

POSSIBLE PAPER TOPICS ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS 2018

NOTE: This is an illustrative list of topics that is not exhaustive. Its purpose is to get you thinking about possibilities. You are free to choose one of these topics (with refinements) or to develop a completely new topic. Some suggested topics address an issue from the standpoint of professional environmental ethics. Others involve analyzing a particular case presenting environmental ethical problems. (Cases can be drawn from real or imagined situations.)

Students may consult with me about potential topics and readings. (Students desiring to fulfill the AWR requirement through the seminar must consult with me about a topic and obtain permission.) **An abstract of all seminar paper topics will be due on Jan. 30, 2018.**

This will be an ethics paper and not a research paper or survey of someone else's work. It is a reflective paper in which you will analyze, in some depth, a particular moral issue. Generally, your papers should present careful arguments in support of a thesis and answer anticipated objections to those arguments. You need to cite all references from which you draw your ideas. Topics should be sufficiently narrow to facilitate close and creative critical analysis. Our classroom work will generate frameworks for analyzing ethical cases of various types.

- (1) Should an environmental professional follow her/his moral beliefs or "conscience" when the professional strongly disagrees with some course of action?
- (2) Ethical analysis of a particular environmental problem (Case Study Analyzing the ethics of some factual situation in the news or from your experience, e.g., some aspect of Gulf Oil Spill, particular coastal or inland wind turbine facility, governmental agency action/position, North Dakota sacred land and water rights and pipeline, etc.)
- (3) Ethical analysis of a legal case or statute covering environmental issues
- (4) Critique/Application of environmental philosopher's (e.g., Aldo Leopold) approach to a particular environmental issue
- (5) Ethical bases for direct representation of environmental entities (animal, land, ecosystem, plant life) in decisions on environmental policy/law
- (6) Imaginary dialogue between environmental ethicists on particular environmental issue
- (7) Bases of corporate ethical responsibility for preventing environmental harm
- (8) Bases of corporate ethical responsibility internationally
- (9) Ethical implications of deep ecology as applied to developing countries

- (10) Environmental paternalism and global environmental solutions
- (11) Eco-feminist approach to a particular environmental case/issue
- (12) Cultural relativism and the global environment
- (13) Environmental justice between regions in allocating scarce resources (e.g., water)
- (14) Can eco-sabotage be justified?
- (15) Citizen's obligation to prevent environmental harm/promote environmental benefit
- (16) Is the animal rights/welfare movement ethically consistent with environmentalism?
- (17) How should an environmental lawyer counsel a client on environmental compliance?
- (18) Should a politician represent her or his own environmental positions or those of electorate?
- (19) Is environmental public "values education" justified and, if so, what should it involve?
- (20) Ethical justification/critique of vegetarianism
- (21) Duties of reparation to redress human-generated harms to species/environment
- (22) Ethics of residential building in environmentally fragile areas (fragile coastlines, fire-prone, etc.)
- (23) Are pollution trade-offs, or other trade-off programs (e.g., wetland, emissions), ethically justified?
- (24) Relationship between environmental and cultural harm of particular indigenous people
- (25) Recreational environmental ethics for rock climbers/hikers/hunters, etc.
- (26) Ethics of entertainment/farm/research uses of animals
- (27) Ethical aspect of alternative energy source (e.g., solar, wood, biomass)
- (28) Ethical analysis of some aspect of climate change mitigation
- (29) Ethics of some particular restoration project

- (30) Ethical ecosystem management of fire
- (31) Climate refugees and international responsibilities
- (32) Commercial whaling and cultural values
- (33) Large scale solar production facilities and environmental impacts
- (34) Ridgeline wind power facilities and environmental impacts
- (35) Relinquishing efforts to recover species endangered or threatened based on unlikely efficacy (e.g., red wolves)
- (34) Ethics of terraforming (e.g., making Mars suitable for human inhabitation)
- (35) Ethics of Enhancement of Survival hunting permits (allowing killing of game, e.g., lions, on wildlife ranches designed to promote conservation purposes)
- (36) Local infrastructure development to minimize effects of climate change
- (37) Rivers or Forests as legal persons
- (38) Environmental implications of various treatments of the dead (burial (at land, sea), cremation, etc.)
- (39) Ethics of culling animals affecting endangered species
- (40) Ethics of contraception as method of animal management (e.g., wild horses)
- (41) Rights of Ecological Entities (rivers, mountains, etc.)