

Practical Ethics for Resource Managers FOR: 421

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Office Hours: Available M-F by video conference or on ESF's Newcomb campus

Office Location: Newcomb Campus/Huntington Wildlife Forest

Conservation [...] believes in prudence and foresight instead of reckless blindness; it holds that resources now public property should not become the basis for oppressive private monopoly; and it demands the complete and orderly development of all our resources for the benefit of all the people, instead of the partial exploitation of them for the benefit of a few. – G. Pinchot, 1909

There are two ways to apply conservation to land. One is to superimpose some particular practice upon the pre-existing system of land-use, without regard to how it fits or what it does to or for other interests involved. The other is to reorganize and gear up the farming, forestry, game cropping, erosion control, scenery, or whatever values may be involved so that they collectively comprise a harmonious balanced system of land-use. – A. Leopold, 1935

Course Description

This course meets online and for one weekend in residence (Newcomb Campus/Huntington Wildlife Forest) providing an introduction to the history and function of ethics and rhetoric in the context of forestry and related fields. Emphasis is on establishing an ethically sound position, aligning competing values and priorities among interested parties and effectively communicating management decisions.

Through the successful completion of all prior coursework, students should understand the economic, social, political and ecological aspects of forestry. This course will take that knowledge further to teach the ethical and rhetorical skills necessary to professionally navigate and balance these often-competing domains, culminating in the group design and presentation of a decision plan in consultation with the instructor and a resource professional.

The practical application and situational analysis aspects of this course are designed for preparation in resource management careers. This course is relevant for students in any major and is recommended for those who want to improve critical thinking, public speaking, problem solving and collaboration skills; importantly it also provides a substantive introduction to the thought and writing of Gifford Pinchot and Aldo Leopold, two of America's first foresters. Enrollment preference will be given to ESF's FRM seniors for whom a passing grade is required for graduation.

Learning Outcomes

Abstract moral or ethical theory becomes practical in the act of working philosophical concepts

into dynamic, real-world situations and circumstances. Practical ethics attempts to reconcile the functional limits of right-doing with a reality where what one *should* do doesn't map neatly onto what one *can* do or what one can *easily* do.

This style of ethics is particularly useful in environmental fields like resource management where benefit and harm coexist, leaving the call and the consequence in the hands of professionals. An introduction to practical ethics teaches how to hold personal values, professional obligations and responsible stewardship together when we are up against limits.

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to enter the profession with a basic understanding of 1) the skills necessary to identify and address an ethically-weighted situation 2) collaborative problem solving and decision making and 3) the rhetorical competence to explain and defend their plans and proposals to stakeholders. Specifically, students will be prepared to apply the following method to resolve a complex management situation.

- ✓ Analyze a situation to identify the ethical tensions and competing stakeholder priorities that complicate its neat resolution.
- ✓ Based on knowledge and understanding of a range of ethical/philosophical approaches, identify those most likely to be effective in addressing the situation.
- ✓ Synthesize these ethical and rhetorical approaches taking the history of forest and natural resources management into account in order to formulate a correct path forward.
- ✓ Apply a composition of ethical approaches in order to determine/test their suitability and revise as needed.
- ✓ Using rhetorical techniques, communicate your decision, evaluate the resolution proposed and revise as needed based on how the positions of constituents, your interpretation of the situation and or the situation itself changes over time.

After completing this course, students should be able to apply each ethical method to discussions concerning

- ✓ Local/regional perspectives on land use conflicts and the philosophical history of these ideas including:
 - What ethics means and how it has been understood throughout western philosophy and how it has been integrated into the writing of Gifford Pinchot and Aldo Leopold particularly.
 - How changing norms of ethics and fairness have been positioned over time to reinforce, modify, challenge and evaluate environmental issues.
 - Who or what is and ought to be considered in any complex situation.
- ✓ The nature and agency of ethics, value theory, morality and responsibility and the ways that these elements influence ongoing discussions of land-use, particularly:
 - How issues of culture and environment are played out in the context of land management.
 - How certain philosophical ideas underlie and inform contemporary practices in

resource management.

Instructional methods used to meet the course outcomes

Asynchronous Learning

- Recorded discussions with NRM professionals will provide both a basic understanding of ethical/philosophical methods and how these approaches play out in a specific NRM situation
 - Featuring professionals from across resource management fields including wildlife, forestry, public and private land easement managers, Office of Public Protection personnel (Forest Rangers and Encon Officers), industry foresters including those at TIMO's, paper companies and mills. Topics will cover the seven philosophical approaches to practical ethics and decision making learned throughout class, in the context of resource management. Our aim is to understand how these abstract concepts become useful tools in management contexts. Professional managers will play a key role in bringing the theory into focus by describing how they have employed each method to resolve a particular conflict in the field. Students will respond to comprehension questions immediately following each recorded discussion.
- Required reading, writing and discussion
 - Weeks 1-8: Students will write in response to all textbook chapter prompts following case studies and complete all written exercises to be shared and discussed during class.
 - Weeks 9-14: Students will write one, 250-word response to each assigned reading from Leopold and Pinchot to be shared and discussed during class.

Synchronous Learning/Class discussion via video conferencing

- Weekly class discussions will review unit topics, readings, students will share their written work, discuss asynchronous assignments/lectures.
- Periodic video conferencing with Assistant Forest Properties Manager Mike Federice in weeks 9-14 including progress reports.
- Forest field tour and orientation towards the final project will take place during a required two-day field trip to HWF in week-eight of the term.

Learning Objectives and Assessment

- Demonstrate *critical thinking skills* through oral and written responses to assigned readings. Student responses will show a working knowledge of the topics addressed by the author, including the nuance and broader implications of the text. Students will interpret the author's claims and offer a thoughtful and thorough opinion of the reading. Student knowledge and proficiency will be assessed based on 1) the successful completion of one written response to each of the assigned readings along with competent oral and written responses to classmates 2) final small group written report and presentation.

- Demonstrate *written communication skills* through the completion of the assignments (detailed above) particularly the ability to bring learned concepts into a final presentation. Student proficiency in this area will be evaluated based largely on a successful final presentation that shows comprehension and application of the topics addressed in class. Students will also be required to complete the written section of each textbook chapter demonstrating an ability to take a situation from the field through each ethical framework.
- Demonstrate *verbal communication skills* by participating in class conversations to show that attention has been paid to the readings/lectures. Additionally, the final project will require each student to verbally communicate classroom learning to the instructor, assigned natural resource professional and their peers. Students must successfully demonstrate a consistent willingness and ability to communicate thoughtfully with the instructor and classmates, to be actively involved in a way that respects differences of opinion and shows engagement with the material.
- Demonstrate *interdisciplinary literacy* by becoming involved in the complexities of the history and contemporary landscape of western philosophy and ethics especially how these concepts are applied to real-world situations. Each unit will include required readings related to the unit topic from the history of American forestry and the environment. This will illustrate how theories pull through into modern environmental debates and can be used to work through practical ethical situations that students will encounter in resource management fields.

Student Expectations and Assignments

Course Textbook to Purchase (hard-copy strongly recommended, e-book available)

- Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers, by Marianne Patinelli-Dubay, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023.

Required Reading

- Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018.
- Aristotle: Rhetoric, edited by C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett Publishing, 2018.
- Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017.

Grading and student evaluation will be based on

- Satisfactory completion of weekly assignments including on-time submission and correct formatting of written responses to assigned readings, chapter assignments and comprehension questions following recorded lectures. (25%)
- Full participation in the collaborative final project including meeting deadlines, working with peers as assigned to develop a Decision Plan, project/presentation and revision (co-evaluation by the instructor and NRM professional). (25%)

- Class participation including productive involvement in ***all*** class discussion, evidence of engagement with and comprehension of theories and texts. This is a small discussion- based course and attendance at each class meeting is important. Students must notify the instructor in advance of an absence at which time a written assignment will be given. If the written assignment is not submitted as instructed, the absence will result in the loss of one letter grade. (25%)
- ***Full participation in the field trip to HWF is required. Students who cannot attend must defer enrollment in this class until the following semester.*** Housing and meals will be provided, the cost of the weekend is \$130/student due following the trip. Travel and coordination details will be handled in the days prior to departure, students should pay attention to announcements to be sure they understand expectations. (25%)

Student Expectations and Assignments

- ***Weeks/textbook chapters 1-8*** will include recorded lectures and class discussions to review the chapter concepts and student's written responses to exercises. Midterm field trip to HWF and completion of midterm. Throughout weeks 1-8, we will review key historical and contemporary approaches to practical ethics as they relate to forestry, the history of forestry and related fields. We will consider the evolution, implications and limitations of each philosophical perspective and the tensions that exist between differing ethical methods in practice. Our aim is to examine how these abstract concepts become useful tools in the context of Resource Management.
- ***Weeks 9-13*** will focus on the writing of Gifford Pinchot and Aldo Leopold. In these close readings we will be looking for implicit or natural reliance on the frameworks and considerations learned and discussed in weeks 1-8.
- ***Week 14/textbook chapter 9*** will introduce rhetorical style and strategy alongside written exercises.
- ***Week 15*** is time set aside for final report/presentation prep, presentations to be scheduled during finals week. The successful final project will demonstrate an understanding of the reality and complexity associated with land management decisions as students learn to connect theoretical ethics with real-world situations through case studies. Groups will reach consensus, establish a plan (written report) and present their decision (oral presentation) to the class during finals week via live video conferencing. At this time, groups will open their resolution, methods etc. up for further discussion and possible revision. Final and revised decision plans will be submitted by each group for a final grade.

UNIT/WEEK 1.

The Philosophical History Contemporary Relevance and Resource Management Applications of the Common Good. Common good or community ethics asks whether a particular choice/behavior serves the common welfare of the community. In the context of resource management, the once-simple notion of “community” becomes complicated, and its definition is brought into question.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Recorded lecture/conversation will be followed by comprehension questions to be completed within a designated time frame.
 - Respond in writing to required readings, completing the written exercise in each textbook unit as assigned.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review lecture material, written assignments and required readings.

Reading

- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. *Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers*, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 1.

UNIT/WEEK 2.

The Philosophical History Contemporary Relevance and Resource Management Applications of Practical Wisdom. Moving from an emphasis on the group to the individual, practical wisdom, the correct orientation of and application of one’s sense of virtue compels us to evaluate whether certain choices and behaviors do justice to our best selves. Considerations here include whether a behavior is consistent with “right-focused desire” or desire for the highest good through just, courageous and prudent action. Here we begin to wrestle with the complexity and necessity of holding personal virtue together with the business of forestry.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Recorded lecture/conversation will be followed by comprehension questions to be completed within a designated time frame.
 - Respond in writing to required readings, completing the written exercise in each textbook unit as assigned.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review lecture material, written assignments and required readings.

Reading

- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. *Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers*, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 2.

UNIT/WEEK 3.

The Philosophical History Contemporary Relevance and Resource Management Applications of Pre-Modern Ethics. A natural outgrowth and subtle shift out of virtue as applied ethics, this approach asks whether the behavior is consistent with right-focused desire or desire for the highest (perhaps interpreted differently from the ‘greatest’) good. It imagines that righteous action prioritizes individual happiness through virtue (justice, courage, temperance, prudence) and takes motivations into account in determining the correctness of one’s position.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Recorded lecture/conversation will be followed by comprehension questions to be completed within a designated time frame.
 - Respond in writing to required readings, completing the written exercise in each textbook unit as assigned.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review lecture material, written assignments and required readings.

Reading

- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. *Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers*, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 3.

UNIT/WEEK 4.

The Philosophical History Contemporary Relevance and Resource Management Applications of Rights Ethics. In light of the prior approaches, what can we make of Right Ethics in the contemporary landscape which acknowledges the full range of human and non-human values and where actions are wrong to the extent that they commit harm or lead to a destabilized system. Assuming a comprehensive idea of what and whom we value, how might we take rights into our ethical accounting?

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Recorded lecture/conversation will be followed by comprehension questions to be completed within a designated time frame.
 - Respond in writing to required readings, completing the written exercise in each textbook unit as assigned.
- Synchronous

- Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review lecture material, written assignments and required readings.

Reading

- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. *Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers*, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 4.

UNIT/WEEK 5.

The Philosophical History Contemporary Relevance and Resource Management Applications of the Greatest Good. An ethic that strives to achieve the greatest good over time is familiar to resource management professionals. This approach requires that we identify and preserve wellbeing across ecological communities or that we acknowledge that the “greatest good and the least harm” will often leave certain human and non-human communities out of the calculation of benefit. We must also consider what constitutes harm or good and benefit and decide over what time horizon we should measure.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Recorded lecture/conversation will be followed by comprehension questions to be completed within a designated time frame.
 - Respond in writing to required readings, completing the written exercise in each textbook unit as assigned.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review lecture material, written assignments and required readings.

Reading

- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. *Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers*, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 5.

UNIT/WEEK 6.

The Philosophical History Contemporary Relevance and Resource Management Applications of Rational Ethics. This approach asks first whether the action is permitted according to the industry rules and best management practices. From there we consider how to implement the solution as fairly as possible taking into account whether it shows favoritism and/or discrimination to parties involved. We will set circumstances aside in an attempt to reconcile a management issue through this lens alone.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous

- Recorded lecture/conversation will be followed by comprehension questions to be completed within a designated time frame.
- Respond in writing to required readings, completing the written exercise in each textbook unit as assigned.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review lecture material, written assignments and required readings.

Reading

- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. *Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers*, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 6.

UNIT/WEEK 7.

The Philosophical History Contemporary Relevance and Resource Management Applications of Rational Approach. As a critical response to Justice and Fairness ethics, this approach brings circumstances and relationships back into our ethical calculation along with the relational and power dynamics at play among constituencies.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Recorded lecture/conversation will be followed by comprehension questions to be completed within a designated time frame.
 - Respond in writing to required readings, completing the written exercise in each textbook unit as assigned.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review lecture material, written assignments and required readings.

Reading

- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. *Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers*, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 7.

UNIT/WEEK 8.

Midterm project and field trip to the Huntington Wildlife Forest. Students will begin to work with Mr. Federice (or other assigned NRM professional) on their final project/presentation. Students will integrate the content and ethical approaches learned thus far throughout the semester with a situation provided by Mr. Federice in a written report aiming to resolve a real-world situation. Mr. Federice will help students to understand the reality and complexity associated with land management decisions as they draw up a comprehensive decision plan in

consultation. Groups will reach consensus and present their decision to the class via Zoom during finals week.

Formats & Assignments

- Synchronous
 - Students will work with Mr. Federice who will provide the situational groundwork for the final group project. Meetings will take place via video conference, full attendance and participation is required.
 - Group-members will begin a proposal outline on a shared platform; progress will be monitored with input from all group-members. Timeline for completion of this outline will be provided.
 - HWF research and harvest tour.

Reading

- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. *Practical Ethics: A Field Guide for Resource Managers*, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 8.

UNIT/WEEK 9.

Community and utility in Leopold and Pinchot.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Respond in writing to required readings.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review the assigned readings and concepts.
 - Group-members will continue work on a proposal outline on a shared platform, progress will be monitored by the instructor with input from all group-members. Timeline for completion of this outline will be provided.

Reading

- Leopold, Aldo. "Wilderness as a Form of Land Use." *Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values*, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 186.
- Pinchot, Gifford. "A Foundation for Permanent Peace." *Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings*, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 109.
- Pinchot, Gifford. "A Forest Devastation Warning." *Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings*, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 104.
- Pinchot, Gifford. "The Blazed Trail of Forest Depletion." *Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings*, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 135.

UNIT/WEEK 10.

Virtue and moderation in Leopold and Pinchot.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Respond in writing to required readings.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review the assigned readings and concepts.
 - Group-members will meet again with Mr. Federice via video conference to share their proposal and revise as recommended.

Reading

- Leopold, Aldo. “Wilderness as a Form of Land Use.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 201.
- Leopold, Aldo. “Conservation Economics.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 90.
- Pinchot, Gifford. “Declaration of Principles: North American Conservation Conference.” Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 83.
- Pinchot, Gifford. “Speech to the Denver Public Lands Convention.” Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 51.

UNIT/WEEK 11.

Rights and the common good in Leopold and Pinchot.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Respond in writing to required readings.
- Synchronous
 - Weekly class discussions via video conferencing will review the assigned readings and concepts.
 - Group-members will meet via video conference to advance their final project and continue to meet project deadlines TBA.

Reading

- Leopold, Aldo. “Wilderness as a Form of Land Use.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt

- Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 131.
- Leopold, Aldo. “Conservation Economics.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 253.
 - Leopold, Aldo. “A Biotic View of the Land.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 131.
 - Pinchot, Gifford. “The Forests of Ne-Ha-Sa-Ne Park in Northern New York.” Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 29.

UNIT/WEEK 12.

Objective care in Leopold and Pinchot

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Respond in writing to required readings.
- Synchronous
 - Class discussions via video conferencing will review the assigned readings and concepts.

Reading

- Leopold, Aldo. “Forestry and Game Conservation.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 17.
- Leopold, Aldo. “The Ecological Conscience.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 267.
- Pinchot, Gifford. “National or State Control of Forest Devastation.” Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 63.
- Pinchot, Gifford. “A Letter to Foresters.” Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 67.

UNIT/WEEK 13.

The moral concern in Leopold and Pinchot.

Formats & Assignments

- Asynchronous
 - Respond in writing to required readings.
- Synchronous

- Class discussions via video conferencing will review the assigned readings and concepts.

Reading

- Leopold, Aldo. “Some Fundamentals of Conservation in the Southwest.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 171.
- Leopold, Aldo. “The Conservation Ethic.” Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values, edited by Jed Meunier and Curt Meine, Society of American Foresters Press, 2018, pp. 75.
- Pinchot, Gifford. “The Proposed Eastern Forest Reserves.” Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 43.
- Pinchot, Gifford. “The ABC of Conservation.” Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings, edited by Char Miller, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017, pp. 54.

UNIT/WEEK 14.

Introduction to the basic elements of rhetorical technique including how to identify them and how to use them effectively in the final presentation. This introduction will help students transition from identifying where the tensions lie within a situation (ethics), to deciding how to proceed and persuade others to follow (rhetoric). Students will decide how to integrate the elements of rhetorical persuasion into their presentations and develop a familiarity with rhetorical style such that it can be of use in the daily interactions that they will find themselves in on the job. This unit is intended to increase awareness of our own ethical preferences, improve our ability to identify the preferences of others with whom we are in opposition and increase our capacity for critical thinking and problem solving based on the twofold strength of practical ethics and rhetorical theory.

Formats & Assignments

- Synchronous
 - Class discussions via video conferencing will review the assigned readings and concepts and how to implement rhetorical technique into their final project/presentation.

Reading

- Aristotle: Rhetoric, edited by C.D.C. Reeve, Hackett Publishing, 2018.
- Patinelli-Dubay, Marianne. Practical Ethics for Resource Managers, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2023, Chapter 9.

UNIT/WEEK 15.

Preparation for the final project.

FINAL.

Students will integrate the content and ethical approaches learned throughout the semester with the case study provided by Mr. Federice in a written report meant to resolve the given real-world situations. Students should understand the reality and complexity associated with land management decisions as they draw up a comprehensive plan together. Groups will reach consensus and present their decision to the class which will then open their resolution, methods etc. up for further discussion and possible revision.

Format: Final group presentation via video conferencing, presentation schedules and requirements TBA, full attendance and participation is required.