

# W&M in Washington

Fall 2012

## *The Ethics of Sustainability*

*Taught by Professor Mark Fowler*

The overall focus of the semester is the ethics of sustainability. In one course, the ethics of globalization will be critically examined with an emphasis on sustainability, human labor rights and the global implications of climate change. In a second course the same themes broadly analyzed in the first course, will be used to explore in depth the ethics of mountain top removal and the use of coal fired power plants, both at home and abroad.

### **Washington Program Internship**

- *6 credit hours: INTR 499*

Students will have the opportunity to work at a wide variety of Washington institutions that impact national environmental policy. Students may choose from governmental bodies, such as the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Interior/National Park Service, and the Department of Energy; non-profits like the World Wildlife Fund, Sierra Club, and the Nature Conservancy; think tanks like the World Resources Institute, the Wilson Center for International Scholars, and the Center for American Progress; and legislative offices such as the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the House Committee on Natural Resources. [Students will give brief mid-term written and oral reports on the progress of internship work and at the end of the semester will submit a 15 page policy recommendation essay which draws on your internship experience where germane.

### **The Ethics of Sustainability and Globalization: Human (Labor) Rights, Consumerism and Climate...**

- *3 credit hours: ENST 211*

This course will address six questions: 1. What is globalization? A seemingly simple question which in fact is very difficult to answer. We shall examine at least four basic ideas of globalization, all of which have different ethical implications for our actions and policies. 2. How is globalization linked to labor rights violations given the rise under it of sweatshops, child labor and modern forms of slavery. Here careful attention will be given to defining and justifying contemporary labor rights as presented in The Universal Declaration of Rights and various international treaties. 3. Globalization is sometimes said to render existing national sovereignty obsolete. Human rights are based upon a cosmopolitan or universal/trans-national ethic. What is the legitimate role of nationalism under globalization and human rights cosmopolitanism? Here the foundation of the ethic of patriotism and that of human rights will need examination. 4. Globalization is sometimes said to be spreading an unsustainable consumerism across the world. Here aspects of the complex relationships between economic rights, the rights of current and future generations, economic growth, and environmental protection must be discussed. 5. What are the connections between globalization and climate change? Is the former the principal cause of the latter? Or the key to the solution to the "problem" of climate change? Or perhaps is the significance of climate change for globalization that climate change compels us to rethink the ethical meaning of globalization? 6. In the end, are globalization and human rights cosmopolitanism mutually supportive or in conflict or both?

### **Issues in Environmental Ethics: The Ethics of Mountain Top Removal and Coal-Fired Power Plants**

- *3 credit hours: ENST 303*

This course, dealing with the ethics of Mountain Top Removal and Coal-fired Power Plants, builds on the first course by zeroing in on the specific sustainability questions pertaining to the mining, transporting and burning of coal. Thus the ethical dimensions of coal use, including the inadequacies of its regulation, its effects on lower income people, how it can undermine public health and the social viability of communities, and its contribution to environmental degradation, will all be explored in more detail. Such topics coincide with the concerns of major governmental and non-governmental organizations in the Washington area, a fact which will make available appropriate outside speakers such as the Department of Environmental Quality, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the EPA.