

PHIL 435A (001) – Environmental Ethics
Winter Term 1, 2016 – 17
Mon, Wed, Fri, 12:00 – 13:00
Geography Building (GEOG), Room 200

Instructor: Bruno Guindon
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Office hours: Mon, Wed, 11:00 – 12:00

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Email:
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Course description

This course offers an introduction to environmental philosophy. Questions to be addressed include: Do we have obligations to the nonhuman world? If so, what explains these obligations? Do nonhuman animals have rights? Is nature valuable? If so, what kind of value does it have? What is the scope of moral considerability? How many people should there be?

We begin with a brief historical survey of answers to some of these questions. We then move on to consider answers from more contemporary authors and environmental ethicists, and reveal some of the metaphysical and metaethical assumptions that underpin them. While no prior familiarity with philosophy is required for this course, students may benefit from having taken at least one prior philosophy course (e.g. introduction to moral theory).

Required Text

- Keller, David R. (ed.) (2010). *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 581 pages. (Available for purchase at the UBC bookstore)
- In addition to the above reader, we will be readings some philosophy journal articles, all of which will be freely accessible via *Connect*. See provisional reading schedule for further details.

Evaluation

- Six reading reflections, six questions, and at least two responses, posted on *Connect* (15% total)
- Two in-class quizzes (10% each)
- Short paper, 4 – 5 pages (25%)
- Final paper, 7 – 10 pages (35%)
- Participation (5%)

Reading reflections, discussion questions and responses

Starting in week 3—and excluding week 6—you will be expected to submit six reading reflections of weekly readings. Readings are denoted by authors' names (except for “Keller”) on the provisional reading schedule. On which reading you write is entirely up to you. However, *it is also entirely your responsibility to make sure you submit three reflections by the end of week 7 and three more by the end of term*. These reflections need not be long: one or two paragraphs will often suffice. Additionally, you are required to end each reflection with a discussion question that relates to the reading. This question should invite further thought and consideration about a topic or concept from the reading that you found interesting or

challenging. *Reading reflections and discussion questions must be submitted via Connect before the beginning of the class in which the reading is being discussed.* Under no circumstances will reflections and discussion questions be accepted once the class has begun.

In addition to submitting reading reflections and discussion questions, you will be required to respond to *at least two questions* posed by your fellow classmates via *Connect*. Again, when you choose to answer these questions is entirely up to you, but you must respond to the questions within the week they are posted. For example, you will not be able to respond to a question in week 6 that was posted in week 4. Again, you are responsible to ensure that you respond to at least two questions by the end of term.

Handouts, additional readings, paper topics, etc.

Handouts, additional readings, and paper topics will be distributed via *Connect*; announcements will also be distributed through the announcement functions available here: thus, check *Connect* routinely.

Participation

As stated above, your participation in the course counts for 5% of your final mark. There are no specific criteria by which I evaluate student participation. Your participation in this course will be evaluated holistically. That is, there are various ways one can obtain participation marks. These include, but are not limited to the following: active contribution in class, asking questions, offering comments, coming to office hours, and generally engaging with the course material. *It should be noted that merely attending classes is not sufficient to receive full participation marks.*

Policy on Lateness

Assignments or essays which are turned in late without an extension will be penalized at the rate of 5% *per calendar day*. No extensions will be given on assignments or essays except for medical reasons. The deadline for requesting an extension is one business day before an assignment is due. Differed exams will not be considered except for medical reasons.

Academic honesty and integrity

Here is a statement from the UBC website:

“Academic honesty is essential to the continued functioning of the University of British Columbia as an institution of higher learning and research. All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Breach of those expectations or failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action.

It is the student's obligation to inform himself or herself of the applicable standards for academic honesty. Students must be aware that standards at the University of British Columbia may be different from those in secondary schools or at other institutions. If a student is in any doubt as to the standard of academic honesty in a particular course or assignment, then the student must consult with the instructor as soon as possible, and in no case should a student submit an assignment if the student is not clear on the relevant standard of academic honesty. If an allegation is made against a student, the Registrar may

place the student on academic hold until the President has made his or her final decision. When a student is placed on academic hold, the student is blocked from all activity in the Student Service Centre.”

Students should also familiarise themselves with UBC regulation on plagiarism:

“Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments.”

See the following link for further information about academic dishonesty and plagiarism:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/?tree=3,54,111,959>

Provisional Reading Schedule

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Mon, Wed, Fri, 12:00 – 13:00

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Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
Week 1			
Wed. 7 Sept.	▪ Introduction	▪ Course Syllabus	
Fri. 9	▪	▪	▪ Class cancelled
Week 2			
Mon. 12	▪ What is Environmental Ethics?	▪ Keller 1 – 23	
Wed. 14		▪ Cont'd.	
Fri. 16	▪ Why study Environmental Ethics?	▪ Various authors 27 – 53	
Week 3			
Mon. 19	▪ Anthropocentrism and duties to nonhumans	▪ Keller 59 – 62 ▪ Aquinas 63 – 64 ▪ Descartes 69 – 73	
Wed. 21		▪ Mill 73 – 77 ▪ Bacon 65 – 68 ▪ Locke 77 – 81	
Fri. 23		▪ Kant 82 – 83 ▪ Beckerman & Pasek 83 – 87	
Week 4			
Mon. 26	▪ Non-anthropocentrism and value	▪ Keller 91 – 92 ▪ Thoreau 93 – 95 ▪ Muir 96 – 97 ▪ Sylvan 98 – 103	
Wed. 28		▪ O'Neill 120 – 129	
Fri. 30		▪ Rolston 130 – 137	
Week 5			
Mon. 3 Oct.		▪ Regan (1992) <i>Does Environmental Ethics Rest on a Mistake?</i>	▪ Available on <i>Connect</i>
Wed. 5		▪ Midgley 137 – 142	
Fri. 7		▪ Bradley (2001) <i>The Value of Endangered Species</i>	▪ Available on <i>Connect</i> ▪ First paper topics posted on <i>Connect</i>

Week 6			
Mon. 10	▪ University Closed		▪ Thanksgiving Day
Wed. 12	▪ Essay writing	▪ Horban (1993) <i>Writing a philosophy paper</i> ▪ Horban (2005) <i>Quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing</i>	▪ Available on <i>Connect</i>
Fri. 14	In-class quiz		▪ Open book; no computers or smart phones allowed

Week 7			
Mon. 17	▪ Direct Moral Standing (DMI): <i>Hierarchical biocentrism</i>	▪ Keller 149 – 153 ▪ Ferré 154 – 161	
Wed. 19	▪ DMI: <i>psychocentrism</i>	▪ Regan 161 – 168 ▪ Cohen (1997) <i>Do Animals Have Rights?</i>	▪ Available on <i>Connect</i>
Fri. 21		▪ Singer 169 – 175	▪ First paper due at the beginning of class

Week 8			
Mon. 24	▪ DMI: <i>Egalitarian biocentrism</i>	▪ Talor 175 – 182	
Wed. 26		▪ Sterba 182 – 192	
Fri. 28	▪ DMI: <i>Ecocentrism</i>	▪ Leopold 193 – 201	

Week 9			
Mon. 31		▪ Callicott 201 – 210	
Wed. 2 Nov.	▪ Alternative grounds for environmental ethics (AG): <i>Deep ecology</i>	▪ Keller 223 – 229 ▪ Naess 230 – 234 ▪ McLaughlin 235 – 239	
Fri. 4	▪ AG: <i>Virtue environmental ethics</i>	▪ Sandler 252 – 256	

Week 10			
Mon. 7	▪ AG: <i>Ecofeminism</i>	▪ Warren 281 – 291	
Wed. 9		▪ Merchant 291 – 300	
Fri. 11	▪ University Closed		▪ Remembrance Day

Week 11			
Mon. 14		▪ Plumwood 300 – 310	
Wed. 16	▪ Environmental Metaethics (EM): <i>Subjectivism</i>	▪ Keller 339 – 341 ▪ Elliot 342 – 351	

Fri. 18	▪ EM: <i>Constructivism</i>	▪ King 352 – 359 ▪ Cronon 359 – 361	▪ Second paper topics posted on <i>Connect</i>
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Week 12			
Mon. 21	▪ EM: <i>Realism</i>	▪ Shepard 362 – 367	
Wed. 23	▪ Environmental Public Policy and Population	▪ Keller 415 – 421 ▪ Malthus 422 - 426	
Fri. 25		▪ Harding 434 – 443 ▪ Commoner 443 – 447	

Week 13			
Mon. 28		▪ Parfit (2004) <i>Overpopulation and the quality of life</i>	▪ Available on <i>Connect</i>
Wed. 30		▪ Cont'd.	
Fri. 2 Dec.	▪ In-class quiz		▪ Open book; no computers or smart phones allowed

Final paper due by Friday, Dec. 9th, BUCH E171, 15:00.