

English 2 (EE): Paper #5: Your Environmental Ethic

Whether over the course of your lifetime so far, or just over the course of the semester, you've been developing an environmental ethic. Now I'd like you to muster what may have been both conscious and unconscious processes and describe what your environmental ethic is at this juncture. Naturally (Culturally!), it has evolved and will continue to, so jot down in 3 - 5 pages what you feel it is now.

As you do, consider the various facets of environmental ethics. Use our readings to help you out. The categories in the Environmental Ethics textbook are helpful; you can run through them like a checklist of what to consider: science, morality, aesthetics, historical and religious or cultural views, anthro-pocentrism, individualism (i.e., the rights of individuals in any given species), ecocentrism (i.e., the land ethic), ecofeminism, and more practical considerations of population, law, economics, and general connection to world sociopolitical concerns. Of course, there can be overlap among these various categories. Also, in a relatively short paper, you might not be able to say all you need to, but at least cover the basics, examining critically the notion of the inherent worth (or intrinsic value) of nature and what kind of moral responsibility humans have toward animals, plants and ecosystems. Write what you know and have learned, getting as specific as you can when you can, and explaining why you think the way you do--showing how your more abstract views (taken from the categories above) apply to your views on such topics as consumerism or consumption (food, clothing, energy use), animals in various kinds of research (biomedical, cosmetic, chemical, academic), population control, developed vs. developing worlds' uses of resources and responsibilities thereof. Those are examples! I don't know that you'll be able to cover it all. Cover what you're most passionate about; mention what you know you're excluding.

In the paper's conclusion you might consider what you personally want to do and can do--in any small or big way--to further Earth's health.