

Phil 4340-01

CRN #29289

Thurs., 2:40-5:10 p.m.

Instructor: Jeff Lockwood

3 credit hours

Issues in Environmental Ethics

Will focus on wilderness. A new anthology has been published on this subject, *The Wilderness Debate Rages on: Continuing the Great New Wilderness Debate* (2008) which promises that to:

...reinvigorate that conversation and usher in a second decade of debate [by gathering] both critiques and defenses of the idea of wilderness from a wide variety of perspectives and voices. *The Wilderness Debate Rages On* includes the best work done on the concept of wilderness over the past decade, underappreciated essays from the early twentieth century that offer an alternative vision of the concept and importance of wilderness, and writings meant to clarify or rethink the concept of wilderness. Narrative writers such as Wendell Berry, Scott Russell Sanders, Marilynne Robinson, Kathleen Dean Moore, and Lynn Laitala are also given a voice in order to show how the wilderness debate is expanding outside the academy.

In the course, we will explore two philosophical lines of inquiry—the ontology and axiology of wilderness. In other words, we will ask, “What is wilderness” and “Why is wilderness valuable?” Neither question is simple to answer, and through a series of assignments which grow on one another, students will build their cases and arguments for what constitutes wilderness (e.g., is it a discrete or continuous property; can it be restored or does it exist only in a preserved state; how much anthropogenic change negates the quality of wilderness; does it exist anywhere on the planet today; is there a way for humans to live within wilderness?) and why it merits our concern (e.g., does it have utilitarian value; can there be zero-access wilderness; does its value lie in aesthetics; are ecosystem services a reason to value wilderness; does it possess intrinsic value?).

An introductory course in philosophy, a course in environmental or natural resource ethics, or the equivalent in reading prior to the course will be necessary to participate effectively in discussions and to craft acceptable papers. Students in philosophy, history, political science, (pre)-law, geography, wildlife/fisheries management, ecology, zoology, botany, range ecology and watershed management, and ENR will find the readings, discussions, and papers in this course to be valuable in their studies.