



PHIL*3280 21st Century Philosophy

Fall 2019

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 2.00 - September 18, 2019

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This course is an introduction to the most current philosophical texts and movements developed since the beginning of the 21st Century. Students will be taught to understand and work creatively with the most recent ideas in the discipline. Material covered will focus almost exclusively on the philosophical texts written in or after the year 2000.

Pre-Requisites: 1.50 credits in Philosophy or 7.50 credits

1.2 Course Description

Environmental philosophy was a product of the twentieth century. This discipline coalesced in the 1940s with Aldo Leopold's idea that ecosystems are organism-like entities that deserve moral standing in their own right. In the 1960s Rachel Carson reinforced this holistic view of nature, showing that industrial pollutants were having unexpected effects throughout the food chain. Later in the 20th Century, authors like E.O. Wilson and Paul and Anne Ehrlich drew public attention to the so called biodiversity crisis. The twentieth century closed with the worry of catastrophic climate change and the idea of a new epoch- the Anthropocene – in which human influence is pervasive and wilderness is lamented. A thread running throughout this environmental thinking is a dichotomy between humans and nature. Pristine wilderness was accepted as an unquestioned ideal, while human impact was regarded as inherently bad.

However, this dichotomy between humans versus nature has come under scrutiny in the 21st century. Ecologists have largely rejected the idea of a balance of nature. Historians have revealed some of the destructive consequences of the "myth" of pristine wilderness, especially for Indigenous peoples who were excluded from their rightful territory to make way for so called natural parks. Philosophers continue to point out that naturalness is problematic both as an empirical and as a normative concept. Hence, many people are starting to view the 21st century as a post-natural era. But does this mean the end of environmental ethics as we know it? Without an idea of "the natural" as something towards which we should strive, what basis is left for evaluating decisions as right or wrong?

Almost every week you will be required to submit a reflection assignment, worth a cumulative 40%. Students are expected to attend all lectures and to participate in guided discussions (15%). Students will work in small groups to guide a discussion (10%). The final project will be a research paper on some topic relating to the theme of the course (35%).

1.3 Timetable

Monday and Wednesday 11:30-12:50

1.4 Final Exam

There is no final exam per se. The research paper will be due during the exam period.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor:	Stefan Linquist
Email:	linquist@uoguelph.ca
Telephone:	+1-519-824-4120 x56672
Office:	MCKN 358

2.2 Office Hours

9:00-10:00 Monday/Wednesday.

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resources

Thinking Like a Mall (Textbook)

Vogel, S. (2015), *Thinking Like a Mall: Environmental Philosophy After the End of Nature*. MIT Press.

Rethinking Wilderness (Textbook)

Woods, M. (2017), *Rethinking Wilderness*. Broadview Press.

Trouble with Wilderness (Article)

<http://faculty.washington.edu/timbillio/Readings%20and%20documents/Wilderness/Cronon%20>

Cronon, W. (1996), *The trouble with wilderness, or, getting back to the wrong nature*. *Environmental History* 1:7-28.

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. 1. Analyze and evaluate major historical and conceptual developments in 21st Century Philosophy of Nature. 2. Identify and critically evaluate the practical significance of major developments in moral philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics, feminism, aesthetics, social and political philosophy, and existentialism. 3. Read and comprehend complex original source materials in the history and problems of philosophy. 4. Write clearly and cogently on advanced problems in philosophy. 5. Be skilled in the use of key tools for sound justification and rational persuasion, including formal and informal logic, the gathering of empirical evidence, the discerning of implicit bias and the balanced judgment of conflicting interpretations.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

5.1 Lecture

Week 1

Topics: Read and discuss Cronon's article, "The trouble with wilderness." (available on Courselink)

Submit reflection on Cronon **(Due Friday September 13)**

Week 2

Topics: Monday: Guided discussion on Cronon article. .

Wednesday: Lecture on Thinking Like a Mall Ch 1 "Against Nature" (p. 1-32) .

Friday: Submit reflection on Ch 1 Against Nature" **(Due Friday Sept 20)**.

Week 3

Topics: Monday: Guided discussion of Thinking Like a Mall Chapter 1.

Wednesday: Lecture on Thinking Like a Mall Chapter 2, "The Social Construction of Nature" (p. 33-64).

Friday: Submit reflection on Chapter 2. **Due Friday Sept 27.**

Week 4

Topics: Monday: Discussion of questions on Chapter 2.

Wednesday: Lecture on Chapter 3, "Alienation, Nature, and the Environment." (p.65-94)

Friday: Submit reflection on "Alienation, Nature, and the Environment." **Due Friday Oct. 4.**

Week 5

Topics: Monday: Discuss reflections on Chapter 3.

Wednesday: Lecture on Thinking Like a Mall Chapter 4. "The Nature of Artifacts." (p. 95-128).

Friday: Submit reflection on Chapter 4. "The Nature of Artifacts." **Due Friday Oct. 11.**

Week 6

Topics:

Monday: Thanksgiving Holiday

Wednesday: Lecture on Thinking Like a Mall Chapter 5. "Thinking Like a Mall." (p. 129-166).

Friday: Submit reflection on Chapter 5. **Due Friday Oct. 18.**

Week 7

Topics:

Monday: discussion of Ch 5 questions.

Wednesday: Lecture on Thinking Like a Mall Chapter 7, "Democracy and the Commons"(p. 199-238)

Friday: Submit reflection on Chapter **Due Friday Oct. 25**

Week 8

Topics:

Monday: Final discussion of Vogel book - where do things stand?

Wednesday: Student Led discussion of Rethinking Nature Ch 2 "Naturalized Human Distinctiveness: the Naturalness Argument" (p. 39-64).

Friday: Submit reflection on either Chapter 3 or Chapter 4 of Rethinking Nature. **Due Friday Oct. 25.**

Week 9

Topics:

Student guided discussion of Rethinking Wilderness

Monday: CH 3: "An other-than-human world: The social constructivist argument." (65-92).

Wednesday: Ch 4, "Trammelling Wilderness: The No

Wilderness Argument" (p. 93-122),

Friday: Submit reflection on either Chapter 5 or Chapter 6 of Rethinking Wilderness.

Week 10

Topics:

Student guided discussion of Rethinking Wilderness

Monday: Ch 5, "Trammeling People 1: The Imperial Argument. (p, 123-148).

Wednesday: Ch 6, "Upsetting the Balance of Nature: The Ecological Argument." (149-180)

Friday: Submit reflection on either Ch 7 or Ch 8. **Due Friday Nov 15.**

Week 11

Topics:

Student guided discussion of Rethinking Wilderness

Monday: Ch 7, "Trammelling People 2: The Environmental Justice Argument" (p. 181-210).

Wednesday Ch 8, "Wilderness Preservation and the Other-Than-Human World: The Management Argument." (211-238).

Friday: Submit reflection on Chapter 9, **Due Friday Nov. 22.**

Week 12

Topics:

Monday: Student led discussion of Ch 9, "Natural, Wild,

and Free: Toward a Wilderness Ethic." (239-269).

Wednesday: Review of course themes and general discussion of future directions in environmental philosophy.

6 Assessments

6.1 Assessment Details

Weekly reflection (40%)

Date: Due most Fridays before 6 pm.

In most weeks of the semester you are required to submit a short reflection on the reading assignment for the following week. Each assignment is worth 5%. There are 10 assignments in total. Your top 8 assignments will count towards your final grade.

Guided discussion (10%)

Small groups of students will lead the discussion for one of the chapters of Rethinking Wilderness.

attendance and participation in class discussion (15%)

Students are expected to attend all lectures and to participate in discussion of readings and assignments.

individual research essay (35%)

Students will select a topic on the course theme and write a philosophical paper on that topic, due at the end of semester.

7 University Statements

7.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

7.2 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. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

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

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

7.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

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

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

7.4 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.

7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

7.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of 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. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

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

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

7.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>