

**AGRICULTURAL ETHICS — A/PL 330
SPRING 2007**

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Instructors	Thomas O. Holtzer– 491-5843 Thomas.Holtzer@ColoState.edu Dept. of Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management C129 Plant Sciences Building R. Lee Speer – 491-1787 R.Lee.Speer@ColoState.edu Department of Philosophy 222 Eddy Hall
Lecture Periods	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-1:45, C363 Clark
General Course Objectives	<p>Agriculture is the most important human activity. It makes life possible. Agriculture is the source of our food and most of our fiber and provides employment for many of the world's people. It is the most important and largest human interaction with the environment. Because of its importance, size, and dispersion, agriculture unavoidably interacts with social, political, economic, and all other realms of human activity.</p> <p>Agricultural education typically emphasizes learning to do things that increase food and fiber production. This course will examine the values underlying agriculture's productive practices. Students will be encouraged to think about the values implicit in agricultural practices and reasons supporting present agricultural practices and practices that may replace them in the future.</p> <p>Agriculture is under attack from many quarters because it is no longer uniformly regarded as serving the public interest. Agricultural practitioners lack knowledge of their ethical foundations and are often unable to articulate and defend their values. This course is designed to bring clarity to the debate surrounding some agricultural issues and explore the ethical dimension of operative values. However, in one semester, no course can examine every ethical issue in agriculture. This course addresses a broad spectrum of issues, but also emphasizes issues important to Colorado. Skills gained will help students pursue analyses of other important agricultural issues.</p> <p>The course will enable identification of value conflicts and provide a framework for discussing them. Students should develop the ability to understand their own views as well as opposing views of ethical issues and be able to articulate and defend various views and the values they represent. Students who complete the course successfully should be able to define and interpret basic concepts in ethics and ethical decision making and be able to use these concepts in discussions of contemporary agricultural issues.</p>

**GENERAL INFORMATION
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Specific Course Objectives

1. To define and interpret basic concepts in ethics and ethical decision making and be able to use these concepts to discuss contemporary agricultural issues.
2. To examine the values underlying agricultural practice.
3. To bring clarity to the debate surrounding some agricultural issues and explore the ethical dimension of operative values.

Instructional Method

There will be lectures, but they will not be the dominant mode of instruction. Students will be expected to complete reading and writing assignments on time and come to class prepared to ask and discuss questions about the day's topic and the assigned readings. Students who do not do the reading and think about the issues raised in the reading are unlikely to do well in the class. The instructional objective is not to convince students that a particular position or argument is correct but to guide students toward development of the skills of analysis and evaluation of arguments. To do this, all must participate and be willing to challenge and be challenged. Ethical argument and philosophical analysis are not easy things to do. Regular attendance and reading are essential to success in this class. The dominant instructional technique will be questioning and dialogue, not lecture. Participation is expected.

Methods of Evaluation

There will be several (about 3 or 4) announced or unannounced quizzes. These may be either "take-home" or "in-class." Quizzes will emphasize assigned readings and ethical concepts and will be primarily multiple choice and short answer. If missed, these quizzes cannot be made up. There will be a "take-home" midterm exam and a final exam. Both will consist entirely or almost entirely of essay type questions. In addition, there will be a writing assignment (described below).

Writing Assignment

Students will submit an in-depth exploration of the ethical arguments on both sides (in some cases multiple sides) of an agricultural issue. Students are encouraged to investigate issues that are not listed for discussion on the class schedule and develop a topic of particular interest to them. Alternatively, students may choose a topic that has been or will be discussed in class. All students are encouraged to discuss topic selection with Holtzer or Speer. Topics (along with a 2-4 sentence preliminary description of the specific ethical questions that are relevant to the topic area) must be submitted via email to Holtzer or Speer no later than February 20th (earlier is better). Topics must be approved by one of the instructors. A first draft of the paper is due in class on Thursday, March 22nd. One of the instructors will read and comment on it. The final version of the paper is due in class on Tuesday, April 24th.

Papers should be analytical, not expository. Analysis means breaking a subject into pieces and considering how each piece relates to the whole. The best papers will be open-minded, reflective, challenging, and more likely to question than assert. Well written papers will demonstrate that the writer understands the arguments of all sides and is capable of making distinctions that hold differences open rather than excluding and rejecting.

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**Writing
Assignment
[Continued]**

The papers should use arguments that persuade the reader, rather than reducing the reader to silence by refuting or ignoring other views. Analysis involves stating a hypothesis and then presenting arguments that defend and refute the hypothesis. Analysis considers questions of causation (why questions). In analytical writing, one is frequently not sure of the answer and does not assume there is only one answer.

In developing ethics analysis papers, it is often useful to ask yourself the following question: The action proposed is good or correct because? Then give the ethical reason or reasons why the action is good. Answers could, but do not have to, include the following kinds of reasons:

1. The proposed action could be regarded as a universal good thing if applied to all people, in all places, and in all times.
2. The proposed action will lead to a net increase in the happiness (broadly defined) of creatures (perhaps, but not necessarily, only humans) who are affected by the act. There will be less suffering and more happiness, less pain and more pleasure.
3. The proposed action treats all sentient creatures with respect. The action does not treat others as simply a means to an end.

Note: Saying "I don't like it" or "it is true to me" are not sufficient. Arguing that it has always been done this way, or if we do some proposed act, the farm/ranch will fail economically, will not be persuasive. Reasons must be provided for judgments or preferences (such as likes or dislikes) and they must be backed with evidence and good arguments. Quotes from religious texts providing advice or commands may be used, but they are not arguments. To prepare an adequate paper, students must allow sufficient time to study articles and arguments carefully, think about them, develop criticisms, and organize their paper into a coherent, consistent, and complete work.

Philosophy Majors may choose to complete the Writing Assignment as described; or alternatively, they may choose to develop a case study on a particular topic. Philosophy Majors choosing this option must discuss their choice of topic with Speer and Holtzer and the details of completing the assignment in the first few weeks of the semester, and they must have the project approved by one of the instructors by February 20th.

**Writing
Assignment
Deadline
Summary**

Topic Selection and Approval	No later than February 20 th
First Draft	Due March 22 nd
Final Version	Due April 24 th

**GENERAL INFORMATION
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Grading	Quizzes and other short writing assignments	15%
	Exam I	20%
	Exam II (Final)	30%
	Writing Assignment	
	First Draft	10%
	Final Version	25%
	Total	100%

Attendance Attendance is required. The final grade of students who miss more than three classes may be lowered by one letter. Absences for University approved reasons must be submitted before the absence. Students are responsible for learning what is covered in classes that they miss.

Text and Readings The required text for the course is by James Rachels (edited by Stuart Rachels). 2006. The Elements of Moral Philosophy. 5th Ed. McGraw Hill. 238 pp. (Be sure to obtain the new, 5th edition.) Specific assignments are provided below. In addition, students are encouraged to explore the entire book. There will be other assigned readings and media presentations. Most are available on WebCT. However, some must be viewed through the reserve system in Morgan Library. Registration for the class is required to gain access.

Cheating and Plagiarism Cheating on examinations and plagiarism in papers are not acceptable and will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Simply stated, plagiarism is the use of another's thoughts or words as if they were your own. It is dishonest use of another's work. Whenever you use a general concept, idea, quotation, fact, statistic, or illustration that is not yours, cite the source. Proper citation of sources in the paper (including internet sources) is expected. When plagiarism is suspected, papers may be checked with one of several internet plagiarism detection programs.

CLASS SCHEDULE (TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS)		
Topic/Lead Instructor	Date	Assignments
Introduction to the course and to ethical theory / Holtzer	16 Jan	Explore Rachels. 2006. The Elements of Moral Philosophy.
Ethical Theory / Speer	18, 23, 25, 30 Jan, 1, 6, Feb	Rachels. 2006. Chapter 1, What is morality? Chapter 3, Subjectivism in Ethics. Chapter 4, Does morality depend on religion? Chapter 6. The utilitarian approach. (also the related Case Study) Chapter 8. Are there absolute moral rules?
Pesticides / Holtzer	8, 13 Feb	Lehman, H. 1993. Values, Ethics, and the use of Synthetic Pesticides in Agriculture. On your own - View "My Father's Garden" Morgan library IVAC Center Video CT-3882
Natural Resources and the Environment / Holtzer	15, 20, 22 Feb	Case Study. White, L. 1967. The historical roots of our ecological crisis. Science 155: 1203-1207.
Farm Animal Welfare and Animal Rights / Speer	27 Feb, 1, 6 Mar	Case Study. Singer, P. All animals are equal. Regan, T. The radical egalitarian case for animal rights.
Midterm Exam	1 Mar 8 Mar	Distributed Due (in class)
Saving the Family Farm / Holtzer	8 Mar	Case Study. Goldschmidt, W. 1998. Conclusion-The Urbanization of Rural America Pp. 183-198 in K. M. Thu and E. P. Durrenberger. Pigs, Profits and Rural Communities. State Univ. of NY Press. Halweil, B. 2000. Where have all the farmers gone? Worldwatch Sept/Oct. Pp. 12-28.
Spring Break	12-16 Mar	

CLASS SCHEDULE (Continued)

Sustainability / Holtzer	20, 22, 27 Mar	Sustainable agriculture in the United States: Engagements, silences, and possibilities of transformation. Pp. 139-167. in P. Allen (ed.) Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability.
Agricultural Research and Biotechnology – Animals/ Speer	29 Mar, 3, 5 Apr	Rollin, Bernard E. 1997. "Send in the clones..., Don't bother, they're here." Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics 10, No. 1, 25–40.
Agricultural Research and Biotechnology – Plants / Holtzer	10, 12, 17 Apr	Case Study. Lappé, M. And B. Bailey. 2002. Biotechnology's negative impact on world agriculture. Pp. 156-167 in G. E. Pence (Ed.) The Ethics of Food. Rowan & Littlefield, New York. Comstock, G. L. 2000. Conclusion. Pp. 285-288 in Vexing Nature? On the ethical case against agricultural biotechnology. Iowa State Univ. Press. Ames, IA. Kirschenmann, F. 2001. Questioning biotechnology's claims and imagining alternatives. Trans. WI Acad. Sci. 89:35-61. Borlaug, N. 2000. Ending world hunger: The promise of biotechnology and the threat of antiscience zealotry. Plant Physiol. 124:487-490.
Water / Holtzer	19, 24, 26 Apr	Reisner, M. 1986, Cadillac Desert. Introduction. Pp. 1-14. Postel, S. 2000. Troubled waters. Utne Reader. Jul./Aug. Pp. 62-66. Sampat, P. 2000. Groundwater Shock. Worldwatch. Jan/Feb. Pp. 10-22.
Foreign Agricultural Assistance / Holtzer	1, 3 May	Singer, P. 1996. Famine, Affluence, and Morality. Pp. 26- 58 in W. Aiken and H. LaFollette (eds.) World Hunger and Morality. 2nd ed. Prentice Hall, NJ.
FINAL EXAM (Finals Week)	Wed, 9 May, 9:10-11:10	