

Syllabus, PHIL*2070
Philosophy of the Environment
Winter 2011

Instructor	Email	Lecture
Stefan Linquist	linquist@uoguelph.ca	Monday & Wednesday
Office: MACK 358		1:30- 2:20
Hours: Mon. & Wed. 2:30-3:00 (or by appointment)		MacNaughton, 105

Teaching Assistants	Sections	office / hrs
Ryan Krahn	rkrahn@uoguelph.ca	1 & 2 MACK 360 /Mon. 3:45-4:45
Nick Purdy	npurdy@uoguelph.ca	3 & 4 MACK 325 / Wed. 2:30-3:30
John Lundy	jlundy@uoguelph.ca	5 & 6 MACK 367 / Thur. 3:30- 4:30
David Hunt	dhunt01@uoguelph.ca	7 & 8 SCIE 1466 /Wed. 1:00-1:30 & Thur. 10:30-11
Emily Jaklic	ejaklic@uoguelph.ca	9 & 10 Mack 367 / Mon. 2:30-3:30

Course Description

This course will critically examine popular beliefs about the environment and humanity's relationship to it. We begin with the foundations of modern environmentalism. This movement was grounded on an image of Mother Nature as an interconnected whole whose components hang together in delicate balance. Human progress and development supposedly threaten the balance of Nature. We will consider whether this picture withstands philosophical and scientific scrutiny. The second part of the course investigates recent debates over climate change. Often, people or governments who are reluctant to take action to prevent climate change are disparaged as irresponsible or unscientific. What do these accusations say about public perceptions of science and policy? How accurate is the public understanding of climate change? Does it matter? The third part of the course will investigate economic approaches to environmental decision making. For example, is it possible to quantify the value of biodiversity or the cost of pollution in economic terms? Or, does an economic framework overlook important ethical and aesthetic reasons for valuing nature?

Course Objectives

- By critically engaging with the core themes of the course student will develop their skills in philosophical analysis and argumentation.
- Students will gain experience in conducting independent research and in communicating the results of that research, both verbally and in writing.
- Students will deepen their understanding of environmental science and philosophy to the point where they are able to identify and evaluate the ideologies and theories on which policy issues are based.

Reading

Readings for the first 2/3^{rds} of the course are available as pdf files on the course website:
www.biophilosophy.ca/Teaching/Philosophy2070.html

The final 1/3rd will focus on M. Sagoff's, The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law and the Environment, Cambridge Press. It is available at the bookstore.

Assessment

Reflection Questions	10%	Midterm	20%
Participation	5%	Climate Chg. paper	25%
Skeptical Env. Assignment	10%	Final	30%

Course Outline

Part 1: A Critical Look at the Foundations of Environmentalism.

Week 1 – What is the Land Ethic?

10/01 Introduction to course themes and expectations.

12/01 *Read:* Aldo Leopold, Ecocentrism: The Land Ethic (p. 163- 172).

Tutorial: First meeting (receive assignment).

Week 2 - Do moral obligations extend to nonhumans?

17/01 *Read:* Baird Callicott, Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic (p. sections I-IX; p. 173-181)

19/01 *Read:* Mark Sagoff, Animal Liberation & Enviro. Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce (p. 38-44).

Tutorial: Group meetings for Skeptical Environmentalism project.

Week 3 – Species and ecological communities, are they morally significant?

24/01 *Read:* Lilly-Marlene Russow, Why do Species Matter? (p. 137-144).

26/01 *Read:* J. Kricher, Nothing endures except change (p. 165-174).

Tutorial: Meet and research Skeptical Environmentalism projects

Week 4 – Can Deep Ecology serve as a foundation for environmentalism?

31/01 *Read:* Arne Naess, The World of Concrete Contents (p. 43-55).

02/02 *Read:* Elliott Sober, Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism (p. 179- 191).

Tutorial: ****Present skeptical environmentalist group projects****

Week 5 – Wherein lies natural beauty, and should it inform conservation decisions?

07/02: *Read:* Yuirko Saito, The Aesthetics of Unscenic Nature (p. 101- 111).

09/02: *Read:* Emily Brady, Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature (p. 139-147).

Tutorial: Assign Climate Chg, paper topics and review “How to write a philosophy paper”.

Week 6 – Review and exam

14/02 – Review /overflow class

16/02 – First Midterm Exam

****Midterm***

No Tutorials this week.

Winter Break

Part 2: Climate Change and the Scientific Method.

Week 7 – What is at issue in the climate change controversy?

28/02 Read: G. Monbiot, Introduction (p. ix-xiii) & Chapter 1, A Faustian pact (p. 1-19).

02/03 Read: G. Monbiot, The denial industry (p. 20-42).

Tut: Assign Outline for paper topics.

Week 8 – How accurate is the public understanding of science?

07/03 ****Guest lecture on the Science of Climate Change ****

09/03 Read: Woodward & Goodstein, Conduct, misconduct and the structure of science (p. 12-22).

Tutorial: Outline for paper topics due.
Discussion of climate change issues.

Week 9- How justified are concerns over climate change?

14/03 Read: E. Crist, Beyond the climate change crisis (p. 29-55).

16/03 Guest lecture on science and society ****Climate chg. papers due in class****

Tutorial: Paper outlines handed back and discussed.

Part 3: Economic analysis and environmental values.

Week 10 – Are all political questions economic?

21/03 Read: *Economy of the Earth* Chapter 1 (p. 2-18).

23/03 Read: *Economy of the Earth* Chapter 2 (p. 24-42).

Tutorial: Discuss economic approach to env. decision making.

Week 11 – Can we put a price on nature's services?

28/03: Read: *Economy of the Earth* Chapter 3 (p. 55-66).

30/03 Read: *Economy of the Earth* Chapter 5 (p. 87-108).

Tutorial: Arboretum visit.

Week 12 – Are consumption and overpopulation serious environmental issues?

04/04 – *Economy of the Earth*, Chapter 6 (p. 110-127).

06/04 – *Economy of the Earth*, Chapter 8 (p. 157-174).

Tutorial: Review for final exam.

21/04 Final exam: 11:30-1:30 Room TBA

Weekly Reflections

You are expected to show up to class having completed the readings assigned for that day. You are also expected to bring a printed version of your answers to discussion questions, if they have been assigned.

Lateness Policy

All assignments must be submitted in class on the due dates or before class (electronically) to both TA and instructor. No assignments will be accepted late without documented or otherwise legitimate justification. Papers must be emailed to the instructor as well as submitted by hard copy.

Plagiarism

Most students think they understand what plagiarism is, but in my experience this is often not so. I therefore direct you to this online tutorial on plagiarism. It takes a few minutes to complete. You will be held responsible for this material.

<http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/tutorials/plagiarism-tutorial>

E-mail Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> email account regularly: email is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement...

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester **Winter '11** courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday March 11th**. For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources

The Undergraduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate programs. It can be found at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/>