Course Objectives:
It is fair to say that the twenty-first century is marked by an environmental crisis unprecedented in human history. Mostly due to human activity, life on earth faces the greatest mass extinctions since the end of the dinosaur age 65 million years ago. Each day, approximately 100 species become extinct and this rate could double within the next few decades. The earth’s air, water, and land are being depleted or polluted at alarming rates: 1.5 million tons of hazardous material is dumped into the atmosphere, ocean, or soil daily. Natural resources face further exhaustion and degradation with growing human populations and their extraordinary levels of consumption. Commonly we consider environmental issues more suitably treated by the scientist who develops a technological solution or by the politician who advocates sound environmental legislation. However, these controversies prompt us to consider what we value, who we are, our place in nature and our responsibilities to it. That is, environmental problems raise existential questions that are the subject matter of ethics and philosophy.

This course is an introduction to the field of environmental ethics or, more broadly, environmental philosophy. We will study, discuss, and critically analyze some of the more important monographs of environmental thought that have defined and shaped this recent field of philosophy. We will consider the following topics:

1. Applied and Theoretical Ethics
2. The Historical Roots of the Environmental Problem
3. Native American and Buddhist conceptions of Nature
4. Environmental Economics
5. Animal Rights
6. Human Exceptionalism
7. The Nature and Status of Wilderness
8. Eco-Feminism
9. The Intrinsic Value of Nature
10. Deep Ecology
11. Environmental Justice

Course Requirements:
There will be a midterm and a final examination worth forty-percent of your grade. The midterm is scheduled for Friday, October 14 and the date of the final will be Thursday, December 15, from 8:00-11:00 am.

The remaining twenty-percent of your grade is reserved for class participation. This
includes both your contribution to class discussion and an advocacy letter group project that we will discuss this semester. Students will be required to show a clear understanding of the readings assigned and the material covered in class. Occasionally, you may be required to write a one to two-page essay answering a specific question regarding the assigned reading or give an oral presentation. The essay will include either an exegesis of the major theme of the assigned reading(s) or a well-constructed critical reflection of the assigned reading(s). These essays will be collected only twice during the semester at the discretion of the instructor. Please do not ask me to accept essays if you have not been in class. You are expected to come to class prepared and have something intelligent to say about the reading. Neither can be accomplished if you do not attend. It should be noted that nothing on this syllabus is written in stone and can be changed with prior notice from the instructor.

Grading:  
Midterm Examination 40%  
Comprehensive Final Examination 40%  
Class Participation (including advocacy letter) 20%

Attendance Policy: For every unexcused absence exceeding two, your grade will drop ten-percent.

Make-up Exams: Make-up exams may be scheduled with the permission of the instructor. Prior consent should be obtained.

Honor Code: What follows is the newly implemented Eckerd College Honor Code:

    On my honor, as an Eckerd College student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to tolerate these behaviors in others.

On every assignment turned in for this course you must write “pledged” before your signature indicating that you understand and adhere to the Honor Code.

Required Texts:  
Louis Pojman, *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*

Supplemental Texts:  
On Electronic Reserve

Tentative Schedule:  

9/6  Course Introduction

9/9  Introduction to Philosophy and Ethics
    Read Des Jardins Chapters 1, 2
9/13  Environmental Ethics: Theory
Read Des Jardins Chapter 5: “Responsibilities to the Natural World: From Anthropicentric to Nonanthropicentric Ethics” (pp. 93-111); from Chapter 7 (“Biocentric Ethics and the Inherent Value of Life”): Section 7.2 (pp. 131-134).

9/16  Environmental Ethics: Theory (continued)

9/20  Environmental Crisis and Occidentalism
Read Pojman Chapter 1

9/23  Environmental Crisis and Occidentalism (continued)

9/27  Animal Ethics
Read Des Jardins Chapter 6 and Pojman Chapter 2 sections 6, 7, 8, 10

9/30  Animal Ethics (continued)

10/4  Land Ethic
Read Des Jardins Chapter 9 and Pojman Chapter 3 sections 17, 18

10/7  Land Ethic (continued)

10/11  Fall Break

10/14  Midterm Examination

10/18  Biocentric Ethics
Read Des Jardins Chapter 7

10/21  Biocentric Ethics (continued)

10/25  Deep Ecology
Read Des Jardins Chapter 10

10/28  Deep Ecology (continued)

11/1  Environmental Justice, Environmental Racism, and Ecofeminism
Read Des Jardins Chapter 11

11/4  Environmental Justice, Environmental Racism, and Ecofeminism (continued)

11/8  Environmental Justice, Environmental Racism, and Ecofeminism (continued)

11/11  Environmental Economics
Read Des Jardins Chapter 3

11/15  Environmental Economics (continued)

11/18  Wilderness and Human Exceptionalism
       Read Des Jardins Chapter 8
       Electronic Reserve: Naturalized Human Distinctiveness by Mark Woods

11/22  Wilderness and Human Exceptionalism (continued)

11/25  Thanksgiving

11/29-12/9  Advocacy Letter Presentations
            Advocacy Letter due 12/9

12/15  Final Examination