

PRAXIS

ENVS 3600

Environmental Ethics

Spring, 2011

Syllabus Objective #4: Recognize and strive toward integration of a creation stewardship ethic as evidenced in both personal lifestyle and in attitudes and actions within social and political institutions.

Focus of the Assignment:

Select a topic from a list of current cases or issues of concern, become familiar with the literature, compose a tentative thesis, complete a careful literature review, and prepare a written and oral report.

Selected Topics/Issues:

1. Historical perspectives within the church (*i.e.* <1970) that have influenced attitudes toward the natural world. – Jon Becker
2. Politics of the environment and the contemporary evangelical church: biblical and not-so-biblical alliances. – Rebekah Jones
3. Greening the Evangelical Church: In search of a model “green church” – Heidi Edwards
4. Contemporary socio-political currents (*i.e.* > 1970) that arouse or suppress environmental awareness/action. – Lindsay Jones
5. Greening of Mission – Missionary approaches from a biblical stewardship ethic–Preston Godbold

Research Strategy:

- a. Identify literature sources of relevant information – *e.g.* ethics journals, books, treatises
- b. Define the scope of your topic for logical and manageable limits (Consultation is welcomed.)
- c. Develop a tentative thesis based on your preliminary review of the literature.
- d. Present progress report, 2-3-page, 2-spaced, and 1-sp. bibliography (Due April 1, 50 points)

Apply Ethical Reasoning:

- A. Descriptive Ethics – Identify and describe with good documentation, the “*What is*” by the following approach adapted to the nature of your topic):
 - a. Evaluate prevailing attitudes, apparent values, and actions related to the environmental issue
 - b. Analyze views, people, or groups that have been or are now influencing attitudes, values, *etc.*
 - b. Explain your basis for an objective definition of “what is” as a basis for normative claims.
- B. Introduce Ethical Foundation – “What ought to be”
 - a. Introduce appropriate ethics with normative claims to address your descriptive account (A.)?
 - b. Is your ethical approach –
 - a. objective, biblically sound, internally consistent, *etc.*?
 - b. cognizant of metaphysical and ontological implications?
 - b. consistent & workable with mission/purpose of the institution?
 - c. consistent with ecological theory?
 - c. Evaluate environmental attitudes, values, and actions (A.) in light of your environmental ethics
- C. Plan of Action – “*What we must do*”
 - a. Present case examples in which an apparent biblical environmental ethic is evident or needed
 - b. What obstacles confront implementation of your plan? What competing ethics?
 - c. What approach would you take as a person of influence to encourage *what must be done*?

Writing and Oral Reporting:

- A. Written Report: Summarize your findings, normative claims, and plan of action (see above) based using 3 to 4 pages, x2-spaced, plus single-spaced bibliography – Due April 22 (75 points)
- B. Oral Presentation:
 - 1. Duration 20-30 min.(provide outline); present your findings, ethical claims and plan of action; then lead discussion Q/A period.; use PowerPoint slides to support presentation – 75 points
 - 2. Date will be arranged between April 25 to May 4.

Evaluation of Written and Oral Presentations:

Credit will be granted according to the extent to which the following quality factors are evidenced. These factors are based on the guidelines and suggestions outlined in the PRAXIS instructions above. Each criterion will be scored on a scale from 1 to 7 (A) for written report; and, 1 to 5 (A) points for oral, plus 25 oral report points for regular attendance and participation:

- 1. Introduction: Introduces topic and defines its scope in a logical manner
- 2. Descriptive ethics clearly presented – describes current level of ethical consciousness toward the environment, and responsibility and actions toward the environment. Explains clearly how and upon what entities values are placed.
- 3. Personal Ethical Awareness: Gives evidence of self-examination and ethical awareness that is evident in a personal identification with the issues; conveyed in a humble, non-condemning tone.
- 4. Normative ethics: Explains clearly what normative claims can be introduced to the culture in question. That is, what ethical frameworks seem most likely to address your case in an objective manner (see Characteristics of a Robust E. Ethic).
- 5. Relation to Environment: Recommendations are consistent with “good science” (*e.g.* ecology).
- 6. Relation to Entrenched Views: Explains what obstacles confront implementation
- 7. View of What Ought to Be: Suggests and elaborates a “plan of action.” If appropriate, utilizes examples from projects that are addressing the issue (*e.g.* obstacles, human needs)
- 8. Resources/Bibliography: Utilizes appropriate, authoritative literature and resource people; (see <http://www.cedarville.edu/personal/silvius/3600/3600main.htm> “Internet Resources”); each is documented with APA format (*e.g.* <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>)
- 9. Discussion Leads discussion with specific talking points but also allows audience to raise questions. Doesn’t pretend to know “all the answers” but is quick to suggest possibilities, relevant concepts or approaches, *etc.*
- 10. Communication: Grammatical quality (sentence and paragraph structure, logical flow); or (for oral report) clear articulation, slide content brief and readable; doesn’t “read from slides”, demonstrates poise, develops rapport with audience.