

# PHIL 2380: Introduction to Environmental Ethics

Early Summer 2020; Mondays and Wednesdays 6:05-8:55pm

**Prof: Dr. Katherine Wayne**

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**Office hours:** Wednesdays 3:30-5:30pm and by appointment, on BigBlueButton

**Teaching assistant:** TBD

**NOTE:** This syllabus is as complete as possible but some details are tentative. Modifications (with notice) may be required as the class progresses.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course addresses a series of questions relevant to the evaluation of environmental issues from a philosophical perspective. For instance, what is nature? Why and how is the natural environment valuable, if it is at all? What role do—and should—humans occupy in the non-human realm? What are our obligations to nature and its constituent non-human individuals and collectives—including ecosystems, future generations, plants, and non-human animals? Which ethical theories and philosophical tools could best guide our responses to these questions? What might be some practical implications of our responses to the above, e.g. in public policy, environmental activism, and basic life choices? Our primary course text and other (mostly) contemporary work in environmental ethics will guide our examination and discussion of the above questions.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand philosophical theories and concepts pertinent to environmental ethics
- Critically analyze and compare different approaches to environmental issues
- Produce clear arguments in defense of particular ethical positions on environmental issues
- Collaboratively address environmental issues in discussion and debate using the methods, theories, and concepts introduced in the course

## CLASS TEXTS

Primary (required) textbook: Sandler, R.L., 2017. *Environmental Ethics: Theory in Practice*. Oxford University Press.

The textbook can be rented online (e.g. through Redshelf) or purchased through your preferred seller. Many required course readings are not in the textbook; outside articles and chapters are accessible through cuLearn.

## METHODS AND POLICIES

This is an online course due to the Coronavirus. I will livestream lectures with Zoom or BigBlueButton and classes will regularly include peer supported learning activities (using, e.g., online breakout rooms and a cuLearn discussion forum). I will also post recorded lectures to cuLearn.

I will hold virtual office hours through BigBlueButton and I encourage you to take advantage of these wherever feasible. While I will respond to e-mails as promptly and fully as possible, e-mail exchanges should generally be reserved for brief and/or logistical/administrative questions. You can typically expect to receive a response to e-mail inquiries from me within twenty-four hours during the work week, barring noted exceptions.

You should check cuLearn regularly for notices and updates e.g., re: scheduling, readings, and assignment instructions. You are also encouraged to use the student discussion forum on cuLearn for peer discussion, forming study groups, exchanging class notes, etc.

If you have any concerns about your ability to fulfill any of the course requirements but are unsure of how to proceed, please speak with me as soon as possible and take care to inform yourself on relevant departmental and university policies and accommodations services. There is a complete list of these on the last pages of this syllabus, with which all students should become familiar.

Violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated. If you are unclear on the nature of academic integrity or Carleton's academic integrity policy, please consult with me and/or the information and links to further resources on the last pages of the syllabus.

## **EVALUATION**

### **1) In-class quizzes (10%)**

Five classes will include a short quiz on the assigned reading(s) for the day. The quizzes are designed to be fairly easy if you have done the day's readings. Question format will generally be multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false. The quiz will be taken through cuLearn at the beginning of the second half of class. We will go over the answers following the automated grading of the quiz. Each quiz is worth 2% of your final course grade. There are no make-ups for individual quizzes, but at the end of term I will hold a bonus quiz that can replace one of your quiz grades.

### **2) In-class group assignments (30%)**

Four classes will include an in-class (online) small group discussion and writing assignment, which will be completed in the second half of class. With the exception of the paper workshop, which counts as one in-class group assignment, these assignments primarily involve critical analysis of the assigned readings for that day. Groups submit one copy of a jointly completed assignment at the end of class; each present and participating member of the group will receive the same assignment grade. There are no make-ups for group assignments, but your lowest grade will be dropped, making your top three assignments each worth 10% of your final course grade.

### **3) Paper (30%)**

Students will choose an essay prompt from a set list and write an argumentative paper of approximately 1500 words in response. The paper is due Wednesday June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The group assignment paper workshop will take place on Monday May 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **4) Take-home final exam (30%)**

The final exam will be a take-home requiring an essay-type response to 2 of 4 questions. Each response is worth 15% of your final grade. The take-home will cover all course material but will focus on the second half. Essay questions will be provided on the last day of class and the take-home is due on the last day of the exam period.

**Note:** In addition to the in-class group assignments, some classes will require completion of brief written reflections and participation in informal large or small group discussion.

Further information and instructions for all major class activities will be posted on cuLearn and discussed in the lectures.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<b>Week 1: May 4/6</b>  <b><i>Defining and grounding environmental ethics</i></b>	Monday: Chapter 1, “What is environmental ethics?” and chapter 2, “Methods of environmental ethics” including box 2.1 <hr/> Wednesday: Chapter 3, “Normativity of nature” including box 3.2 and chapter 4, “Natural Value” including boxes 4.2 and 4.3
<b>Week 2: May 11/13</b>  <b><i>Value and moral status</i></b>	Monday: Mill, “On Nature” (selection) and Rolston III, “Value in nature and the nature of value” <i>*First in-class group assignment</i> <hr/> Wednesday: chapter 5, “Anthropocentrism, ratiocentrism, and indirect duties” including box 5.3 (required) and Baier, “The rights of past and future persons” (recommended) <i>*Quiz 1</i>
<b>Week 3: May 18/20</b>  <b><i>From moral status to normative theory: consequentialism</i></b>	Monday: Chapter 7, “Nonanthropocentric individualism: the moral considerability of plants and animals” including boxes 7.5 – 7.8 and section 6.3 in chapter 6, “Enlightened anthropocentrism: efficiency, sustainability, and future generations” (p. 127-131) <i>*Second in-class group assignment</i> <hr/> Wednesday: Holland, “On some limitations of consequentialism in the sphere of environmental ethics” and chapter 8, “Consequentialist environmental ethics: animal welfare and utilitarianism” <i>*Quiz 2</i>
<b>Week 4: May 25/27</b>  <b><i>Con’t ethical theory: deontology and virtue ethics</i></b>	Monday: Taylor, “The ethics of respect for nature” (selection) and chapter 9, “Deontological environmental ethics: respect for nature, animal rights, and environmental rights” including boxes 9.2 and 9.3 <i>*Third in-class group assignment (paper workshop)</i> <hr/> Wednesday: chapter 10, “Character ethics: virtue, vice, and the environment” including box 10.1 <i>*Quiz 3</i>
<b>Week 5: June 1/3</b>  <b><i>Holism vs individualism</i></b>	Monday: Chapter 11, “Ecocentrism” including boxes 11.2, 11.4-11.6 and chapter 12, “Deep ecology” including boxes 12.1 and 12.3 <i>*Quiz 4</i> <hr/> Wednesday: McShane, “Individualist biocentrism vs. holism revisited” and box 13.2 p. 304 (required) and Sagoff, “Animal liberation and environmental ethics: Bad marriage, quick divorce” (recommended) <i>*Paper due</i>

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**Week 6: June 8/10**

***Strategies in context:  
culture, politics, and  
social justice***

Monday: Whyte & Cuomo, "Ethics of caring in environmental ethics: Indigenous and feminist philosophies" and chapter 14, "Ecofeminism and environmental pragmatism" including box 14.2

*\*Fourth in-class group assignment*

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Wednesday: Gardiner, "Human rights in a hostile climate," and chapter 15, "Environmental justice" including boxes 15.2-15.4, and box 9.5 from chapter 9 (p. 215-217)

*\*Quiz 5*

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**Week 7: June 15**

***Implications for choice-  
making: ethics of  
consumption***

Young, "Overconsumption and procreation: are they morally equivalent?" and McKinnon, "Climate change: against despair"

*\*Review for take-home exam (with take-home questions)*

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## Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Summer 20)

### Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this summer.

### 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 Examinations:

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](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) 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](#))

### Academic Accommodation:

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

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor 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 [EDC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *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](#).
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* 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:

May 4	Classes start.	July 1	Statutory holiday, University closed.
May 11	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>early</u> summer courses.	July 2	Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume.
May 15	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>full</u> summer courses.	July 9	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>late</u> summer courses.
May 18	Statutory holiday, University closed.	July 17	Last day to withdraw from <u>late</u> summer courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
May 22	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from <u>early</u> and <u>full</u> summer courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.	Aug. 3	Civic holiday, University closed
June 9	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for <u>early</u> summer courses before the official examination period.	Aug. 7	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade for <u>late</u> summer and <u>full</u> summer courses before the official examination period.
June 16	Last day for <u>early</u> summer classes. Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline. Last day for academic withdrawal from <u>early</u> summer courses.	Aug. 14	Last day of <u>late</u> and <u>full</u> summer term classes. <b>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</b> Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.
June 19-25	Final examinations.		Last day for academic withdrawal from <u>late</u> summer and <u>full</u> summer courses.
June 25	Take-home examinations for <u>early</u> summer courses are due.	Aug. 17-23	Final examinations.
		Aug. 23	Take-home examinations for <u>late</u> or <u>full</u> summer courses are due.

### Useful Contacts:

Department of Philosophy:	<a href="http://www.carleton.ca/philosophy">www.carleton.ca/philosophy</a> 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	<a href="http://www.carleton.ca/registrar">www.carleton.ca/registrar</a> 520-3500
Academic Advising Centre:	<a href="http://www.carleton.ca/academicadvising">www.carleton.ca/academicadvising</a> 520-7850
Centre for Student Academic Support:	<a href="https://carleton.ca/csas/">https://carleton.ca/csas/</a> 520-3822
Student Support Services :	<a href="https://carleton.ca/academics/support/">https://carleton.ca/academics/support/</a>