

PHIL 2380 – Introduction to Environmental Ethics
Department of Philosophy
Carleton University
0.5 credit

Semester: Winter 2021
Asynchronous Course

Professor: Manvitha Singamsetty
Contact Hours: Appointment by e-mail
E-mail: Manvitha.singamsetty@carleton.ca

TA:
Contact Hours: Appointment by e-mail
Email:

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 conceptualising of the environment, 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. In light of COVID-19, this course will be delivered online. This is an asynchronous course and students are welcome to contact the TA or the instructor as and when needed.

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 – 25%

There will be a total of 10 quizzes, and each quiz will be worth 2.5%. Questions will be based on class readings and the lectures. All quizzes will be conducted online and will be available on the course website on cuLearn.

2. Essay – 40%

a. Workshop – 5%

Due between 11 Jan 2021 and 9 Feb 2021

Using this [link](#) you will need to sign up for the workshop titled ‘Introduction to Fundamentals of Academic Writing’. The skills you will learn in this workshop relate directly to constructing an abstract and a final essay for this course. Once your attendance for the workshop is recorded you will receive 5%

b. Abstract – 10%

Due on 11 Feb 2021

On the course website you will find a list of topics. Choose any ONE topics from this list for your final essay. You will then need to construct an abstract of your essay as well as a bibliography of no less than 5 sources to submit as a blue print for your essay.

c. Final essay – 25%

Due on 16 March 2021

The final essay of about 1500 words will be graded on the quality of analysis, argumentation, and counter arguments presented. Elements of structure, language, and imagination will also be scored and rewarded appropriately. For a detailed guide on essay writing for this course, refer to the “Assignments” tab on the course website.

3. Final Exam – 35%

This will be a scheduled, online, range exam consisting of short and long answer questions. The syllabus, format, and scope of the final exam will be posted on the course website.

Absence from any examination must be justified by valid documentation (e.g. letter from a doctor). 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 on cuLearn.
- Please make sure to do your readings before listening to the lecture recordings.

PHIL 2380 A - Reading Schedule - 2021			
Date	Topic	Reading	Access
12-Jan	Introduction to the course	Textbook pp. xix - xxii	Recorded lecture, available on course website
14-Jan	What is Environmental Ethics?	Textbook pp. 1-15	
19-Jan	Methods of Environmental Ethics	Textbook pp. 16-18, 26-35	
21-Jan	The Normativity of Nature	Textbook pp. 40-54	
26-Jan	Writing workshop	Sign up link provided on course website. This component needs to be completed before 09 Feb 2021	
28-Jan	Natural Value	Textbook pp. 66-74, 77-80	Recorded lecture, available on course website
02-Feb	"The Wild Unknown"	Video	Access instructions on course website
04-Feb	The Wild Unknown		Recorded lecture, available on course website
09-Feb	Anthropocentrism and Indirect Duties	Textbook pp. 95-110	
11-Feb	Essay abstract due	Submit Essay abstract on cuLearn	
16-Feb	Reading Week - No Class		
18-Feb			
23-Feb	Sentience and Morality	Textbook pp. 138-161	Readings and recorded lecture, available on course website
25-Feb	Anishinaabe environmental ethics, sustainability	'TEK and Environmental Futures' by Winona LaDuke	
02-Mar	Indigenous epistemologies and the environment	'We are the Land Native American Views of Nature' by Annie L Booth	
04-Mar	Angry Inuk	Video	Link in ARES

09-Mar	Angry Inuk		Recorded lecture, available on course website
11-Mar	Utilitarianism	Textbook pp. 168-180	
16-Mar	Final essay due - no class	Submit Essay on course website "Assignments" tab	
18-Mar	Utilitarianism	Textbook pp. 198-209	Recorded lecture, available on course website Recorded lecture, available on course website
23-Mar	Deontology	Textbook pp. 198-205	
25-Mar	Deontology	Textbook pp. 212-215, 217-219	
30-Mar	Animal Rights	Textbook pp. 206-211, 215-217	
01-Apr	Gandhi's Environmentalism	'Climate Justice and Gandhian Morality' by Ramya K Tella	
06-Apr	Anthropocene The Human Epoch	Video	Link in ARES
08-Apr	Anthropocene film + Class Discussion	Textbook pp. 410-419	Synchronous class - attendance optional
13-Apr	Final Exam Review	Course website - "Assignments" tab	

Tips for doing well:

1. Students are expected to do the readings before listening to the recorded lectures.
2. On average, you will spend about six hours on this class every week – 3 hours in lectures and 3 hours in preparation and reading for class. In addition, you will spend about 4 hours on the essay abstract, about 18 hours on the final essay, and about 18 hours studying for the final exam so please schedule your semester accordingly.
3. All course related announcements and communication will be channeled through the course website on cuLearn.
4. Please be sure to submit the 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. The 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 (Fall/Winter 2020-21)

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 coming year.

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:* 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 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:

Sept. 9	Classes start.
Sept. 23	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 12	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 26-30	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 27	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 11	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 12-23	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 11	Classes begin.
Jan. 25	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 31	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 2	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 14	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i>
Apr. 15	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 16-27	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 27	All take-home examinations 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