

Philosophy and the Environment

Philosophy 215
TTH 150am-320pm
Howard 254

Spring 2019



My Information

Here is my information:

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Office hours: TTH 1030-1130am or by appointment

Course Introduction

In this course, we consider several questions concerning our environment and our relationships to it and try to provide cogent answers.

- Humans matter morally, but so do non-human animals. This raises several philosophical questions: *Why* do non-human animals matter morally (and humans too!)? *Which* non-human animals matter morally; primates, birds, reptiles, insects, and so on? *What* are our moral responsibilities to these animals?
- Many environmentalists think that animals matter morally, but so do living things per se. But why does being alive give value to something? Does that value extend beyond the organism to populations, species, or even ecosystems? For example, is it wrong to drive a species to extinction? Is destabilizing an ecosystem morally wrong?
- Often philosophers understand the moral value of organisms, species, and/or ecosystems in terms of their *intrinsic value*. This is value they possess independent of their benefits to others including humans. But, what exactly is this value and how do things come to have it if they do?
- Many environmental philosophers offer explanations for why we find ourselves with such serious environmental problems. Deep ecologists think the reason is anthropocentrism. Ecofeminists think it is that women, non-human animals, and nature are subject to domination by a patriarchal society. Social ecologists think it is capitalism and hierarchical thinking. Is there an overarching explanation for why we have the environmental problems we do?
- American environmental history is deeply intertwined with notions of wilderness. Is the notion of wilderness fundamentally *misanthropic*? To what extent is associated with environmental injustice committed against Native Americans? Does it presuppose a false notion of ecological stability and resilience? Another notion philosophers have emphasized is *wildness*. Are wilderness and wildness different? Does focusing on wildness avoid the problems associated with wilderness?

- The richest 500 million people found in China, Europe, India, Japan, and the United States (8% of humans) emit half of the greenhouse gases with the poorest 3 billion emitting next to nothing. What should we – as a nation and as individuals – be doing about anthropogenic climate change given that the US has historically been one of the largest GHG emitters per capita? How can we live sustainably and solve this wicked problem?
- One of the grave challenges we face in the American West is forest fire. During the twentieth century, we prevented “natural” fire regimes and with climate change face a future of catastrophic wildfires. What moral and political issues are raised by our fire policies? How can we mitigate and adapt to these challenges?

Course Materials

All readings will be electronically distributed to you.

Course Requirements

In this course, your grade will be determined by 3 in-class exams, a take-home final exam, and class participation/attendance. The grade distribution is,

- Three exams ($3 \times 20\%$)
- Final exam (30%)
- Participation/attendance (10%)

Exams

You will be given 3 in-class exams. The final exam will be cumulative. I will circulate questions at least a week in advance (e.g. eight questions) and will pick a subset (e.g. four questions) to answer.

Participation

This class is difficult for some students; however, the biggest difficulties arise because students get behind in the readings. To prevent this, you should attend class regularly. Thus, I will allow you to miss a maximum of four classes

unpenalized but for each class thereafter you will lose 1% of your final grade. My rubric for participation is as follows.

A	B	C	D	F
Actively supports, engages and listens to peers (ongoing)	Makes a sincere effort to interact with peers (ongoing)	Limited interaction with peers	Virtually no interaction with peers	No interaction with peers
Arrives full prepared at every session	Arrives mostly, if not fully, prepared (ongoing)	Preparation, and therefore level of participation, are both inconsistent When prepared, participates	Rarely prepared, rarely participates	Never prepared, never participates
Plays an active role in discussions (ongoing)	Participates constructively in discussions (ongoing)	Participates constructively in discussions and makes relevant comments based on the assigned material	Comments are generally vague or drawn from outside of the assigned material	Demonstrates a noticeable lack of interest in the material (on going)
Comments advance the level and depth of the dialogue (consistently)	Makes relevant comments based on the assigned material (ongoing)	Group dynamic and level of discussion are not affected by the student's presence	Demonstrates a noticeable lack of interest (on occasion)	Group dynamic and level of discussion are significantly harmed by the student's presence
Group dynamic and level of discussion are consistently better because of the student's presence	Group dynamic and level of discussion are occasionally better (never worse) because of the student's presence		Group dynamic and level of discussion are harmed by the student's presence	

Participation Rubric

Grade Scale

The course grading scale is as follows:

A = 93 – 100, A- = 90 – 92, B+ = 86 – 89, B = 83 – 85, B- = 80 – 82, C+ = 76 – 79, C = 73 – 75, C- = 70 – 72, D+ = 66 – 69, D = 60 – 65, F = 0 – 59

It is impossible to do well in this course without reading and studying. I suggest that you *carefully* read the assigned material taking notes on what you read. You are strongly encouraged to discuss the course material with others outside of class. I am happy to help you outside of class.

Plagiarism

All students are expected to follow Lewis & Clark College's Academic Integrity Policy. This is stated in Lewis Clark College's College Catalog. Generally, plagiarizers and cheaters will be given an F for the entire course (they will not be allowed to drop or withdraw from the course). Also, your case will be given to the Honor Board where in addition to a failing grade you will receive disciplinary action.

Learning Differences

If you have been diagnosed with a learning difference and are seeking an accommodation, please provide me, as soon as possible, with a "Notice of Disability and Statement of Accommodation" from Student Support Services.

Tentative Schedule

Here is our schedule which is of course revisable.

Week 1 Animal Ethics

- Course Introduction
- "Not for Humans Only", Peter Singer
- "Animal Rights", Tom Regan

Week 2 Animal Ethics

- "Animal Rights", Tom Regan, cont.
- "Can Animal Rights Activists Be Environmentalists?" Gary Varner
- *Entangled Empathy, Chs. 1, 3* Lori Gruen

Week 3 Bio- & Ecocentrism

- "The Ethics of Respect for Nature", Paul Taylor
- "Biocentric Individualism", Gary Varner
- Ned Hettinger and Bill Throop "Refocusing Ecocentrism: De-emphasizing Stability and Defending Wildness"

Week 4 Intrinsic Value

- “The Varieties of Intrinsic Value,” John O’Neill
- “The Value of Nature and the Nature of Value,” Holmes Rolston
- “Projectivism and the Last Person Argument” Alan Carter

Week 5 Deep Ecology

- FIRST EXAM
- “The Deep Ecology Movement”, Arne Naess
- “Radical American environmentalism and wilderness preservation: A third world critique” Ramachandran Guha

Week 6 Ecofeminism

- “Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health”, Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen.
- “The Impoverishment of the Environment: Women and Children Last”, Vandana Shiva.
- “The Power and the Promise of Ecofeminism Revisited”, Karen J. Warren.

Week 7 Social Ecology & Ecosocialism

- “Socialism and Ecology”, Jim O’Connor
- “What Is Social Ecology?”, Murray Bookchin
- “Social ecology and social labor: A consideration and critique of murray bookchin”, Alan Rudy & Andrew Light

Week 8 Wilderness & Wildness

- William Cronon “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature”
- Jack Turner “Wildness and the Defense of Nature”

- Marc Ereshefsky, “Where the Wild Things Are: Environmental Preservation and Human Nature”

SPRING BREAK

Week 10 Climate Ethics

- “Global Environment and International Inequality”, Henry Shue
- “Greenhouse Development Rights: A Framework for Climate Protection that is ‘More Fair’ than Equal per Capita Emissions Rights”, Paul Baer, with Tom Athanasiou, Sivan Kartha and Eric Kemp-Benedict
- “Adaptation: Who Pays Whom?”, Paul Baer

Week 11 *Climate Ethics*

- SECOND EXAM
- “Selling Environmental Indulgences”, Robert Goodin
- “It’s Not My Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations”, Walter Sinnott Armstrong

Week 12 Ethics & Activism

- Paul Watson, “Tora! Tora! Tora!”
- Kate Rawles, “The Missing Shade of Green”
- J. Baird Callicott, “Environmental Philosophy Is Environmental Activism: The Most Radical and Effective Kind” Andrew Light, “Taking Environmental Ethics Public”

Week 13 Monkeywrenching & Ecosabotage

- “Ecological Sabotage: Pranks or Terrorism?” Eugene Hargrove
- “Earth First! and *The Monkey Wrench Gang*” Edward Abbey
- “More on EArth First! and *The Monkey Wrench Gang*” Dave Foreman
- “Editor’s Response” Eugene Hargrove

Week 14 Ethics & Fire

- THIRD EXAM
- “What Ethical Issues Are Involved in Wildfires?” Brian Patrick Green
- “Ecointerests and Forest Fire” Lawrence E. Johnson
- “Traveling the Logging Road, Coast Range” Kathleen Dean Moore

FOURTH EXAM