

## **POSSIBLE PAPER TOPICS ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS 2022**

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 (set of facts) presenting environmental ethical problems. (Cases can be drawn from real or imagined situations.) Still others involve critical analysis of an environmental ethics approach.

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. Please come prepared with a formulated topic in mind.) **A written Proposal of your seminar paper topic will be due on Feb. 15, 2022** (more information to follow).

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 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. Of course, you should both quote and cite precise language of an author. 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. You may use classroom resources in your paper or rely entirely on outside research. You should do some outside research even if you rely on class materials in part.

- (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 an oil spill or other pollution, particular coastal or inland wind turbine facility, governmental agency action/position, sacred land and water rights and pipeline or other development)
- (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) Corporate ethical responsibility of U.S. corporations with international operations in countries with weaker environmental laws
- (9) Ethical implications of deep ecology as applied to developing countries
- (10) Environmental paternalism and global environmental solutions (e.g., climate change)
- (11) Eco-feminist approach to a particular environmental case/issue
- (12) Cultural relativism and global environmental issues
- (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 personal 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 (e.g., addressing low sea level; climate engineering of rainfall, temperature, etc.)
- (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 international or domestic wildlife ranches designed to promote conservation)
- (36) Local infrastructure development to minimize effects of climate change, undertaken because of central government inaction
- (37) Rivers or Forests as ecological legal persons with rights
- (38) Environmental implications of various treatments of the dead (burial on land, sea), cremation, “natural” burials, etc.)
- (39) Ethics of culling animals negatively affecting endangered species
- (40) Ethics of contraception as method of animal management (e.g., wild horses)
- (41) Human co-existence with large carnivores (bears, wolves, etc.)
- (42) Principles for designing an outer space ethic
- (43) Mining celestial bodies in space
- (44) Ethics of ocean fish farming

- (45) Ethical standing of species apart from their individual members?
- (46) Ethics of cloning to recreate extinct beings (e.g., Woolly Mammoth)
- (47) Developing moral motivations to address climate change or other environmental issue
- (48) Removing wolves from Endangered Species listing
- (49) Relocating animals vulnerable to changes in temperature
- (50) Buddhist (Islamic/Christian/ Jewish, etc.) approach to particular environmental issue