 minutes for your analysis and proposed solutions, 2 minutes for summary and conclusions, 3 minutes for questions from the audience. Perspectives must include:

- 1) a time dimension beyond the here-and-now.
- 2) a space dimension beyond Michigan, the US, or just developed nations. This also means you are looking at more than just your own socioeconomic group.
- 3) a species dimension beyond just humans.

You should have a title slide as well as other visual materials to help your audience understand. You may use Power Point (I'd be happy to help you learn how) or overheads (I'll help you make them). Be sure to practice your presentation...your timing must be right to convey your message(s) effectively. These presentations will be evaluated by your peers and graded by your instructor. **Your absence from others' presentations will result in the loss of one letter grade from your presentation.**

**Exam:** A mid-term exam will occur on the day specified on the lecture schedule. Material covered will include lecture, outside readings, group work, and textbook readings.

**Final exam:** Your final will be comprehensive over all course material and will include lecture material as well as readings and other outside assignments. All students must take the final.

**NOTE:** The last day to withdraw from this class with a "W" grade is February 27, 5pm. After that date only letter grades or an "I" grade will be given. An Incomplete (I) grade will be given only as designated by the university catalog.

**Grading:** Grades will be calculated as weighted means. Grading scale follows: A = 94 and above, A- = 90-93, B+ = 87-89, B = 84-86, B- = 80-83, etc.

**An invitation:** Please feel welcome to come to me for help or for discussions when you wish. It is my goal that each of you learn as much as possible this semester...I am most willing to help in the learning process in any way necessary.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES

**Absenteeism:** You will not be graded on attendance at class except as indicated on your syllabus. However, you are responsible for all material covered in class; learning the material will be easier if you regularly attend class, participate, and take careful notes. It is NOT the responsibility of the instructor to redeliver missed lecture or laboratory material.

**Tardiness:** Habitual tardiness is disruptive to class time; such behavior will result in dismissal from the class or lockouts (i.e. you will not be allowed to enter the classroom).

**Cheating:** Cheating will be dealt with according to the GVSU Student Code. In particular, I will assign an F to any project, paper, or test involved in cheating. If you are copying or being copied from, you will be subject to the above penalty.

Prerequisites: If you do not have the necessary pre-requisites, you must drop this class by Friday of the first week. If you do not, you will be dropped at the beginning of week two and will lose tuition and receive late fees if you add another class.

Questions or comments during lecture: Please feel free and welcome to ask questions or make comments at any time before, during, or after lecture.

Exams and due dates: There will be no make-up exams, papers, or projects in this class. All assigned work is due at the beginning of class time on the due date. If you must miss an exam or other work, make arrangements BEFORE the work is missed. Work with due dates will have the grade lowered one full grade for each calendar day the work is late.

Extra credit: All work counting toward a grade in this class is listed on your course syllabus. There will be no "extra credit" for ANY reason.

University policies: University-specified add and drop dates will be strictly abided. No incompletes will be given except for emergencies. Final exams will be given ONLY at the regular time, as scheduled by the University; check your exam time now and withdraw from this course if you cannot be present at the scheduled time.

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of learning or physical disabilities, please contact the Disabilities Support Services (DSS) at 895-2490, 200 STU.

General: If you are having problems in this class, please come in to see me as soon as possible. The earlier you come in, the easier it is to help and be helped. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, talk to me before class, send email, or call for an appointment.

Date	Topic	Preparatory
Readings/Assignments Due		
T Jan. 6	Introduction & Class Organization "Price of Lives"--Modeling peer evaluation of writing Short paper #1--brainstorm first draft.	R: How Much are Human Lives and Health Worth? A: Short Paper #1
R	Theories of moral reasoning	
T Jan. 13	Movie: Factory Trawlers Tragedy of the Commons discussion	R: Sources 2.4; Tragedy of the Commons <b>Due: Short Paper #1 First Draft</b>
R	Share peer evaluations for short paper #1 Overview of Environmental Problems <b>I=PAT</b>	R: Easter Island <b>Due: Peer evaluations Short Paper #1</b>
T Jan. 20	Movie: Earth and the American Dream	
R	Discussion: Environment versus Economy Climate change: A poster child	R: Sources 2.5; The Limits to Growth <b>Due: Final Short Paper #1 w/ peer eval.</b>
T Jan. 27	G1: Issue 12: Do Human Activities.... G2: Sources 6.1: Soft Energy Paths...	
R	Lecture: Climate change in Michigan	A: Short Paper #2
T Feb. 3	G3: Issue 15: Should the US ..Nuclear Waste.. G4: Sources 6.2: Reinventing the energy sys..	R: Dealing with Change
R	G5: Issue 4: Should Env Policy...Env Racism.. G6: Sources 7.3: Rethinking Rain Forests....	<b>Due: Short Paper #2 first draft</b>
T Feb. 10	Share peer evaluations for short paper #2 G1: Sources 16.4: Women's Indigenous Know...	<b>Due: Peer evaluations Short Paper #2</b>
R	Movie: ZPG G2: Sources 11.1: Global Politics of Pop... G3: Issue 16: Is limiting Human Pop Growth..	
T Feb. 17	Movie: The Day of Six Billion G4: Sources 11.2: The Ultimate Resource	<b>Due: Final Short paper #2 w/ peer eval.</b>
R	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
T Feb. 24	Movie: Power of Water-Love Canal Lecture material--Chemical poll. & hormone mimics	
R	Lecture material--Chemical poll. & hormone mimics G5: Sources 8.3: Threats to World's Water	
Mar. 1-5	<b>Spring Break</b>	
T Mar. 9	Class discussion: Issue 6: Environmental Case Overstated? G6: Issue 5: Precautionary Principle Sound B..	<b>Due: First Draft Term Paper</b>
R	G1: Issue 3: Env. Regulations too Restrictive? G2: Issue 2: Is Biodiversity Overprotected? How to tell "Wise-use, Bad-science"	R: Dynamic Diversity
T Mar. 16	Movie: The Wilderness Idea Intra-group peer evaluation of term paper	<b>Due: Peer evaluations of Term Paper</b>
R	Group discussion: Issue 9: Genetic Engineering (Yes side only) G3: Sources 12.1: Cultures & Agriculture G4: Sources 12.2: Food First-Beyond the Myth..	
T Mar. 23	Between-group peer evaluations of term papers G5: Issue 17: Will Pollution Rights Trading.... G6: Issue 19: Is Sustainable Development Compat..	<b>Due: Peer evaluations of "Group Pair" Term Papers</b>
R	Positive trends in West Michigan	

T Mar. 30	Symposium	<b>Due: Term paper</b>
R	Symposium	
T Apr. 6	Symposium	
R	Symposium	
T Apr. 13	Personal action--the science; Corporate Action; Return of all papers	
R	Movie: The Man Who Planted Trees	
M Apr. 19	<b>Final Exam 12-1:50pm</b>	