

## PHIL/ENEC 368: Living Things, Wilderness, and Ecosystems: An Introduction to Environmental Ethics

The meaning of environmental values and their relation to other values; the ethical status of animals, species, wilderness, and ecosystems; the built environment; environmental justice; ecofeminism; obligations to future generations.

### Course Overview

Number	PHIL/ENEC 368.001
Title	Living Things, Wilderness, and Ecosystems: An Introduction to Environmental Ethics
Credit hours	3
Course Description	This class is about the nature of environmental values and issues in moral philosophy that relate to the environment. In particular, in this course we will focus on one central topic, climate change, and we will consider several issues in environmental ethics that are relevant to understanding different aspects of this complex and multifaceted problem. We will consider questions such as: what is the value of nature? What, if anything, do we owe to future generations? What, if anything, do we owe to the natural environment? How is climate change an issue of social justice? What principles should guide our preservation of the human species as well as of all other living organisms and the environment more generally? What are the possible policy responses to climate change, and how should they be evaluated from a moral standpoint?
Prerequisites	There are no prerequisites for this course.
Target Audience	This course is intended for: (1) philosophy students who are interested in environmental values; (2) science and environmental studies students who are interested in environmental values; and (3) any other student who wants to learn about different views about the values of nature and our moral responsibilities for it.
Instructor	M. Giulia Napolitano Caldwell Hall 202A mgnapoli@unc.edu
Teaching Assistants	N/A
Course Website	<a href="https://uncch.instructure.com/courses/19644">https://uncch.instructure.com/courses/19644</a>
Class Days, Times, Location	MWF, 12:20 – 1:10 p.m., CW 105

Office Hours	MWF 11.15-12.15 by appointment, in person or on Zoom. I am always happy to meet with you for clarifications on the course material, for guidance on the assignments, for discussing your progress in the course, or anything else you might want to talk about related to the course. Just schedule an appointment with me via email.
Course Texts	All readings available on Canvas
Course Format	The class format will combine short introductory lectures with whole class discussions and smaller group discussions and group activities. You are expected to have carefully read the papers before class and to participate actively in the discussion.

## Course Goals and Learning Objectives

All our philosophy courses aim at the acquisition and nurturing of basic philosophic skills. One of the main goals of our philosophy curriculum is to instill and enable the development of skills that are distinct to philosophy, but which are foundational to all forms of knowledge.

These **basic philosophical skills** involve being able to:

- Think critically;
- Deploy philosophical concepts and terminology correctly, in either a historical or contemporary setting;
- Represent clearly and accurately the views or argument of particular philosophers, in either a historical or contemporary setting;
- Identify the premises and conclusion(s) of a philosophical argument and assess both its validity and soundness;
- Apply a philosophical theory or argument to a new topic, and being able to draw and defend reasonable conclusions about that topic;
- Develop an argument for a particular solution to a philosophical problem in either a historical or contemporary setting;
- Write clearly, precisely, and persuasively in defense of a philosophical thesis;
- Participate in respectful, critical, and reflexive dialogues about difficult philosophical positions;
- Read, interpret, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different philosophical texts and the philosophical positions presented them.

In addition, PHIL368 satisfies the **value theory** requirement for our philosophy major and minor, and as such aims at developing the following learning outcomes:

- being familiar with some of the leading normative theories in philosophy, such as utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics;
- being able to identify and explain the various contexts in which philosophical questions of justification arise;
- being able to assess ethical values in terms of the philosophical and non-philosophical reasons offered;

- being able to recognize different ethical perspectives and the distinctive approaches these perspectives bring to questions of value,
- being able to evaluate ethical justifications for different ways of organizing civic and political communities;
- being able to analyze and evaluate the differences between personal ethical decisions and those bearing on the public and civic domains.

***Specifically, this course will enable students to:***

- analyze carefully and critically the philosophical complexities related to topics in environmental ethics and see how these issues inform our justifications for both private and public, and both local and global decisions and policies;
- Think critically about environmental values and the value of nature, and assess what responsibilities we have in response to these values;
- Recognize the need for regulations, policies, and international cooperation concerning climate change and the ability to evaluate specific proposals to fight climate change at a private, public, and global level;
- Recognize the impact of different worldviews upon environmental behavior.

**This course is part of the IDEAs in Action General Education curriculum:**

## Ethical and Civic Values

Students develop their capacity to think carefully and critically about how to make and justify private and public decisions.

### Questions for Students

1. How can people think fruitfully (individually and together) about how they should live their lives?
2. What is required to judge a standard or value as worthy of support?
3. How should we distinguish between prejudices and reasonable grounds for value judgments?
4. What considerations – stories, reasons, testimony, documents, data, etc. – can justify our values and commitments, whether personal or social?

### Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the contexts in which questions of justification arise.
2. Assess ethical values in terms of reasons offered
3. Recognize different ethical perspectives and the distinctive approaches these perspectives bring to questions of value, evaluating ethical justifications for different ways of organizing civic and political communities.

4. Analyze the differences between personal ethical decisions and those bearing on the public and civic spheres.

### Recurring Capacities

Every focus capacity course includes the following activities:

1. **Writing**, totaling at least 10 pages in length or the intellectual equivalent.
2. **Presenting** material to the class, smaller groups, or the public through oral presentations, webpages, or other means.
3. **Collaborating** in pairs or groups to learn, design, solve, create, build, or research.

These elements – referred to as “recurring capacities” – will help you repeatedly practice crucial skills for future study, life, and career success.

## Course Assignments and Assessments

Assignments	Percentages
Class participation	15%
Short writing assignments (10% each) (1-2 pages each)	40%
Term paper outline + peer feedback (1 page)	10%
Term paper (5 -6 pages)	25%
Final project presentation	10%

### Grading Scale

*Converting your final average to a letter grade:*

93-100% : A  
90-92.99%: A-  
87-89.99%: B+  
83-86.99%: B  
80-82.99%: B-  
77-79.99%: C+  
73-76.99%: C  
70-72.99%: C-  
67-69.99%: D+  
63-66.99%: D  
0-62.99%: F

### Assignment Descriptions

The typical amount of time required to complete work for this course will be between 9 and 12 hours weekly including class/synchronous activities.

**Class participation:** You will get two participation grades during the course, one for the first half of the semester and another for the second, each worth 7.5% of your grade. Participation will be graded on the basis of

- *Alertness/attentiveness.* Includes (obviously) being fully awake, and not being on your computer, tablet or phone (except for taking notes, checking the readings, or anything else class-related) .
- *Regularity of participation in discussion.* You are expected to participate in class discussions and collaborate with your fellow students regularly. I do understand that participation in discussion can be difficult or intimidating for many students. I want to create an environment in which you feel comfortable participating. If you are having difficulty, please come to office hours or email me and we can set up a meeting to discuss strategies.
- *Respectfulness of participation.* You are expected to be respectful to the instructor and to other students. This includes not talking over others or drowning them out, as well as listening to others and responding to what they say.
- *Preparedness.* Your participation should reflect having done all the reading and having thought about it. You can demonstrate this by referring to specific ideas from the readings in your comments, and by answering when I ask the class to recall something from a reading.

Note: you will not be graded on the philosophical quality of your contributions, as I want people to be able to speak freely and try out new ideas without fear of judgment. I also want to add that asking questions, including clarificatory questions, can be a great way to participate.

**Short writing assignments:** Four short written assignments—1-2 double-spaced pages—summarizing and critically engaging with a reading from class in response to a prompt provided by me in advance. These assignments are meant to gradually build your writing skills in preparation for the term paper.

**Term paper outline and peer feedback:** In preparation for the term paper, you will write an outline of your paper. You will also be assigned to two peers to provide feedback on their outlines. You will be graded both on the quality of your outline, and the quality of your feedback to your peers. Instructions on writing outlines and giving feedback will be provided closer to the date.

**Term paper:** You will write a paper—5-6 double-spaced pages— in response to one of several distributed prompts. Further instructions on this assignment, including the grading rubric that will be used, will be provided closer to the date.

**Final group project:** A group project where students apply concepts and frameworks learnt in the course to one case study of their choice. The grade will be based on the presentation of the group project which will take place on the day scheduled for the final exam. More guidance and information will be provided closer to the date.

**Extra credit:** Over the course of the semester there will be a number of opportunities to get some extra credit for this course. In each case, it will involve participating in, and then engaging with, something that had direct relevance to this course. In each case, in order to receive extra credit, you should write a short essay (≈1-2 double-spaced pages) engaging critically with an argument or view presented in one of the qualifying opportunities.

In addition to the announced opportunities, you may also contact me to recommend something. Each event and essay is worth 1 extra point (1%). You can earn maximum 2 extra points throughout the semester. You should notify me of any event you plan to attend for extra credit beforehand, and you should email me your short essay after the event. All extra credit must be completed BEFORE the end of classes. Under no circumstances will I accept extra credit assignments after the last day of classes.

As with all assignments in this course, the Honor Code applies. If you have any questions about plagiarism, consult this page: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/plagiarism/>.

## Policies for Submission of Written Work.

All written work should be submitted via the Assignments function on Canvas (except for extra credit essays, which should be emailed directly to me).

To facilitate anonymous grading, please don't include your name anywhere on your paper or in the file name. Use your UNC PID instead.

Extensions & Late Penalties:

- For term papers and short written assignments:
  - Extensions are granted to anyone who asks at least 24h before the deadline. Under no circumstances will extensions be granted after the deadline for the assignment.
  - Late submissions (without an extension) will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for every day or part of a day that they are late.
- For paper outlines and peer feedback:
  - No extensions will be granted, due to the nature of the assignment (it is essential to provide feedback to your peers in a timely fashion for them to be able to incorporate it in their final paper).
  - Late outlines and comments will be graded maximum as a C if they are submitted within 2 days of the deadline. Later submissions will receive zero points.

You are more than welcome (indeed, encouraged) to meet with me while working on assignments. This is free advice that almost always improves your grade. However, in the interest of fairness, I will not provide feedback on any written drafts.

## Course at a Glance

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Module	Topic	Readings	Date
Introduction & basic philosophical skills	Intro to the course	Syllabus	M 01/9/23
	Skills day 1: reading and summarizing a philosophy paper	<a href="#">Jim Pryor's guidelines on reading philosophy</a>	W 01/11/23
	Skills day 2: making arguments and engaging with philosophy	Shafer Landau- Moral reasoning  <a href="#">Bailey - But how do I participate?</a>	F 01/13/23
			M 01/16/23 MLK day

Environmentalism and the value of nature	Conservation and preservation	Principles of conservation (Pinchot)	W 01/18/23	
		Hetch Hetchy Valley (Miur) + discussion	F 01/20/23	
	Skills day 3: writing philosophy	<a href="#">Jim Pryor's guidelines on writing philosophy</a>	M 01/23/23	
	Anthropocentrism	The environmentalist's dilemma (Norton)	W 01/25/23	
		Anthropocentrism vs Nonanthropocentrism (McShane)	F 01/27/23	
		Discussion	M 01/30/23 *Short writing assignment 1 due*	
	Biocentrism and deep ecology	On being morally considerable (Goodpaster)	W 02/1/23	
		(Recommended: The land ethic - Leopold)		
		Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation (Guha)	F 02/3/23	
		Discussion	M 02/6/23	
	The value of nature and geoengineering	Rethinking the unthinkable (Preston)	W 02/8/23	
		Discussion	F 02/10/23	
				M 02/13/23 well-being day

Responsibility for the environment	Economic paradigm and responsibility for the environment	A perfect moral storm (Gardiner)	W 02/15/23 *Short writing assignment 2 due*
		Ethical obligation in a tragedy of the commons (Johnson)	F 02/17/23
		Discussion	M 02/20/23
	Individual and collective responsibility	Bearing the weight of the world (Raterman)	W 02/22/23
		Climate change, collective harm and legitimate coercion (Cripps)	F 02/24/23
		Discussion	M 02/27/23 *Short writing assignment 3 due*
	Climate change denial	Democracy, public policy, and the assessment of scientific testimony (Anderson)	W 03/1/23
		Should we tolerate climate change denial? (McKinnon)	F 03/3/23
		Discussion	M 03/6/23
	Catch-up discussion	No new reading	W 03/8/23
	Skills day 4: writing a paper outline	No reading	F 03/10/23 *Short writing assignment 4 due* *Participation grade 1*
	M 03/13/23 - M 03/19/23 SPRING BREAK		
	Group project description and first meeting	Come with ideas for the group project	M 03/20/23
Global Justice	Future generations and human rights	Intergenerational Justice (Howarth)	W 03/22/23

	Climate change and justice between non overlapping generations (Karnein)	F 03/24/23 *Paper outline due*
	Discussion	M 03/27/23
	Does anthropogenic climate change violate human rights? (Bell)	W 03/29/23
	Discussion	F 03/31/23 *Peer feedback due*
		M 04/3/23 NO CLASS
		W 04/5/23 NO CLASS
		F 04/7/23 University Holiday
International inequality and historical responsibility	Global environment and international inequality (Shue)	M 04/10/23
	The Polluter Pays? Backward-Looking Principles of Intergenerational Justice and the Environment (Butt)	W 04/12/23
	Discussion	F 04/14/23
Ecological refugees	The Ethical Implications of Sea-Level Rise Due to Climate Change (Byravan & Rajan)	M 04/17/23
	Ecological Refugees, States Borders, and the Lockean Proviso (Nine)	W 04/19/23
	Discussion	F 04/21/23 *Final paper due*

Final projects meeting time	No reading	M 04/24/23 *Participation grade 2*
	No reading	W 04/26/23
	No reading	F 04/28/23 Last day of classes
*MAY9th 12.00 pm final projects presentations*		