

Philosophy and the Environment

Philosophy 215
MWF 1:50–2:50am
Howard 259

Fall 2017



My Information

Here is my information:

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Howard 230

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Office hours: W 11:30-1:30pm or by appointment

Course Introduction

In this course, we ask four questions concerning our environment and our relationships to it and consider a variety of answers.

- What matters morally for its own sake? Do only present humans matter morally? Do future humans matter as well and just as much? What about non-human animals - do their pains and pleasures matter?
- What is wilderness and is it the same thing as wildness? Is the very notion of wilderness ecologically problematic or morally suspect (i.e., ethnocentric)? Should we designate and conserve wilderness?
- What is biodiversity and why should we conserve it? Is it valuable only because of the agricultural and pharmaceutical products derived from it? Is it only valuable because of the ecosystems services it provides? What about ecotourism and aesthetic experience? Is it only valuable as a means to an end?
- The richest 500 million people found in China, Europe, India, Japan, and the United States (8% of humans) emit half of the greenhouse gases with the poorest 3 billion emitting next to nothing. What should we – as a nation and as individuals – be doing about anthropogenic climate change given that the US has historically been one of the largest GHG emitters per capita? How can we live sustainably and solve this problem?

Course Materials

There are four books for this course. Any other reading will be electronically distributed to you.

- Simon Caney, Stephen Gardiner, Dale Jamieson, and Henry Shue (2010) *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*. Oxford University Press.
- Jonathan Newman, Gary Varner, and Stefan Linquist (2017) *Defending Biodiversity: Environmental Science and Ethics*. Cambridge University Press.

- O'Neill, J., A. Holland, and A. Light (2007) *Environmental Values*. Routledge Press.
- Woods, Mark (2017) *Rethinking Wilderness*. Broadview Press.

Course Requirements

In this course, your grade will be determined by 4 exams (or 3 exams and 1 paper) along with class participation/attendance. The four exams represent 80% of your grade. Participation is 15% and attendance is 5%.

Exams

You will be given 4 exams ($4 \times 20\%$). The final exam will be cumulative. I will circulate questions a week in advance (e.g. eight questions) and will pick a subset (e.g. four questions) to answer. You should expect an exam every 5 weeks.

Papers

If you prefer, you can *replace your final exam* with one 6-8 page paper that should have a well-defined thesis that is clearly argued. The essay should be without spelling and grammatical errors. What follows is a rough indication of what I look for in grading papers.

A, 90+, Excellent – Papers receiving a grade in this range clearly demonstrate advanced understanding of the basic concepts and issues in the text(s). In addition, these papers provide a sustained argument and critique of the text or provide substantial and interesting questions concerning the interpretation of the text. The paper as a whole is tightly focused and well-organized. Errors in grammar or spelling are nonexistent.

B, 80-89, Good – Papers receiving a grade in this range demonstrate a basic, but thorough, understanding of basic concepts and issues. Where understanding is lacking, an earnest attempt at interpreting the author is evident. In addition, these responses show a somewhat successful attempt at critical examination, argument, or questioning of the text. The paper as a whole is mostly focused and well-organized. Errors in grammar and spelling are minimal.

C, 2, 70-79, Satisfactory – Papers receiving a grade in this range demonstrate some (possibly incomplete) understanding of basic concepts and issues. In addition, these responses show little or no earnest attempt at interpretation, critical examination, or questioning of the text. Paper lacks focus and is poorly organized. Errors in grammar or spelling are frequent.

D - F, Unsatisfactory – Papers receiving a grade in this range have failed to demonstrate any degree of real understanding of basic concepts and issues, and lack evidence of an earnest attempt to do so.

Participation

Your participation in class is evaluated for each class along the following rubric.

0

- Absent

1

- You are present and not disruptive (e.g. talking to others)
- You didn't do the reading
- You don't offer much by way of discussion
- You are not actively listening (e.g. watching cat/dog videos on Facebook)

2

- You did the reading but don't show any evidence of analysis
- You offer straightforward information without elaboration
- You don't attempt to contribute to discussion
- You listen here and there

3

- You show good preparation knowing the reading well and thought it about it
- You contribute to discussion building off other's comments, offers constructive questions, offers supporting suggestions, and don't dominate conversation

- You are clearly engaged paying attention to the discussion

4

- You have prepared excellently - you have through read the reading and can bring other information to bare on it
- You can analyze and synthesize the reading with other material encountered in class
- You responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contribute to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material, etc.
- You are actively involved and listening

Attendance

Philosophy can be difficult. To prevent this, you should attend class regularly. Thus, I will allow you to miss a maximum of six classes unpenalized but for each class thereafter you will lose 1% of your final grade. Participation grade reflects absence at most, but more than 6 absences and your attendance grade can subtract from your final grade.

Late work

All assignments are due on the scheduled dates. However, if you come to me at least *one full day in advance* you may have one week's extension, no excuse required. If you do not have an extension, for every day your assignment is not turned in, your assignment is lowered one letter grade (i.e. 10 points). Be aware that turning in a paper by extension will delay feedback and that you may not have the time you need to improve and develop before the next assignment.

Grade Scale

The course grading scale is as follows:

A = 93 – 100, A- = 90 – 92, B+ = 86 – 89, B = 83 – 85, B- = 80 – 82, C+ = 76 – 79, C = 73 – 75, C- = 70 – 72, D+ = 66 – 69, D = 60 – 65, F = 0 – 59

It is impossible to do well in this course without reading and studying. I suggest that you *carefully* read the assigned material taking notes on what

you read. You are strongly encouraged to discuss the course material with others outside of class. I am happy to help you outside of class. That is why I keep office hours.

Plagiarism

All students are expected to follow Lewis & Clark College's Academic Integrity Policy. This is stated in Lewis Clark College's College Catalog. Generally, plagiarizers and cheaters will be given an F for the entire course (they will not be allowed to drop or withdraw from the course). Also, your case will be given to the Honor Board where in addition to a failing grade you will receive disciplinary action.

Learning Differences

If you have been diagnosed with a learning difference and are seeking an accommodation, please provide me, as soon as possible, with a "Notice of Disability and Statement of Accommodation" from Dale Hollaway, Coordinator of Student Support Services.

Tentative Schedule

Here is our schedule which is of course revisable.

Week 1 Environmental Values

- Ch. 1 Values and the Environment
- Ch. 2 Human Well-being and the Natural World

Week 2 Environmental Values

- Ch. 3. Consequentialism and its Critics
- Ch. 4 Equality, Justice and Environment
- Ch. 5 Value Pluralism, Value Commensurability, and Environmental Choice

Week 4 *Rethinking Wilderness*

- Introduction: The Received Wilderness Idea
- Ch. 1 Wilderness: Conceptual and Historical Background
- Ch. 2 Naturalized Human Distinctiveness: The Naturalist Argument
- Ch. 3 An Other-Than-Human World: The Social Constructivist Argument

Week 5 *Rethinking Wilderness*

- Ch. 4 Trammeling Wilderness: The No-Wilderness Argument
- Ch. 5 Trammeling People 1: The Imperial Argument
- Ch. 6 Upsetting the Balance of Nature: The Ecological Argument

FIRST EXAM

Week 6 *Rethinking Wilderness*

- Ch. 7 Trammeling People 2: The Environmental Justice Argument
- Ch. 8 Wilderness Preservation and the Other-Than-Human World: The Management Argument
- Ch. 9 Natural, Wild, and Free: Toward a Wilderness Ethic

Week 7 *Climate Ethics*

- “A Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change, Intergenerational Ethics and the Problem of Moral Corruption”, Stephen M. Gardiner
- “One Atmosphere”, Peter Singer
- “Subsistence Emissions and Luxury Emissions”, Henry Shue

Week 8 *Climate Ethics*

- “Global Environment and International Inequality”, Henry Shue
- “Greenhouse Development Rights: A Framework for Climate Protection that is ‘More Fair’ than Equal per Capita Emissions Rights”, Paul Baer, with Tom Athanasiou, Sivan Kartha and Eric Kemp-Benedict
- “Selling Environmental Indulgences”, Robert Goodin

Week 9 *Climate Ethics*

- “Adaptation: Who Pays Whom?”, Paul Baer
- “Is ‘Arming the Future’ with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil? Some Doubts About the Ethics of Intentionally Manipulating the Climate System’, Stephen M. Gardiner
- “It’s Not My Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations”, Walter Sinnott Armstrong

SECOND EXAM

Week 10 *Defending Biodiversity*

- Ch. 1 Biodiversity and the Environmental Agenda
- Ch. 2 Ecosystem Functioning and Stability
- Ch.3 The Precautionary Principle

Week 11 *Defending Biodiversity*

- Ch. 4 Agricultural and Pharmaceutical Benefits
- Ch. 5 Nature-based Tourism and “Transformative Value”
- Ch. 6 How Far do Instrumental Value Defenses Get Environmentalists?

Week 12 *Defending Biodiversity*

- Ch. 7 Methodology in Philosophical Ethics
- Ch. 8 Extensionism in Environmental Ethics
- Ch. 9 Ecoholism: Do Ecological Wholes have Intrinsic Value?

Week 13 *Defending Biodiversity*

- Ch. 10 Ecoholism 2: Callicott on the Leopold Land Ethic
- Ch. 11 Should Biodiversity be Conserved for its Aesthetic Value?
- Ch. 12 How Far Do Intrinsic Value Defenses Get Environmentalists?

Week 14 *Defending Biodiversity*

- Ch. 13 Conclusions and Personal Reflections

THIRD EXAM

FOURTH EXAM/PAPER