**PHIL 2380 – Introduction to Environmental Ethics**

**Department of Philosophy, Carleton University**

**Summer 2024**

**0.5 credit**

Online Blended Course – all components of the course are mandatory

Professor: Manvitha Singamsetty

Contact Hours: By Appointment

E-mail: [manvitha.singamsetty@carleton.ca](mailto:manvitha.singamsetty@carleton.ca)

Class Timings: Wednesdays and Fridays, 11.30am to 2.30pm ET

Zoom link for synchronous classes is available on Brightspace.

**Calendar Course Description:**

Major questions in environmental ethics: How should human beings view their relationship to the rest of nature? Is responsible stewardship of the environment compatible with current technology? Must future generations be protected? Do animals, other life forms, endangered species, ecosystems and/or the biosphere have value/rights?

**Course Description:**

This course addresses a series of questions relevant to the evaluation of environmental issues from a philosophical perspective. Why is the natural environment valuable? Does it possess value only insofar as it provides us with some instrumental good or does it have inherent worth independent of that which human beings derive from it? Should we preserve and protect the natural world for its own sake or simply for our own? How might the answers we give to these questions inform our environmental activism and our public policies? In an attempt to address these questions, the course will look at various arguments philosophers have offered regarding the natural world’s value, and assess various strategies that have been proposed and pursued in the name of respecting and/or preserving our natural environment. Material for this course draws from historical and contemporary philosophy across various schools and traditions, as well as current global events and narratives. While the course will be accessible to students with non-philosophical backgrounds, its methods of evaluation will prepare students to succeed in upper level courses in ethics and social and political philosophy.

The aim of this course is to provide students with a comprehensive introduction to various global strands of environmental ethics. The course begins with an introduction to the key concepts and debates in environmental ethics including but not limited to instrumental versus intrinsic worth of nonhuman life, the use of nonhuman life, human-nonhuman binary, rights of nature, and the political conceptualisations of nature in global agreements.

The course has been designed to cater to all learning methods and mechanisms including reading, writing, listening, audio-visual input, discussions, reflection, critical analysis, and summarizing. This course is an online blended course, meaning that it combines both synchronous and asynchronous components. Please note that all components of this course are mandatory – students are required to do the readings, listen to the recorded lectures, attempt all quizzes and assignments, as well as attend synchronous class discussions. Please refer to the class schedule for more details.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course students will

* gain a comprehensive understanding of important concepts, methods, assumptions and ambiguities of classical, contemporary, mainstream, and “marginal” debates in environmental ethics
* learn how to apply classical moral paradigms to contemporary ethical issues in environmental ethics
* be able to present written work on key critical perspectives, in both descriptive and evaluative ways, on various topics in environmental ethics
* be introduced to and learn more about philosophical methods through argumentation in moral philosophy in relation to debates on the environment

**Teaching Philosophy:**

This course has been designed to enhance student-centered learning. Critical analysis and self-reflection are key to the learning mechanisms in this course. Learning involves not only gaining new information but also a critical and ethical application of this newly gained knowledge. In this course we will focus on both these aspects of learning.

**Assignments:**

1. **Quizzes – 30%**

There will be a total of 15 quizzes, and each quiz will be worth 2%. Questions will be based on the readings and lectures. All quizzes will be conducted online, the link can be accessed under the ‘Assignments’ tab on the course website. A detailed quiz schedule is available on pp. 3-4 of this syllabus. All quizzes are open throughout the course, and will close on 18 June 2024.

1. **Midterms - 20% each, total 40%**

Midterm 1 – 17 May 2024

Midterm 2 – 05 June 2024

All midterms will be conducted online. Midterms will consist of MCQs, short and long answers. Midterm review documents, detailing the syllabus, questions format etc., and the link to the assignment are available on Brightspace.

1. **Final Exam – 30%**

This will be a scheduled online exam consisting of MCQs, short and long answer questions. A Final Exam Review document containing the syllabus, format, and scope of the final exam is available on Brightspace. The final exam is not cumulative.

**Note - Absence from any examination must be justified by valid documentation (e.g. letter from a doctor, self-declaration form etc.). Only students with valid documentation will be permitted to write a make-up test/exam.**

**Reading Schedule:**

* Textbook – *Environmental Ethics Theory in Practice* by Ronald Sandler, OUP, 2017 The textbook can be purchased [here](https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/environmental-ethics-ronald-sandler-v9780190685577). Detailed instructions on how to purchase and store the e-textbook are provided in the introductory lecture.
* Electronic versions of all other readings are available on the course website.

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| **PHIL2380 - Class Schedule** | | |
| **Online Blended Course - All Components are Mandatory** | | |
| **Zoom link for synchronous classes is available on Brightspace** | | |
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| 08-May | Introduction to the course | Synchronous Class. Link on Brightspace |
| Environmental Ethics: Scope and Method | Textbook pp. 2-12, 18-21, 26-30 |
| Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| 10-May | Natural Value | Textbook pp. 66-77 |
| Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| Anthropocentrism and Indirect Duties | Textbook pp. 95-102, 109-110 |
| Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| 15-May | Assessing Environmental Ethics Approaches | Synchronous Class. Zoom link on Brightspace |
| Quiz - link on Brightspace |
| The Wild Unknown - Video | Link on Brightspace. No class. |
| 17-May | The Wild Unknown | Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz - link on Brightspace |
| Midterm 1 | Online - Link on Brightspace |
| 22-May | Moana - Polynesian Environmental Ethics | Link on Ares. No Class |
| Seeking Minobimaatisiwiin - An Indigenous Environmental Ethic | PDF on Brightspace, read pp. 91-99 |
| Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| 24-May | ‘We are the Land’ - Annie L Booth | PDF on Brightspace, read pp. 329-335 |
| Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on course website |
| Angry Inuk - Documentary | Link in ARES. No Class |
| 29-May | Angry Inuk - Class Discussion | Synchronous Class. Zoom link on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| Utilitarianism | Textbook pp. 168-192 |
| 31-May | Utilitarianism Contd. | Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| Assessing Utilitarianism | Synchronous Class – link on Brightspace |
| Quiz – Link on Brightspace |
| 05-Jun | Midterm 2 | Online - Link on Brightspace |
| Deontology | Textbook pp. 198-221 |
| 07-Jun | Deontology Contd. | Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| Assessing Deontology | Synchronous Class – link on Brightspace |
| Quiz – Link on Brightspace |
| 12-Jun | Animal Rights | Textbook pp. 206-216 |
| Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| Rights of Nature: ‘Do Trees Have Standing?’ - Christopher D Stone | PDF on Brightspace |
| Recorded lecture uploaded on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| 14-Jun | Anthropocene - Documentary | Link in ARES. No class |
| Anthropocene - Class Discussion | Synchronous Class – link on Brightspace |
| Quiz – link on Brightspace |
| 21 Jun 2024 to 27 June 2024 | Examination Period | Final Exam date and time to be decided by Examination Services |

**Tips for doing well:**

1. Students are expected to do the readings before listening to the recorded lectures.
2. Please make sure to finish studying the relevant lectures before each synchronous class. Material covered in the recorded lectures will not be repeated in the synchronous components of the course.
3. On average, you will spend about nine hours on this class every week – 6 hours in lectures and 3 hours in preparation and reading for class. In addition, you will spend about 4 hours each studying for the midterms and about 8 hours studying for the final exam.
4. All course related announcements and communication will be channeled through Brightspace
5. Please be sure to submit assigned work on time—unexcused late work will be penalized.

**Class resources and policies**:

1. You are encouraged to approach the academic writing help center in case you need any assistance with learning how to write essays etc. CSAS holds regular workshops on writing, taking notes etc. that you may find helpful. You can learn more about these workshops and services [here](https://carleton.ca/csas/learning-support-workshops/)
2. If you feel stressed or overwhelmed you are encouraged to access the resources on campus to manage your time, stress levels, seek mentors etc. More information can be found [here](https://students.carleton.ca/wellness/?utm_source=Web&utm_medium=Pillar_Home-More&utm_campaign=Service_Pillars-Wellness)
3. Communication: Please allow a minimum of 24 hours to receive a response to your email/query. For tech related issues please contact [ITS](https://carleton.ca/its/contact/) as they will be able to guide you most effectively.
4. You are expected to be respectful of your colleagues, the teaching assistant, and the professor during all discussions and interactions.

If I can ensure your full access to this course in any way not already addressed in this syllabus/course outline please do not hesitate to contact me with your queries/requests.

**Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Summer 2024)**

**Assignments:**

Please follow your professor’s instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically.

**Evaluation:**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Deferrals for Term Work:**

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

**Deferrals for Final Exams:**

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/examinations/#deferred-final-exams)). Visit the [Registrar’s Office](https://carleton.ca/registrar/) for further information.

**Plagiarism:**

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of ‘plagiarism’ as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/academic-integrity-and-offenses-of-conduct/#academic-integrity-policy))

**Academic Accommodation:**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

* *Pregnancy or religious obligation*: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the [Equity Services website](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf).
* *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](http://carleton.ca/pmc).
* *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton’s Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)
* *Accommodation for* [*Student Activities*](https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf)*:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

**Important Dates:**

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| May 4 Classes start.  May 10 Last day for registration and course changes for early summer courses.  May 17Last day for registration and course changes for full summer courses.  May 17 Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from early summer courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.  May 22 Statutory holiday, University closed.  May 31 Last day to withdraw from full summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.  June 9 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for early summer courses before the official examination period.  June 16 Last day for early summer classes.  Classes follow a Monday schedule.  Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.  June 17-18 No classes or examinations take place.  June 19-25 Final examinations.  June 25 Take-home examinations for early summer courses are due. | July 3 Statutory holiday, University closed.  July 4 Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume.  July 10 Last day for registration and course changes for late summer courses.  July 17 Last day to withdraw from late summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.  Aug. 1 Last day for academic withdrawal from full and late summer courses.  Aug. 7 Civic holiday, University closed.  Aug. 9 Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for late summer and full summer courses before the official examination period.  Aug. 16 Last day of late and full summer term classes.  Classes follow a Monday schedule. Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.  Aug. 17-18 No classes or examinations take place.  Aug. 19-25 Final examinations.  Aug. 25 Take-home examinations for late or full summer courses are due. |
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**Addresses:**

Department of Philosophy:

[www.carleton.ca/philosophy](http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy)

520-2110

Registrar’s Office:

[www.carleton.ca/registrar](http://www.carleton.ca/registrar)

520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:

[www.carleton.ca/academicadvising](http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising)

520-7850

Writing Services:

<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>

520-3822

MacOdrum Library

<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>

520-2735