The Rights of Nature?

Land and Landscape explores foundation concepts in planning and design theory and practice. The intent of this seminar class is to add breadth and depth to the understanding of such ideas as land, landscape, nature, environment, place, value, experience and art through reading and discussion. The underlying premise is that the way people possess such complex ideas significantly influences their conception of landscape architecture, their contributions to environmental planning and design, and the many decisions over the course of a lifetime they will make as environmental citizens.

This year the conceptual focus of the class is on the meaning and evolution of environmental ethics. There are two required texts.


These texts are supplemented by a collection of related books on reserve in the AAA library and a class reader of selected articles from the literature of the field.

We’ll ask and discuss such questions as:

What are ethics? An ethic? Moral expansionism? A land ethic?

Does nature have intrinsic worth? (& what does that mean?)

Does nature have rights? Do animals? insects? viruses? rocks?

If nature has rights, when are human actions unjust? (Who’s more important here?)

What is justice? environmental justice?

Is it better to suffer an injustice than to do an injustice to an other?

Is a rights approach to environmental ethics the best approach? What are its benefits, drawbacks?
LAND AND LANDSCAPE
READING

LA 4/543  •  Winter 2001

Jerome Diethelm, Professor
# Land and Landscape  LA 4/543 - Winter 2001  
• Jerome Diethelm, Professor

## Environmental Ethics:  
“The Rights of Nature”

# Class Schedule

## Reading & Class Assignments

## Week 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #1</th>
<th>Tues. Jan. 9:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intro. to L&amp;L: course format; shared mode of operation; assignments; class tone; the texts; “the reader”; course concepts and questions; your questions and aspirations.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Class #2</th>
<th>Thurs. Jan. 11:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read 1. “Earth Ethics: A Challenge to Liberal Education” Holmes Rolston III (reader)</strong></td>
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## Week 2

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<tr>
<th>Class #3</th>
<th>Tues. Jan. 16:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read 1. “Prologue: Ethical Extension and Radical Environmentalism,” (pp. 3-12, Nash) Read 1. “From Natural Rights to the Rights of Nature,” (Chapter 1, Nash); (text)</strong></td>
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<th>Class #4</th>
<th>Thurs. Jan. 18:</th>
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Week 3

Class # 5  Tues. Jan. 23:

Class # 6  Thurs. Jan. 25:
Read: 1. “Ecology Widens the Circle,” (Chapter 3, Nash); (text)

Week 4

Class # 7  Tues. Jan. 30:
Read: 1. “Intro.: The River of the Mother of God and other essays;” “A Biotic View of Land;” “What is a Weed?” Aldo Leopold; (reader)
Read: 2. “Surface Waters and Underground Seas,” “Realms of the Soil,” and “Green Earth's Mantle,” Rachel Carson (reader)

Class # 8  Thurs. Feb. 1:
Read: 1. “The Land Ethic,” Aldo Leopold;
Read: 2. “Thinking Like a Mountain,” Aldo Leopold (reader)

Week 5

Class # 9  Tues. Feb. 6:
Read: 1. “Chapter 9: The Land Ethic,” Joseph R. Des Jardins; (text)
Read: 2. Other responses to the Land Ethic such as J. Baird Callicott's, In Defense of the Land Ethic (on reserve)

MID-TERM Bring one or two slides to discuss.

Class #10  Thurs. Feb. 8:
Guest: Joern Langhorst Holms Rolston III (reader)
### Week 6

**Class #11**  
**Tues. Feb. 13:**  
Read: 1. “Ethical Issues In Agriculture,” William Aiken in *Earthbound* (reader)

**Class #12**  
**Thurs. Feb. 15:**  
Read: 1. “The Greening of Religion,” (Chapter 4, Nash); (text)  
Read: 2. “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” Lynn White, Jr. (reader)

### Week 7

**Class #13**  
**Tues. Feb. 20:**  
Read: 1. “The Greening of Philosophy,” (Chapter 5, Nash);  
Read: 2. (Selections from the reserve shelf)

**Class #14**  
**Thurs. Feb. 22:**  
Read: 1. “Chapter 3: The Dominant Modern Worldview and its Critics,” Bill Devall & George Sessions in *Deep Ecology*  
Read: 2. “Chapter 4: the Reformist Response,” Bill Devall & George Sessions in *Deep Ecology*  
Read: 3. “Chapter 5: Deep Ecology,” Bill Devall & George Sessions (reader)

### Week 8

**Class #15**  
**Tues. Feb. 27:**  
“Self-Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World,” Arne Naess (reader)  
Read: 2. “Liberating Nature,” (Chapter 6, Nash) (text)  
Read: 3. “Western Process Metaphysics (Heraclitus, Whitehead and Spinoza),” George Sessions (reader)

**Class #16**  
**Thurs. Feb. 29:**  
Read: 2. “Feminism and Ecology,” Carolyn Merchant;  
Week 9

Class #17  Tues. Mar. 6:  
Read 1.: “Ecology, Place and the Awakening of Compassion,” Gary Snyder

Read 2.: “Ritual is Essential,” Dolores LaChapell (reader)

Class #18  Thurs. Mar. 8:  
Shared Summary Session:  
1-2 paragraphs each. Short personal statements that reflect on the reading and the class.

Week 10

Review Week in Landscape Architecture and Architecture: No class.

Time to research and write class papers.

Term Assignments

1. **Accumulating Notebook**: Two written paragraphs (min. for each class). Appreciation, comments and/or questions about the day’s reading for each class as preparation for discussion. Class Participation = 50% (Turn in a copy each Thursday. Keep your original)

2. *(grads only)* Shared responsibility for classes. 1 grad assistant required for each class session (Class #2-#17) Scheduled participation at first session.

   Prepare questions for discussion; draw insights from the reading and personal experience; bring background and related materials for information and class discussion = 25%

3. Class discussion (all) = 25%

4. A 6 page summary paper reflecting on the accumulated materials, discussions from the class and other related readings that centers on the question: Does nature have rights? 25%

   (Due: Wed. Mar. 21, @ 9:00am. Put in alcove across from 216 La.) Returned on Friday Mar. 23, 01 in alcove or department boxes.
from Introducing Ethics by Dave Robinson and Chris Garratt
Usually it's a little more difficult to pinpoint when one era ends and another begins...