NREM 306: Environmental Ethics
New Course Justification

1. What is the objective and purpose of the new course?
   See the objectives listed in the course syllabus.

2. How will the content be organized?
   Textbook readings will prepare students for two 50-min lectures each week. Handouts and special readings will prepare students to engage in a discussion or debate on specific ethical or policy issues related to the environment. Videos, websites, and other resources will supplement readings.

3. What other courses at UHM closely parallel the proposed course and in what way will the latter make a distinct contribution?
   TPSS 416: Introduction to Social, Ethical and Political Issues Associated with Biotechnology. This course focuses specifically on biotechnology and does not appear to go into the same depth of the ethical dimensions or develop the skills that are the objectives of NREM 306.
   PHIL 103: Introduction to Environmental Philosophy. This course introduces students to some of the same basic issues; thus, it is an appropriate prerequisite for NREM 306, which will require students to study specific ethical approaches in depth and apply them to real environmental issues.

4. Where or how does the proposed course fit into the current and future curriculum?
   The focus of NREM is to prepare students to be natural resource managers and professionals through education and training in biophysical and social sciences. UH-Manoa has made ethics education an essential part of general education requirements. NREM 306 serves to meet both needs. It will be an approved elective for Track I and II majors. As well, this course is intended to carry both ethics (E) and oral communication (O) focus designations, which will help our students meet these general education requirements.

5. Why is the number of credits and level justified? Explain the prerequisites and the absence thereof.
   As a course that meets 50/min per day, 3 days per week, it meets the contact hour requirements of a 3-credit course. The depth of topics covered, the objectives of the course, and the sophistication of the assignments are all appropriate for a 300-level course. Students are not expected to master concepts, topics, or skills, which would be the hallmark of a 400-level course. The prerequisites are intended to require students to have familiarity with either natural resource issues or basic philosophy so that they are reasonably prepared
to explore and discuss the ethical dimensions of environmental issues.

6. How will the course assist students to achieve the critical skills and competencies expected of CTAHR graduates?

Written Communications: Students will have to write in a logical manner and utilize appropriate writing styles for the formal debates

Oral Communications: The discussions and formal debates will engage students in public speaking. The course will provide resources for how to speak effectively and persuasively.

Analytical/Problem Solving Skills: Students will have to analyze the values and ethics behind environmental dilemmas and policy dilemmas, crafting solutions that are ethically defensible and reflect a diversity of values and interests.

Personal Characteristics: Students will be required to work in small groups to prepare for debates, so they will have to be dependable, trustworthy, and accept constructive criticism

Human Relations Skills: Again, group work will require them to develop human relations skills that allow them to function effectively as part of a team.

7. How will students be evaluated?

The syllabus describes how students will be evaluated.

8. What are the minimum qualifications for teaching this course? Is a qualified instructor now available?

Expertise in either ethics or natural resource management with competency and training in the other area. Dr. Travis Idol has a PhD in forestry and natural resource management and an undergraduate minor in philosophy, which includes formal courses in symbolic logic and the philosophy of science. Dr. Idol has also attended the Bioethics Institute workshop, a one-week training for faculty to help them instruct students about the ethical issues in biological, agricultural and environmental sciences.

9. How will the course be financed, assuming no further cutbacks?

No funds beyond current departmental allocations are necessary.

10. Has the course been offered before? Is there a demand for it?

The course was offered in 2005 and 2006. Seventeen students enrolled in 2005 and five students enrolled in 2006. The class is being offered as a special topic course (NREM 491) during Fall 2011. It is fully subscribed, with 20 students enrolled. Nine of the enrolled students are from majors outside NREM and CTAHR.

11. Is the course cross-listed with another department? No.