

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

PHIL 328/SCHG 300-01

Fall 2015: 3 hours

MWF 11:00 – 11:50 a.m., HUM 114

Instructor: Avery Kolers

Office: Humanities bldg., room 314

Hours: MF 10:00 – 11:00;
Thurs 3:00 – 4:00; and by appt.

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<https://blackboard.louisville.edu>

Course Description: Examination of the moral status of the natural environment and ethical problems of human/environment interaction.

Curricular Role: This course fulfills a normative philosophy distributional requirement in the PHIL major, a 3xx elective in the PHIL minor, a 300+ Humanities elective for non-PHIL majors, and a Social Change elective for SCHG minors.

Required Texts:

[MH] Marion Hourdequin, *Environmental Ethics: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[Broome] John Broome, *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World* (New York: Norton, 2013).

[DS] David Schlosberg, *Defining Environmental Justice* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

[Online] Primary-source articles available by linking from this syllabus. Links in the electronic syllabus should take you there. The URLs are printed at the bottom of the syllabus if you need to type them in.

Technology:

This course will make significant use of the Blackboard platform. If you have not used Blackboard previously you should familiarize yourself with it. Also, I will use email to contact you if I need to. I will normally send email **only** to your U of L account. If you do not usually check that account, you should set it to forward to your preferred account. Also, I have a spam filter on my email account and so if you use email to turn in assignments you should send them **from** your U of L account (or through Blackboard) to ensure that my spam filter doesn't block them.

Disabilities: The University of Louisville is committed to providing access to programs and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and require accommodation to participate in and complete requirements for this class, notify me immediately and contact the Disability Resource Center (119 Stevenson Hall, 852-6938) for verification of eligibility and determination of specific accommodations.

Title IX/Clery Act Notification: Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain **confidential** support from the PEACC Program (852-2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville

Police (852-6111).

Disclosure to **University faculty or instructors** of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is **not confidential** under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer.

For more information, see the Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide (<http://louisville.edu/hr/employeerelations/sexual-misconduct-brochure>).

Learning Objectives:

Content:

- Awareness and understanding of some environmental values and problems, including especially those you may confront in daily life;
- Understanding of the causes and some potential solutions of certain problems;
- Appreciation of the nature and importance of global warming (global climate change) as a moral and philosophical challenge
- Recognition of the interrelation of environmental factors, and the interrelation between environmental and other moral, social, or political issues;
- Familiarity with main philosophical theories regarding the nonhuman world and regarding the interaction between humans and nonhumans;

Interacting with Content:

- Enhanced abilities to deploy, effectively and objectively, reasoning skills such as drawing inferences and distinctions, evaluating arguments, uncovering hidden assumptions, recognizing analogies and disanalogies across concepts, disambiguating by drawing careful distinctions, etc.;
- Enhanced facility in following, recapitulating, and charitably evaluating written and spoken arguments;
- Improved capacity to *construct* written and spoken arguments, appreciating where your own view may be controversial;
- Empowerment through the enhanced ability to assess social practices and institutions, and discern values and disvalues in public life;
- Ability fruitfully to apply your knowledge and skill-base to new moral and environmental questions that arise in the future.

Explanation of Learning Objectives:

Every philosophy course has two subject-matters. The first is the *content*. The second is a *distinctive way of interacting with the content*.

Content:

This course has at its core two most-general questions: *how should we interact with natural phenomena* such as animals, plants, species, and ecosystems; and *how should we interact with one another* in light

of our interests in these natural objects, given that natural objects may be degraded or diminished by certain ways we use them?

The course divides roughly into four parts. Part One introduces key concepts in the ecology, economics, and ethics. Part Two dives into what is perhaps the gravest problem humanity has ever faced: Global Warming. No serious person can be uninformed about this problem. The principal text for this section – Broome – discusses the main ecological, economic, environmental, and ethical problems associated with global climate change. Part Three addresses environmental issues as problems of justice – that is, as problems of maldistribution, misrecognition, and unnecessary harm to other persons and communities. Finally, Part Four broadens the scope of moral concern to animals, ecosystems, and the Earth itself.

By the end of the semester you should have gained and/or improved upon the following **content-related** skills and knowledge:

Interacting with content

Philosophy is in the first instance a particular way of interacting with what you read, hear, and think. The fundamental questions are “what does this mean?” “is this true?” and “if this is true, what are its implications?” In order to answer the first question we engage in *conceptual analysis*, which is a fancy word for *definition*. But philosophical definitions are not dictionary definitions; they are attempts to clarify our thinking, not just track our usage. In order to answer the second question we engage in *argumentation*: the identification of premises and relationships among them; the drawing of distinctions as needed for disambiguation; the assessment of theses and inferences. And in order to answer the third question we set up a claim against other salient theses and determine whether they are compatible or incompatible, and why. Philosophy is fundamentally about understanding a reality that does not much care to be understood, and about learning how to act when there are not always clearly applicable rules, and such rules as we do have might not be right.

All inquiry proceeds from questions, and philosophical inquiry is no exception. **If you are not questioning, you are not doing philosophy.** Certitude is the enemy of philosophy. Memorization and absorption of facts are *useful* for philosophy, for the sake of informing our philosophical reflection, but do not themselves constitute philosophy. But at the same time, pure speculation and rumination, detached from any purpose, also do not constitute philosophy. Finally, philosophy is not debate. We are here to reach the truth. That is the only way to “win.” In philosophical arguments, there is no value to *having been* right, the only value is in *getting it* right.

By the end of the semester you should have gained or improved upon the following **philosophical** skills:

Evaluation:

1. Eco-Journals	5 x 7=	35
2. Field work		40
3. Quizzes		15
4. Participation		<u>10</u>
Total		100%

- 1) *Eco-journal*. [EJ] At the beginning of the semester you should set aside a small amount of time each day or week to keep this journal. Periodically over the semester you will be required to submit your journal and, in collaboration with a classmate, record a 5-10- minute discussion of some reflection questions on the relevant topic. More information is on a separate handout.
- 2) *Ethics Fieldwork* [FW]: This is an 8-step major paper in which you will develop an empirically informed, philosophically sophisticated moral thesis on a particular environmental issue identified/chosen by you. More information will be provided for each step.
- 3) *Quizzes*: What they sound like. We will have about 8 quizzes over the course of the semester; your lowest two quiz grades will be dropped.
- 4) *Participation*. A principal method of learning in this class is through discussion of course materials. You should be ready to participate every time; I will expect you to be present and prepared each class unless you have an excused absence. A few times you are required to post in the BB discussion board. Doing so counts toward your participation grade.

A note on grading: My classes usually have an average grade between about 78 and 82 percent, which is C+/B-. Unless something unpredictable happens, the course average will be no lower than a C+.

Handing in assignments:

Presentation. I will expect all work to be spell-checked and proofread; writing will be one criterion of evaluation. All assignments should be submitted using the minimum of paper and frills—double-side if possible, no folders, etc.; just a single staple in the top-left corner as needed. **Always keep a copy** of your assignments when you hand them in, and do not throw them away after I've returned them to you. If there are any discrepancies, I will assume my records are accurate unless you can provide me with documentation.

Written assignments may be submitted electronically in the following formats **only**: .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .odt. For recorded EJ discussions, you must ensure that they are in a format that does not require proprietary software, and particularly Mac software. Simple MP3 is the best, if you can do it. **If I can't open your assignment then it has not been submitted.**

Your best bet is to use Blackboard to upload assignments or submit them through the "send email" function on Blackboard, but whatever you do **always use your U of L email account** and cc yourself on the email to ensure that the attachment was included. Then, keep that email at least until you have a grade for the relevant assignment. If there is any discrepancy, my records will be decisive unless you can show me **the original email with a date stamp and the correct document attached.**

Deadlines: At-home assignments are due by the beginning of class on the day listed in the schedule below. Late assignments will be penalized one grade per school day late, beginning at 2:15 p.m. If you cannot hand in an assignment on time, you must communicate with me, and if at all possible turn in the assignment, *beforehand*. In general, unforeseeable physical impossibility and deaths in the family are the only valid excuses for late assignments.

Academic Integrity: Cheating and plagiarism are immoral because a) they are *dishonest* (to me and others), in that the cheater/plagiarist presents as her/his own something that is not; b) they are *unfair* (to classmates), who work hard to meet requirements that the cheater/plagiarist circumvents; c) they violate

academic obligations (to the university) that students voluntarily accept upon enrollment; and d) they may violate *self-regarding duties* of *self-development* or *self-perfection* (if such duties exist).

They can also get one in serious trouble. According to the University of Louisville's *Code of Student Conduct*, Section 5, "Academic dishonesty is prohibited at the University of Louisville. It is a serious offense because it diminishes the quality of scholarship, makes accurate evaluation of student progress impossible, and defrauds those in society who must ultimately depend upon the knowledge and integrity of the institution and its students and faculty." It is your responsibility to know this code and comply with its requirements. If I discover violations of this policy I will pursue the required disciplinary channels, which normally involve communicating with the dean for undergraduate affairs. If you have any questions about how to comply with this policy, ask me *in advance*.

Schedule of topics

(Subject to change.)

Date	Topic	Reading	Due today	Notes
Part I: Introduction				
W 1/6	Introduction			
F 1/8	Ethics is essential	MH 6-23		
M 1/11	Approaches to ethics: Consequences, costs, and benefits	MH 23-40		
W 1/13	Approaches to Ethics: Kant and Respect	MH 40-48		
F 1/15	Approaches to Ethics: Virtue	MH 48-57		
M 1/18	MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., DAY – NO CLASS			
W 1/20	Practical Environmental Ethics	MH chap. 5	EJ1 (Louisville); post enviro issue in BB Discussion Board	
F 1/22	Continued			Begin FW assignment
Part II: Climate				

Date	Topic	Reading	Due today	Notes
M 1/25	Climate Basics: Ecology, Economics, and Moral psychology	Broome, chaps. 1-3; MH 143-47	EJ2 (footprint)	
W 1/27	Continued			
F 1/29	Continued			
M 2/1	What should we do about climate?	Broome, chaps. 4-7		May grads: Last day to apply for a degree
W 2/3	Continued			
F 2/5			FW step 1	
M 2/8	Applied Value Problems	Broome, 8, 9, & 11		
W 2/10	Continued			
F 2/12			EJ3 (transit)	
M 2/15	Climate ethics, justice, and policy	MH 149-67; Climate CoLab, " US Carbon Price 2015 "	Post in the BB Discussion Board on one of the ideas in "Carbon Price 2015"	
W 2/17	Continued			
F 2/19	Research in Environmental Ethics			Meet in Ekstrom W104
Part III: Justice and Environmental Goods & Bads				
M 2/22	Environmental Justice	MH 101-14	FW step 2	
W 2/24	Justice and Social Justice Movements	DS 11-20; 29-40		
F 2/26	Continued			
M 2/29	US EJ Movements	DS chap. 3		
W 3/2				

Date	Topic	Reading	Due today	Notes
F 3/4	Introducing Ecofeminism	MH 88-100		
M 3/7	Applying Ecofeminism	Gaard, “Ecofeminism and Climate Change” (online)	FW step 3	Last day to withdraw
W 3/9		Continued		
F 3/11		Continued		
M 3/14 – F 3/18	Spring Break – No Class			
Part IV: Value in the More-than-human World				
M 3/21	Beyond Anthro- centrism	MH 58-70	FW step 4	
W 3/23				
F 3/25	Eating animals	Pollan (online)	FW step 5	
M 3/28	Living with animals	Taylor, “Interview with Donaldson and Kymlicka” (online)	EJ4 (animals and food)	
W 3/30		Continued		
F 4/1	Ecosystems & the Land Ethic	MH 67-86		
M 4/4		Leopold, “The Land Ethic”(online)		
W 4/6		Leopold, “Thinking like a Mountain” (online)		
F 4/8		Continued	FW step 6	
M 4/11	Ecological justice	DS Chap. 5 (you can skim a bit) and 6 (read carefully)	EJ5 (Louisville)	
W 4/13		Continued		

Date	Topic	Reading	Due today	Notes
F 4/15	Doing & Living Environmental Ethics	MH chap. 8	FW Step 7	FW presentations
M 4/18		Continued		FW presentations
W 4/20	Conclusions			FW presentations
Th 4/21	Reading Day			
M 4/25			FW step 8 due by 2:00 p.m., Monday, April 25	

Required Articles for PHIL 328/SCHG 301-01 Environmental Ethics

1. Climate CoLab, "US Carbon Price 2015" <http://climatecolab.org:18081/web/guest/plans/-/plans/contestId/1301419>
2. Greta Gaard, "Ecofeminism and Climate Change," *Women's Studies International Forum* 49 (2015): 20-33: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/echo.louisville.edu/science/article/pii/S0277539515000321>
3. Michael Pollan, "An Animal's Place," *The New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 10, 2002, p. 58 <http://echo.louisville.edu/login?url=http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?did=235756041&sid=1&Fmt=6&clientId=9580&RQT=309&VName=PQD>.
4. Angus Taylor, "An Interview with Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka," *Between the Species* 17 (2014). <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2047&context=bts>
5. Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" <http://home.btconnect.com/tipiglen/landethic.html>.
6. Aldo Leopold, "Thinking like a Mountain" <http://www.eco-action.org/dt/thinking.html>