

PHILOSOPHY 533
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Instructor: Jeff Carroll
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Office: 209 Cocke Hall
Office Hours: **TBA**, or by appointment

Class Meeting: Day-Day Time, Location

Course Description:

Is the natural world inherently valuable or is it valuable only as a means to human ends? What are the moral and social implications of thinking of ourselves as parts of nature? What obligations do we have to other animals, and to future generations of human beings? In this course we will explore these and related questions, which increasingly occupy a central place in public discourse in light of worries about overpopulation and climate change, as well as the evolution of a full-blown 'green' cultural movement. The object of this course will be to evaluate major ethical questions that appear in the context of these environmental and social challenges.

Texts:

The textbook/anthology for this course is David R. Keller, ed., *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*. Other required and recommended readings will be available on the Carmen web site for the course.

Schedule of readings and assignments:

(* indicates article is in textbook)

Introduction and overview

March 27 Syllabus review and survey of major themes and aims of course

Tragedy of the commons and global obligations

March 29 *Garrett Hardin, "The Ecological Necessity of Confronting the Problem of Human Overpopulation," pp. 434-442

*Amartya Sen, "Population: Delusion and Reality," pp. 454-467

[Recommended reading on global justice (on Carmen): Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1972, pp. 229-243. Pogge, Thomas. "Severe Poverty as a Violation of Negative Duties." *Ethics & International Affairs* 19.1 (2005): 55-83; "What is Global Justice?" Chapter 1 of *Politics as Usual*, 2010, pp. 10-25.]

Obligations to future generations

Apr 3 Brian Barry, "Sustainability and Intergenerational Justice" (Carmen)

*Bryan Norton, "The Ignorance Argument: What Must We know to be Fair to the Future?" pp. 534-543.

Melinda Roberts, "The Nonidentity Problem," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nonidentity-problem/> **Sections 1-2.1 only**

Gustav Arrhenius et al, "The Repugnant Conclusion," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/repugnant-conclusion/> **Section 1 only**

Anthropocentrism

- Apr 5 *Thomas Aquinas, "Humans as Moral Ends," pp. 63-64
 *Immanuel Kant, "We Have Only Indirect Duties to Animals," pp. 82-83
 Onora O'Neill, "Environmental Values, Anthropocentrism and Speciesism" (Carmen)

Movie Day #1

- Apr 10 *Earthlings* (2005), directed by Shaun Monson

The utilitarian argument for animal rights

- Apr 12 John Stuart Mill, selection from "Whewell's Moral Philosophy" (Carmen)
 *Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal", pp. 169-175
 R.G. Frey, "Utilitarian Critique of Animal Rights" (Carmen)

The radical egalitarian case for animal rights

- Apr 17 *Tom Regan, "Animals as Subjects-of-a-Life," pp. 161-167
 Mary Anne Warren, "A Critique of Regan's Animal Rights Theory" (Carmen)

Extending moral standing to non-animals

- Apr 19 *Paul Taylor, "The Ethics of Respect for Nature," pp. 175-182
 *Christopher Stone, "Should Trees have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects," pp. 110-119.

Holism and endangered species

- Apr 24 *Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," pp. 193-201
 *Holmes Rolston III, "Value in Nature and the Nature of Value," pp. 130-137
 Holmes Rolston, "Duties to Endangered Species" (Carmen)
 Tom Regan, "How to Worry About Endangered Species" (Carmen)

Deep ecology

- Apr 26 Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep Ecology Movement," pp. 230-234
 Andrew McLaughlin, "The Heart of Deep Ecology," pp. 235-239

Short paper due and Movie Day #2

- May 1 *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), directed by Davis Guggenheim

Intrinsic value and valuing things intrinsically

- May 3 G.E. Moore, excerpt from *Principia Ethica* (Carmen)
 *John O'Neill, "The Varieties of Intrinsic Value," pp. 120-128

Thomas Hill, "Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments"
(Carmen)

Virtue ethics and anthropocentrism

May 8 Thomas Hill, "Finding Value in Nature" (Carmen)
Bryan Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism" (Carmen)

Historical critiques of human engagement with nature

May 10 Lynn White, Jr. "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis" (Carmen)
*William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," pp. 359-361

Social ecology

May 15 *David Ehrenfeld, "The Environmental Limits to Globalization," pp. 551-556
*Murray Bookchin, "What is Social Ecology?" pp. 268-275

Ecological feminism

May 17 *Karen J. Warren, "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism," pp. 281-288
*Val Plumwood, "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism," pp. 300-308

Environmental pluralism and pragmatism

May 22 Anthony Weston, "Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics," pp. 311-317
Andrew Light, "Methodological Pragmatism, Pluralism, and Environmental Ethics," pp. 318-325

Movie Day #3

May 24 *WALL-E* (2008), directed by Andrew Stanton

Sustainability

May 29 Herman Daly, "The Steady-State Economy," pp. 516-524
John Elkington, "Making Capitalism Sustainable," pp. 525-533

Review Day

May 31 Overview of quarter and review for final exam

****Final exam****

June 7 (Thursday) 9:30-11:18AM

Course Requirements:

Assignment	Date	Weight
Short Paper (800-1000 words)	May 1	20%
Term Paper (~2400 words)	By end of day on June 1	30%
Final Exam	Thursday, June 7, 9:30-11:18AM	30%
Participation	Ongoing	20%

Grading scheme: A: 93-100, A-: 90-92.9, B+: 87-89.9, B: 83-86.9, B-: 80-82.9, etc...

Late papers: will be accepted only with reasonable advance notice that the paper will be late, and will be marked down one step (e.g. A to A-) per day.

A rough guide to grades: A: truly exceptional work/ A-: excellent work/ B+: very good, clearly above average work/ B: good, above average work / B-: respectable, but not outstanding in any respect/ C+: only fair work/ C: clearly below average/ C-: poor work/ D: barely passable/ F: failing

Class protocols and expectations:

Syllabus: the student is responsible for all information on this syllabus, including the information below about plagiarism. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to contact me or the university writing center for further details.

Participation: involves active engagement with the course material, listening attentively to classmates, contributing to class discussion, including offering opinions about the readings and responding constructively to the views of others. *I will ensure that all sincere and constructive input is taken seriously and that class discussion remains respectful. Personal attacks will not be tolerated.*

Some questions to ask yourself before every class: (1) What were the main concepts and arguments in the readings? (2) Against whom or what is the author arguing? (3) What does the author hope to accomplish in this piece? (4) How does this reading connect to other readings so far?

Attendance: can affect your participation grade. I reserve the right to take attendance at any class. More than two missed classes will result in loss of a letter grade on your final grade. One cannot expect to master the material while missing more than 10% of the classes. If you have to miss a class or exam, it is your responsibility to notify me *before the day of class*, or (in the case of exams) *as far ahead of time as possible*.

Come prepared for class: this means, above all else, that you have done the reading assigned for that day. You are responsible for keeping up with this schedule of readings. *I will post all readings on Carmen in a timely manner.* Reading philosophy can take considerable effort, as it is argumentative, not narrative, in nature. Leave enough time to read the articles twice through. Bring readings to class, for reference during class.

Texting and so forth: please turn off cellular phones during class. Those obviously checking email, doing social media, or so forth will have their participation grade affected.

Office hours: are there for your benefit. Please do not leave questions until just before the exams. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are staying up with the class. *I am happy to answer questions and provide further help to those engaging seriously with the work of the class.*

Rough guide to participation grade: A: the student excels in the foregoing by contributing significantly and substantively to class discussion, engaging respectfully with other students, exhibiting excellent preparation for class, and attending class regularly. B: the student does well in the foregoing by occasionally contributing to class discussion, engaging respectfully with other students, exhibiting good

preparation for class, and attending class regularly. C: the student does a fair job in the foregoing by contributing infrequently, listening respectfully but engaging fellow students very little, exhibiting only cursory preparation for class, or attending class less than regularly. D-F: student does poorly in the foregoing, rarely contributing if at all, perhaps disrupting class, exhibiting little or no preparation for class, or attending class infrequently.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a very serious issue – and **I am required to report any case of possible misconduct to the University**. I will be vigilant about plagiarism and other forms of cheating. I require electronic submission of papers so that I can run them through different databases for the purposes of catching plagiarism. For all our benefit, please simply do the required readings and make use of the course resources, and your instructor (me), to do well by appropriate means. I am here to help. Following is a useful paragraph from my colleague, Prof. Don Hubin:

The University understands academic misconduct to include “any activity which tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution, or subvert the educational process” (<http://oaa.osu.edu/procedures/1.0.html>). Examples include, but are not limited to, such actions as cheating on exams and submitting a term paper written by another. No one should be unclear about whether *these* are wrong, but students are sometimes not clear about what constitutes plagiarism. ‘Plagiarism’ is defined by the University to be “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrase of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” There should be no misunderstanding about word for word transcriptions or simple paraphrases—these *must* be acknowledged through proper citations. It is sometimes not clear, though, when simply using the ideas of another requires citation. This is especially true in the context of a course, in which one is, presumably acquiring fundamental ideas of a subject matter from the text or the instructor. Certain ideas are “in the public domain,” so to speak; they are ideas used by everyone working in the field, and do not require citation. Other ideas are such that their origin needs to be acknowledged. It is sometimes difficult for beginning students to distinguish these. It is helpful to remember that what is at issue is whether the failure to acknowledge a source would tend to misrepresent the idea as your own. The failure to acknowledge your source for a distinction between consequentialism and deontology, for example, would not tend to misrepresent the distinction as your own since it is a distinction that most people working in the field will draw in some way or other. To offer a *specific* account of this distinction that is offered by another without citing the source could easily tend to misrepresent the account as your own. It is clearly better to err on the side of over-acknowledgment in cases in which one is in doubt. Electronic copies of papers will be scanned for plagiarism and inappropriate use of web-based materials.

Disability Services:

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. They should inform me as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>