

Guiding Questions for Reading and Discussion

Justin Andrew Hill, M.A.
PHIL 2305: Contemporary Ethical Issues

Nota Bene: The numbers on the left refer to the week and then either part one or part two of the aforementioned week in the following convention: WW.PP, such as 03.02 for Week 3, Part 2.

For MW and TR sections, parts one and two refer to explicit days of class — e.g., part one on MT and part two on WR. For MWF sections, part one is extended into W, and part two begins W and ends F. When possible, MWF sections will finish part one M and begin part two W, leaving F for questions, exploration, and growth. This extra time has yet to happen as content is plentiful.

01.01-02	Unit 0: Syllabus Quiz and Icebreakers.
02.01	V. F. Cordova, <i>How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V. F. Cordova</i>, eds. Kathleen Dean Moore, Kurt Peters, Ted Jojola, and Amber Lacy, foreword by Linda Hogan (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2007), vii-46 [Front Matter (e.g., Foreword, Editor's Introduction, Author's Introduction, Biographical Essay), I. Bridges]. 1. What do bridges represent for Cordova? 2. How are the two processes of bridges interrelated? 3. Why start a philosophy text by explaining where one comes from? 4. What is the significance of a place of origin to one's identity? 5. What is the significance of one's identity for one's survival strategies? 6. How are bridges a matter of adaptations and transformations?
02.02	Cordova, <i>How It Is</i>, II. Windows, 47-84. 1. What do windows represent for Cordova? 2. How do our language, stories, assumptions, and cultural practices determine how we understand the world?
03.01	Cordova, <i>How It Is</i>, III. What Is the World?, and IV. What Is It to Be Human?, 85-130. 1. What is the world? 2. How did the world begin? 3. Of what is the world made?

4. What is the nature of time?
5. What is the nature of space?
6. What is real?
7. Are there many realities or only one?

03.02 Cordova, *How It Is*, IV. What is the Human?, 131-80.

1. What is the human?
2. How does the human integrate in a complex, interconnecting world?
3. How might people reclaim the power to define themselves and thus regain the right to shape their own lives?

04.01 Cordova, *How It Is*, V. What Is the Role of a Human in the World?, 181-232.

1. What is the role of the human in the world?
2. How do the places of birth and of upbringing inform as well as determine how we ought to act in relation to those places as well as in relation to others who live and who will live and who have lived in those/these places?
3. How, then, shall we live?
4. How is it, this beautiful, mysterious, powerful and vulnerable world?
5. Who am I in this world?
6. How shall I then live?

04.02 Unit 1: Cordova, Essay Exam, 120 minutes, 1500 words.

05.01-02 Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There*, illus. Charles W. Schwartz (London/Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), "Part I: A Sand County Almanac," vii-40.

1. Explain what an almanac is and how Leopold is constructing his own ecological record.

05.02 Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, *ibid.*, cont. 41-92.

1. Describe two episodic sections from across the twelve months; include the material facts, their causal relations to the environment, and the sociocultural history at play, including human impact, e.g., from the US Forest Service, from

hunting, from road-building, logging, rafting, etc. Rather than approving or speaking negatively about these relationships, focus on explaining how the mechanisms of causation operate in an ecology.

2. Describe your own September almanac in your neighborhood, whether urban or rural; spend time in this unit noticing your neighbors, your animals [fauna], your plants [flora], sun, wind, rain, weather, latitude, altitude, coastal access to hurricanes, risk of floods, droughts, fires, etc.

06.01 Leopold, *ibid.*, 93-122.

1. Explain the meaning and importance of the following three topical sections: (i) the sand counties; (ii) the odyssey of the atom X across an ecosystem, and (iii) the Flambeau, and its relation to formally administered-constructed river recreation.

2. Explain the significance of Red Legs Kicking; why does that memory stand out so vividly to Leopold? What does the vividness imply about human experiences of hunting, i.e., killing animals, whether or not for food or just for trophies [and there is likely a felt moral difference between the two motives]? Is the adrenaline resulting from a successful hunt a worrying motive for violence in other contexts?

06.02 Leopold, *ibid.*, 122-62.

1. In Arizona and New Mexico, explain the relationships between mountaintops, “topping out the mountain” after the winter thaw each spring [and bragging rights for being the first to do so], Escudilla, Old Bigfoot, and to “fear lightning [... after one has...] ridden The Mountain in July.”

2. Describe the Guacamaja’s relationship to its ecosystem in the Sierra Madre mountains along the Texas-Mexico border and in the Mexican desert. Describe also the jaguar’s relationship to, i.e., ecological dependence on and impact upon, its green lagoons.

07.01 Leopold, *ibid.*, 163-226.

1. Explain the history of recreation; the types of modern recreationists; the relation between hunting and conservation; the esthetics of recreation; the economics of recreation; the ethics of recreation; the contradictory nature of recreation in different ways for different people; and photographs as trophies.

2. Other than the material in number 1 above, list the five components of recreation and give examples of each.

3. Leopold proposes that contact with “wild things” provides three distinct values. List these values produced by engaging with wildlife, and then critique Leopold’s underlying assumption about “primitive peoples,” as Cordova explains as a myth.

4. Explain the challenges of husbandry using specific examples from the text.

5. Explain Leopold’s relationship between wilderness, organically interdependent husbandry, managing predator populations via hunting, road-building, destruction of wilderness due to road-building, and the alternative: travel by packhorse.

6. Explain each of the purposes for wilderness, which are listed as subsections in that chapter, i.e., wilderness for wildlife, science, and recreation.

7. Why is wilderness a resource which can shrink but not grow? What does this finitude of the resource imply about husbandry and conservation reasoning?
8. “The Land Ethic” begins with an uncomfortably nonchalant description of Odysseus killing slaves; how does Leopold use this to explain the change in how humans perceive moral personhood, i.e., where personhood is extension of the group who receives moral consideration, e.g., humans, animals, environments, land, ecologies, or even non-carbon-based matter, i.e., life-sustaining elements?

07.02 Unit 2: Leopold, Essay Exam, 120 minutes, 1500 words.

08.01 bell hooks, *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (New York/London: Routledge of Taylor & Francis Group, 2019 [2009]), 1-40.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

08.02 hooks, *ibid.*, 41-88.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

09.01 hooks, *ibid.*, 89-134.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

09.02 hooks, *ibid.*, 135-83.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

10.01 hooks, *ibid.*, 184-230.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

10.02 Unit 3: hooks, Essay Exam, 120 minutes, 1500 words.

11.01 María Lugones, *Pilgrimages / Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions*, (Laham/New York/Boulder/Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), ix-39.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

11.02 Lugones, *ibid.*, 40-51.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

12.01 Lugones, *ibid.*, 52-75.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

12.02 Lugones, *ibid.*, 76-100.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

13.01 Lugones, *ibid.*, 102-18.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

Anne Carson, *Men in the Off Hours*, “Dirt and Desire: An Essay on the Phenomenology of Female Pollution in Antiquity,” pp. 1-7.

1. tbd

- 2.
- 3.

13.02 Lugones, *ibid.*, 120-48.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

14.01 Lugones, *ibid.*, 150-64.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

14.02 Lugones, *ibid.*, 166-80.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

15.01 Lugones, *ibid.*, 182-205.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

15.02 Lugones, *ibid.*, 206-37.

1. tbd
- 2.
- 3.

16.01 Reading Day. (No class.)

16.02 Unit 4: Lugones [Final], Essay Exam, 120min, 1500 words.

Final grades available within two weeks under normal, non-exigent circumstances.