

PHIL 332: Environmental Ethics

Instructor: Eric Wilkinson
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Lectures: Mondays & Wednesdays, 12:00 – 15:00
Office Hours: Mondays, 11:00; BUCH E 275 (or Zoom)
Teaching Assistant: TBA

Course Description:

What is the appropriate relationship between human beings and the natural world? What rights do animals have, and should we eat them? Whose responsibility is it to address climate change? These kinds of questions are examined in environmental ethics. This course will explore several of these topics central to the subfield through perspectives such as land ethics, deep ecology, ecofeminism, social ecology, and Indigenous environmental philosophy. The theoretical analyses are paired with discussion of concrete environmental issues facing Canada today, including forestry management, mining, fisheries, agriculture, energy infrastructure, and the Canadian response to climate change. The subjects are introduced through the writings of influential environmental ethicists, and a range of positions on each issue are represented. Upon completing the course, students will have a strong understanding of the debates in environmental ethics, and will have had a chance to form their own opinions and acquire ethical insights which apply to environmental issues that they will encounter.

Assessment & Grading:

<i>Assignment:</i>	<i>Due Date:</i>	<i>Weight:</i>	<i>Description:</i>
Participation	Ongoing	10%	Contributing to in-class discussion groups.
Critical Reflection #1	July 17 th	25%	A 2-page analysis of a topic from the course.
Critical Reflection #2	July 31 st	25%	A 2-page analysis of a topic from the course.
Final Paper	August 17 th	40%	A 5-page, double-spaced, argumentative paper.

Communication Policy: Before emailing, please consult the syllabus for an answer to your query. When emailing, use your university email address and allow at least 48 hours to receive a response.

Late Policy & Extensions: The penalty for late assignment submission is five percent (5%) a day. Extensions will be assessed individually and granted mainly for medical reasons or bereavement.

Disability Accommodations: Those who require disability accommodations must register with UBC's Centre for Accessibility. The Centre will assist students in determining their needs and will help to communicate the accommodations that registered students require to the course instructor.

Academic Integrity: The University of British Columbia values academic integrity. Thus, students should understand the consequences of cheating, plagiarism, AI use, and other academic offences.

Course Schedule:

Date:	Lecture Topic:	Primary Reading:	Secondary Reading:
July 6 th	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Reading
July 8 th	Ethical Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Western Ethical Theories and the Environment” (Marion Hourdequin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Some Central Debates” (Robin Attfield)
July 13 th	Nature, Wilderness, and the Canadian Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Trouble with Wilderness” (William Cronon) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ice and the Climate of Canadian Philosophy” (Janet Wesselius)
July 15 th	Anthropocentrism, Biocentrism, Ecocentrism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Conflicting Values: Anthropocentric, Biocentric, and Ecocentric Ethics” (Franks, Hanscomb, & Johnston) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Environmental Ethics and Canadian Forest Policy” (Peter Miller)
July 20 th	The Land Ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic” (J. Baird Callicott) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Forests at Barrière Lake” (Shenkier & Meredith)
July 22 nd	Deep Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement” (Arne Naess) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Shifting Values: Seeing Forests and Not Just Trees” (Drengson & Taylor)
July 27 th	Social Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What is Social Ecology?” (Murray Bookchin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Aftermath of Collapse” (Raymond Rogers)
July 29 th	Ecofeminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Nature, Self, and Gender” (Val Plumwood) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Allies in Agriculture: Farm Women and the Ecosystem” (Karen Krug)
August 3 rd	Indigenous Environmental Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Indigenous Environmental Justice” (Kyle Whyte) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Contemporary Colonialism: The Dakota Access Pipeline” (Helena Arbuckle)
August 5 th	Animal Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All Animals are Equal” (Peter Singer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights” (Tom Regan)
August 10 th	Ethical Vegetarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Arguments for Vegetarianism” (Michael Fox) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wahkootowin Vegetarianism: When Is It Okay to Eat Your Kin?” (John Miller)
August 12 th	Ethics of Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A Perfect Moral Storm” (Stephen Gardiner) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Responsibility” (Chris Cuomo)

Participation:

During the classes there are discussion sessions where students are expected to participate in group conversations on the lecture topic for that week. The attendance and active participation of students in those discussion sessions is recorded and will constitute their participation grade for the course.

Critical Reflections:

The critical reflections are writing assignments that require: (a) explaining a key theory or concept from the course; and, (b) using it to analyze a concrete environmental issue. Students have 2-pages, double-spaced to complete the assignment and will be given a list of topic prompts to choose from.

Final Papers:

In lieu of a final exam, the final assessment for this course is a term paper. The assignment will be 5-pages, double-spaced, and will involve arguing for a position on an issue discussed in the course. A list of subjects will be provided, but students may choose their own if approved by the instructor.