

OXFORD COLLEGE
INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Philosophy 115 WS
Fall 2004
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This course will be an introduction to the philosophy of ethics. We will examine in some detail the thought of four extremely influential thinkers – Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and Nietzsche – and consider how their ethical theories might provide the occasion for reflecting on the ethical status of the environment. The four philosophers present very different systems of ethical thought and with respect to these systems we will address the broad issues of what morality means, what constitutes a moral or ethical existence and the importance of human happiness. Additionally, we will spend a significant portion of our time discussing the ethical implications of the human relationship to the environment both globally and locally.

Texts:

Arne Naess, “Deep Ecology,” introductory material from Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*

Mill, *Utilitarianism*

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*

Elliot, *Environmental Ethics*

Requirements:

- 1) Brief commentary (approximately 350 words) due every Tuesday. These commentaries will attempt to apply the ideas of the philosophers to concrete ethical matters: 15% total
- 2) Three short essays of 4-5 pages each: 15% each.
- 3) Two exams: mid-term and final at 15 % each.
- 4) Class participation is essential and **will** figure into the final grade: 10%.

There will be two “field days” during which we will conduct class outside with the help of a guide from the Biology Department, i.e. Dr. Eloise Carter or her well qualified representative. The first will be a trip to the Ox House in conjunction with Aristotle. The second will be a visit to selected sites on our campus in conjunction with Mill. The dates are not yet certain.