

PHIL 2380 – Introduction to Environmental Ethics
Department of Philosophy, Carleton University
Summer 2023
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

Class Timings: Wednesdays and Fridays, 08.35 – 11.25
Zoom link for synchronous classes is available on Brightspace.

Teaching Assistant: TBA
Contact Hours: TBA
Email: TBA

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 16 June 2023.

2. Midterms - 20% each, total 40%

Midterm 1 – 17 May 2023

Midterm 2 – 02 June 2023

All midterms will be conducted online as range assignments. 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.

3. Final Exam – 30%

This will be a scheduled, online, range 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](#). 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.

PHIL2380 - Class Schedule

Online Blended Course - All Components are Mandatory

Zoom link for synchronous classes is available on Brightspace

05-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	
12-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 - Class Discussion	Synchronous Class. Zoom link on Brightspace Quiz - link on Brightspace	
		Midterm 1	Online - Link on Brightspace
	19-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	
26-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
		02-Jun	Midterm 2
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
09-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
16-Jun	Final Exam review	Review document on Brightspace. No Class.
19 Jun - 25 Jun	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](#)
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](#)
3. Communication: Please allow a minimum of 24 hours to receive a response to your email/query. For tech related issues please contact [ITS](#) 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 2023)

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](#)). 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:* 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](#).
- *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 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](#).
- *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
- *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 3	Statutory holiday, University closed.
May 10	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>early</u> summer courses.	July 4	Late summer courses begin and full summer courses resume.
May 17	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>full</u> summer courses.	July 10	Last day for registration and course changes for <u>late</u> summer courses.
May 17	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from <u>early</u> summer courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.	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	Statutory holiday, University closed.	Aug. 1	Last day for academic withdrawal from full and late summer courses.
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.	Aug. 7	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. 9	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. Classes follow a Monday schedule.	Aug. 16	Last day of <u>late</u> and <u>full</u> summer term classes. Classes follow a Monday schedule.
June 17-18	Last day for handing in term work, subject to any earlier course deadline.	Aug. 17-18	No classes or examinations take place.
June 19-25	No classes or examinations take place.	Aug. 19-25	Final examinations.
June 25	Final examinations.	Aug. 25	Take-home examinations for <u>late</u> or <u>full</u> summer courses are due.
June 25	Take-home examinations for <u>early</u> summer courses are due.		

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
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