**PHIL 2380 – Introduction to Environmental Ethics**

Department of Philosophy, Carleton University

Winter 2024

0.5 credit

In-Person Course: classes will **not** be recorded or be made available in any way asynchronously.

Class Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:30am-9:55am EST

Lecturer: Dr. Kate Lawson

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 10-11am or by appointment.

Office Location: 3A52 Paterson Hall

E-mail: kate.lawson3@carleton.ca

Teaching Assistant: TBD

TA Office Hours: By appointment

TA email: TBD

*We will do our best to respond to your emails within 48 hours Monday-Friday. To support a work/ life balance, we will not respond to emails on evenings and weekends, so please be sure to ask your questions with ample time.*

**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. 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. This course is an in-person/ on-line blended course, meaning that it combines both in-person synchronous and online 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 in-person classes. 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 debates in environmental ethics.
* learn how to apply phenomenological experience in the world to ethical issues in environmental philosophy.
* 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.

**Assignments:**

1. **Quizzes – 30%**

January 10 - March 31

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 Brightspace.

Quizzes #1-5 are due on January 31 at midnight.

Quizzes #6-9 are due on March 4 at midnight.

Quizzes #10-15 are due on March 31 at midnight.

There will be no extensions beyond these dates, as the correct answers will be released to students for studying purposes.

1. **Midterm - 20%**

Midterm – Wednesday February 7, 8:30AM- Thursday February 8, 8:30AM

The midterm will be conducted online as a range assignment and will be available to you to complete over 24 hours, although it should not take longer than the 1.5 hours of our class time. Midterm will consist of MCQs, short and long answers. Midterm review documents, rubric, questions format etc., and the link to the midterm itself will be available on Brightspace. The midterm is open book and class will not be held in person on Feb 7 to give students ample time to write. Dr. Lawson will be available via email to answer any questions or concerns. Please be sure that you have a quiet space with a good internet connection. The library is always a good option.

1. **Reflection paper on animal ethics -10%**

Due: Friday March 8, midnight

This assignment will be handed in electronically through Brightspace. It will be between 300 and 400 words, double spaced, times new roman font. It will be graded on three components: (1) Your understanding and explication of ONE of: Bonnie Steinbock on “Speciesism and the idea of Equality,” Peter Singer on “All animals are equal,” Charlton on “Abolitionist Approach to Animal Rights,” *or* Cora Diamond on “Eating Meat and Eating People.” (2) Your response (critique or endorsement) to the text with at least one strong argument in favour of your opinion, and (3) your grammar, sentence structure, and coherence. Questions and writing workshop for this assignment will take place in-person on February 12.

1. **Case study on environmental racism in Canada- 10%**

**Due: Friday March 22 at midnight.**

This assignment will be handed in electronically through Brightspace. It will be between 300 and 400 words, double spaced, times new roman font. It will be graded on three components: (1) Your understanding and explication of environmental racism in ONE of: Sarah Marie Weibe on Canada’s Chemical Valley or Ingrid Waldron, on one of the issues brought forward in *There’s Something in the Water* around Nova Scotia and environmental racism. (2) Your response (critique or endorsement) to the text with at least one strong argument in favour of your opinion, and (3) your grammar, sentence structure, and coherence. Questions and writing workshop for this assignment will take place in-person on February 12.

1. **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 rubric, format, and scope of the final exam will be available on Brightspace. The final exam is not cumulative. As with the midterm, you will have 24 hours to complete this exam.

**Late Policy:**

This class has a strict late policy.

All quizzes, assignments, and the final essay are due through submission on Brightspace.The portal will close upon the appointed hour and as such, you will not be able to submit after that point. DO NOT leave your submission to the last few hours.

If you require special accommodation or an extension due to accessibility issues, you must reach out to the **Paul Menton Centre** at the beginning of the semester to set up the accommodation. While it is not necessary, once you have this set up with the PMC, I would appreciate if you let me know if and when you will be needing an extension or an accommodation on a particular project so I can be sure that I have it all set up for you.

Otherwise, extensions may be granted but only under extenuating circumstances. Vacation, travel, and work loads for other courses do not apply. Similarly, you must be present in class to write the final exam. Barring extenuating circumstances, no extensions will be given.

**Course readings and texts:**

All required readings for this course will be made available to you online through Ares.

If you want to purchase a physical copy of any of the books in which our reading selections are found, the corresponding editions can be easily found and purchased online. *This is not required*.

*Please do the day’s reading* before *attending class. This will help you to understand the lecture and engage more thoroughly with the material during our class discussions.*

**Readings:**

Curzer, Howard, 'Aristotle and Moral Virtue', in Nancy E. Snow (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, Oxford Handbooks (2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 6 Dec. 2017), <https://doi-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199385195.013.14>: pp. 104-113.

Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. and ed. Terence Irwin, second ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999), Book VII, Ch 10, 1145a 15- 1152a 36; pp. 99-114.

Kim, Halla. “Some historical Background to Kant’s Moral philosophy,” and “Morality in the Age of Enlightenment,” in Introduction in *Kant and the Foundations of Morality*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015): 12-15 and 19-22.

Kant, Immanuel. “Section 2: The Categorical Imperative,” *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: With an Updated Translation, Introduction, and Notes*. Edited by Allen W. Wood. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2018): AK4:421-AK4:425 OR pp.34-38.

Bykvist, Krister, “The Basic Elements of Utilitarianism,” in *Utilitarianism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2010), 16-19.

Nozick, Robert, “Experience Machine,” *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. (New York, N.Y: Basic Books, 1974), 42-45.

Eichner, Maxine, “What is care ethics?” in *Care Ethics and Political Theory*. Edited by Daniel Engster and Maurice Hamington. First edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3-4.

Simon Ortiz, “Indigenous Sustainability: Language, Community Wholeness, Solidarity,”Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability, eds. Melissa K. Nelson and Dan Shilling (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 85-94.

Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, "Skywoman falling" (pp 3-10), "Putting down roots" (pp 254- 267), "Collateral Damage" (pp 348-359), and "Epilogue: Returning the Gift" (pp 380-384).

“nature”, “commodity”, and “beauty” in Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature*. Project Gutenberg, 2009.

Gifford Pinchot, "Principles of Conservation" pp. 28-30

Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River* (Ballantine Books; Illustrated edition, Dec 12 1986), 237-245.

“Book of Genesis 1:01- 2:025” in *King James Bible*. 1998. Vol. Project Gutenberg ed., 2nd version, 10th ed. Champaign, Ill: Project Gutenberg, pp. 5-7

John Stuart Mill, "Nature" in Essays on Ethics, Religion, and Society (Toronto: UofT press, 1985), 385-386, and 401-402.  
Thomas Aquinas, "Whether It Is Unlawful to Kill Any Living Thing" in The Summa Theologica of St Thomas Aquinas, Part II, Second Number (QQ.XLVII-LXXIX) (New York: Benzinger Brothers, [1485] 1918), pp. 195-197.

Immanuel Kant, "Duties towards Animals and Spirits" in Lectures on Ethics (New York: Haroer and Row, 1963), pp. 238-241.

Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (Oxford: Claredon Press [1789] 1876), pp. 310-311.

Bonnie Steinbock, “Speciesism and the Idea of Equality.” *Philosophy (London)* 53, no. 204 (1978): 247–256.

Peter Singer, “All animals are equal” in Philosophical Exchange, 1:103-116 (1974).

Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, “Reply: Animal Citizenship, Liberal Theory and the Historical Moment.” *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review / Revue Canadienne De Philosophie* 52, no. 4 (2013): 769–86. doi:10.1017/S0012217313000863.

Francione, Gary, and Anna Charlton. “Abolitionist Approach to Animal Rights.” *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare*, vol. 1, 2010, pp. 1–5.

Diamond, Cora. “Eating Meat and Eating People.” *Philosophy (London)* 53, no. 206 (1978): 465–479.

Kristin Shrader-Frechette, "Environmental Justice" Environmental Justice: Creating Equality, Recaliming Democracy (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 3-18.

Sarah Marie Weibe, “Chapter 1: Skeletons in the Closet” in *Everyday Exposure: Indigenous Mobilization and Environmental Justice in Canada's Chemical Valley* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

Page, Elliot, Ian Daniel, Ingrid Waldron, Julia Sanderson, Xavier Coleman, Hugo Perez, and Ingrid. Waldron. *There’s Something in the Water*. place of production not identified: Two Weeks Notice LLC, 2019. (movie)

Hardin, G. “The Tragedy of the Commons. The Population Problem Has No Technical Solution; It Requires a Fundamental Extension in Morality.” *Science (American Association for the Advancement of Science)*, vol. 162, no. 3859, 1968, pp. 1243–48, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.162.3859.1243.

John Locke, “On property” in *Second Treatise of Government.* Edited by Richard Howard Cox, (Harlan Davidson, Incorporated, 1982), section 27-34, pp. 18-22.

Malthus, Thomas Robert, and Shannon C. Stimson. “Book 1, Chapter 1: Ratios of the Increase of Population and Food” in *An Essay on the Principle of Population: The 1803 Edition*. 1st ed., (Yale University Press, 2018), pp. 11-17.

Julian Simon, “3. Can the Supply of Natural Resources - Especially Energy - Really Be Infinite? Yes!” in *The Ultimate Resource 2* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

GAO, Shan. “‘Xujlng’ (Emptiness and Stillness) in Daoism, Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature, and Environmental Ethics.” *Frontiers of philosophy in China* 12, no. 2 (2017): 224–236.

Mathews, Freya. “Letting the World Grow Old: An Ethos of Countermodernity.” *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 3, no. 2 (1999): 119–137.

Karen J. Warren, "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism" *Environmental ethics* 12, no. 2 (1990): 125–146.

Val Plumwood “Being Prey” Terra Nova Vol. 1 no. 3 (Summer 1996): 32-44.

**Class Schedule**

**Monday, Jan 08**

Introduction to the course: Expectations, grades, syllabus, and the concept of environmental ethics.

Reading: No reading for this class.

No Quiz for this class.

**Wednesday, Jan 10**

**Setting the scene for ethics.** What are ethics and what are the main ethical systems in “western” philosophy: Virtue Ethics.

**Readings:** Curzer, Howard, 'Aristotle and Moral Virtue', in Nancy E. Snow (ed.), *The*

*Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, Oxford Handbooks (2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 6 Dec. 2017), <https://doi-org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199385195.013.14>: pp. 104-109.

And

Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. and ed. Terence Irwin, second ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999), Book VII, Ch 10, 1145a 15- 1152a 36; pp. 99-114.

**Quiz #1 on Virtue Ethics posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Jan 31 at midnight.**

**Monday, Jan 15**

**Setting the scene for ethics.** What are ethics and what are the main ethical systems in “western” philosophy: Deontology or Kantian Ethics.

**Reading:** Kim, Halla. “Some historical Background to Kant’s Moral philosophy,” and “Morality in the Age of Enlightenment,” in Introduction in *Kant and the Foundations of Morality*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015): 12-15 and 19-22.

And

Kant, Immanuel. “Section 2: The Categorical Imperative,” *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals: With an Updated Translation, Introduction, and Notes*. Edited by Allen W. Wood. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2018): AK4:421-AK4:425 OR pp.34-38.

**Quiz #2 on Deontology posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Jan 31 at midnight.**

**Wednesday, Jan 17**

**Setting the scene for ethics.** What are ethics and what are the main ethical systems in “western” philosophy: Utilitarianism.

**Reading:** Bykvist, Krister, “The Basic Elements of Utilitarianism,” in *Utilitarianism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2010), 16-19.

And

Nozick, Robert, “Experience Machine,” *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. (New York, N.Y: Basic Books, 1974), 42-45.

**Quiz #3 on Utilitarianism posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Jan 31 at midnight.**

**Monday, Jan 22**

**Setting the scene for ethics.** What are ethics and what are the main ethical systems in “western” philosophy: Ethics of care.

**Reading:** Eichner, Maxine, “What is care ethics?” in *Care Ethics and Political Theory*. Edited by Daniel Engster and Maurice Hamington. First edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3-4.

**Quiz #4 on Ethics of Care posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Jan 31 at midnight.**

**Wednesday, Jan 24**

**Setting the scene for ethics.** Indigenous Ethics and the environment.

**Reading:** Simon Ortiz, “Indigenous Sustainability: Language, Community Wholeness, Solidarity,”Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability, eds. Melissa K. Nelson and Dan Shilling (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 85-94.

**Quiz #5 on Indigenous Environmental Ethics posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Jan 31 at midnight.**

**Monday, Jan 29**

**Indigenous Ethics and the Environment Continued.**

**Reading:** Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, "Skywoman falling" (pp 3-10), "Putting down roots" (pp 254- 267), "Collateral Damage" (pp 348-359), and "Epilogue: Returning the Gift" (pp 380-384).

**Wednesday, Jan 31**

**Origins of “Environmental Ethics” in “western” philosophy**

**Readings:** “nature”, “commodity”, and “beauty” in Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature*. Project Gutenberg, 2009.

Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River* (Ballantine Books; Illustrated edition, Dec 12 1986), 237-245.

**Quizzes 1-5 Due at Midnight tonight. NO EXTENSIONS.**

**Monday, Feb 5**

**Human Dominion over Nature and Midterm Review**

**Readings:** “Book of Genesis 1:01- 2:025” in *King James Bible*. 1998. Vol. Project Gutenberg ed., 2nd version, 10th ed. Champaign, Ill: Project Gutenberg, pp. 5-7

John Stuart Mill, "Nature" in Essays on Ethics, Religion, and Society (Toronto: UofT press, 1985), 385-386, and 401-402.

**Wednesday, Feb 7**

**Midterm**

**Monday, Feb 12**

How to Write in Philosophy Workshop

**Quiz #6 on Genesis and Mill posted on Brightspace and available to complete until March 4 at midnight.**

**Wednesday, Feb 14**

**Animal Ethics: Traditional Perspectives**

**Readings:** Thomas Aquinas, "Whether It Is Unlawful to Kill Any Living Thing" in The Summa Theologica of St Thomas Aquinas, Part II, Second Number (QQ.XLVII-LXXIX) (New York: Benzinger Brothers, [1485] 1918), pp. 195-197.

Immanuel Kant, "Duties towards Animals and Spirits" in Lectures on Ethics (New York: Haroer and Row, 1963), pp. 238-241.

Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (Oxford: Claredon Press [1789] 1876), pp. 310-311.

**Quiz #7 on Aquinas, Kant, and Bentham posted on Brightspace and available to complete until March 4 at midnight.**

**Monday, Feb 19**

Winter Break- No Classes

**Wednesday, Feb 21**

Winter Break- no classes

**Monday, Feb 26**

**Animal Ethics Contemporary Perspectives:**

**Readings:** Bonnie Steinbock, “Speciesism and the Idea of Equality.” *Philosophy (London)* 53, no. 204 (1978): 247–256.

Peter Singer, “All animals are equal” in Philosophical Exchange, 1:103-116 (1974).

**Quiz #8 on Steinbock and Singer posted on Brightspace and available to complete until March 4 at midnight.**

**Wednesday, Feb 28**

**Food and Animals**

**Reading:** Francione, Gary, and Anna Charlton. “Abolitionist Approach to Animal Rights.” *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare*, vol. 1, 2010, pp. 1–5.

Diamond, Cora. “Eating Meat and Eating People.” *Philosophy (London)* 53, no. 206 (1978): 465–479.

**Quiz #9 on Charlton and Diamond posted on Brightspace and available to complete until March 4 at midnight.**

**Monday, Mar 4**

**Environmental Justice**

**Reading:** Kristin Shrader-Frechette, "Environmental Justice" *Environmental Justice: Creating Equality, Reclaiming Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 3-18.

**Quizzes 6-9 Due at Midnight tonight. NO EXTENSIONS.**

**Wednesday, Mar 6**

**Canadian Case Study: Environmental Racism in Ontario’s Chemical Valley**

**Reading**: Sarah Marie Weibe, “Chapter 1: Skeletons in the Closet” in *Everyday Exposure: Indigenous Mobilization and Environmental Justice in Canada's Chemical Valley* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

**Quiz #10 on “Everyday Exposure” posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Sunday March 31 at midnight.**

**Friday March 8, midnight, reflection paper on animal ethics due.**

**Monday, Mar 11**

**Canadian Case Study: Environmental Racism in Nova Scotia**

**No Reading, but please watch:** Page, Elliot, Ian Daniel, Ingrid Waldron, Julia Sanderson, Xavier Coleman, Hugo Perez, and Ingrid. Waldron. *There’s Something in the Water*. place of production not identified: Two Weeks Notice LLC, 2019.

**Quiz #11 on “There’s Something in the Water” posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Sunday March 31 at midnight.**

**Wednesday, Mar 13**

**Private Property**

**Reading:** Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons"

John Locke, “On Property”

**Quiz #12 on Hardin and Locke posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Sunday March 31 at midnight.**

**Monday, Mar 18**

**Natural Resources**

**Readings:** Malthus, Thomas Robert, and Shannon C. Stimson. “Book 1, Chapter 1: Ratios of the Increase of Population and Food” in *An Essay on the Principle of Population: The 1803 Edition*. 1st ed., (Yale University Press, 2018), pp. 11-17.

Julian Simon, “3. Can the Supply of Natural Resources - Especially Energy - Really Be Infinite? Yes!” in *The Ultimate Resource 2* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

**Quiz #13 on Malthus and Simon posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Sunday March 31 at midnight.**

**Wednesday, Mar 20**

**Attention, Daoism, and the Environment**

**Reading:** “Emptiness and Stillness in Daoism” GAO, Shan. “‘Xujlng’ (Emptiness and Stillness) in Daoism, Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature, and Environmental Ethics.” *Frontiers of philosophy in China* 12, no. 2 (2017): 224–236.

**Quiz #14 on Daoism posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Sunday March 31 at midnight.**

**Friday March 22 at midnight: Case study on environmental racism in Canada due.**

**Monday, Mar 25**

**Attention in the environmental ethics tradition**

**Reading:** Mathews, Freya. “Letting the World Grow Old: An Ethos of Countermodernity.” *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 3, no. 2 (1999): 119–137.

**Quiz #15 on Matthews posted on Brightspace and available to complete until Sunday March 31 at midnight.**

**Wednesday, Mar 27**

**Feminist Ecological Ethics**

**Readings:**  Karen J. Warren, "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism" *Environmental ethics* 12, no. 2 (1990): 125–146.

Val Plumwood “Being Prey” Terra Nova Vol. 1 no. 3 (Summer 1996): 32-44.

**Quizzes 10-15 Due at Midnight on Sunday March 31. NO EXTENSIONS.**

**Monday, April 1**

**Exam Review Class**

**Wednesday, April 3**

**Final Thoughts on the course, environmental ethics, and how to move forward ethically.**

No readings for today’s class.

**Monday, April 8**

**Study Hall**

No readings for today’s class.

**Tips for doing well:**

1. Students are expected to do the readings before attending the lectures.
2. Come to class with ideas, questions, critiques, and concerns about the readings.
3. On average, you will spend about nine hours on this class every week – 3 hours in lectures and 6 hours in preparation and reading for class. In addition, you will spend about 4 hours studying for the midterm 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 or not accepted. See late policy above.

**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.