

Advanced Introduction to Environmental Ethics (Graduate Seminar, Spring 2016)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces major topics in environmental ethics. We will discuss an array of questions relevant to environmental ethics, including: what are the different ways to classify value, and how do environmental values fit into these classifications? What ethical framework is appropriate for tackling environmental issues? What kinds of things (humans, animals, plants, and ecosystems) have moral worth or morally relevant interests? How do we weigh the interests of the current generation against the interests of future generations when choosing environmental policies? Are the emissions of western countries unjust? How do we balance conservation of species against the interests of indigenous people? Do our ethical obligations to protect the environment prohibit us from procreating?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Gain familiarity with canonical works in contemporary analytic environmental ethics.
 - Learn to distinguish between categories of value and how they bear on the central issues in environmental ethics, including climate change, economic valuations of the environment, procreation, animal agriculture, and geoengineering.
 - Evaluate recent philosophical arguments regarding the above issues.
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READINGS

Most readings can be found in the form of pdfs on the course website (accessible through <https://home.nyu.edu/academics>) or as chapters of books in NYU's Ebrary system. Ebrary books you will need to access:

Jamieson, Dale. 2008. *Ethics and the Environment*. Cambridge

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings
W1: T 1/26	The environment as an ethical issue: History of environmental ethics.	Jamieson, <i>Ethics and the Environment</i> , ch. 1, "The environment as an ethical question" McShane, "Environmental Ethics: An Overview" Routley, "Is there a Need for New, an Environmental Ethic?"
Unit 1: Background in value theory		
W2: T 2/2	Background in Value Theory: Varieties of Value	Bradley, "Extrinsic Value" Kagan, "Rethinking Intrinsic Value"

W3: T 2/9	Value Theory: The possibility of non-human values	<p>Klocksien, "Perspective Neutral Intrinsic Value"</p> <p>Jamieson, D. Ethics and the Environment, pp-68—75</p> <p>O'neill, J. "Varieties of Intrinsic Value"</p> <p>Norton, B. "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism"</p> <p>Recommended: Kenneth Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable"</p>
Unit 2: What Matters Morally and Why?		
W4: T 2/16	The value of life: Biocentric Individualism	<p>Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, ch. 6.1.</p> <p>Woolf, V. "The Death of the Moth"</p> <p>Taylor. "Biocentric Egalitarianism"</p>
W5: T 2/23	The value of the living community: Ecocentrism and the conflict with Sentientism	<p>Partridge, E. 1993. "The Philosophical Foundations of Aldo Leopold's 'Land Ethic'" igc.org/gadfly.</p> <p>Varner, G. "Sentientism"</p> <p>Recommended: Callicott, J.B. "Animal Liberation, A Triangular Affair"</p> <p>Optional: http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2015/1102/Why-hunting-of-Yellowstone-grizzly-bears-could-resume</p>
W6: T 3/1	The Value of Endangered Species	<p>Biotech Firm 3-D Prints Rhino Horn</p> <p>Russow, L. 1981. "Why Do Species Matter?" <i>Environmental Ethics</i>, 3, 101--112.</p> <p>Gruen, L. 2002. "Refocusing Environmental Ethics: from Intrinsic Value to Endorsable Valuations"</p>
W7: T 3/8	The Value of Nature	<p>Bradley, B. "The Value of Endangered Species"</p> <p>Muir, J. 1912. "Hetch Hetchy Valley"</p> <p>Elliot, R. "Faking Nature"</p> <p>Gruen, L. 2002. "Refocusing Environmental Ethics: from Intrinsic Value to Endorsable Valuations"</p>

[Scientists say that 'nature' is entirely gone](#)

Vogel, S. 2011. "Why 'Nature' Has No Place in Environmental Ethics" in Kaebnick (ed.) *The Ideal of Nature: Debates about Biotechnology and the Environment*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

W8: T 3/15 Spring Break: No class ☹

W9: T 3/22 How do Economists Value the Environment and Future People? Selections from Revesz, R. and Livermore, M. *Retaking Rationality*
Attfield, R. "Existence Value and Intrinsic Value"
Kelman, S. "Cost-benefit Analysis: An Ethical Critique"
Broome, J. "The Future v. the Present"

W10: T 3/29 The Ecofeminist Perspective on Environmentalism Warren, Karen. "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism"

Unit 3: Case Studies in Environmental Ethics

W11: T 4/5 Case study: Expert Testimony and Climate Change Denial Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"
Anderson, E. "Democracy, Public Policy, and Lay Assessments of Scientific Testimony"
In-class video: Huemer, "Political Irrationality"
[Klein, E. "How Politics Makes us Stupid"](#) (Vox)

Recommended: Huemer, "Why People are Irrational about Politics"

W12: T 4/12 Case study: Overpopulation and value. Is more people better? [2016 Nature study-Global fishing catch one third higher than official reports](#)
Parfit, D. 2004. "Overpopulation and the Quality of Life"

Huemer, M. "In Defence of Repugnance"

W13: T 4/19 Case Study: Geo-engineering Gardiner, S. 2010. "Is Arming the Future with Geo-engineering Really the Lesser Evil?" *In Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*

Morrow, D. 2014. "Starting a Flood to Stop a Fire? Some Moral Constraints on Solar Radiation Management"

Svoboda, T. 2012. "Is Aerosol Engineering Ethically Preferable to other Climate Change Mitigation Strategies?"

Liao S. M. et al. "Human Engineering and Climate Change"

W14: T 4/26 Case Study: The Ethics of Animal Agriculture: Animal Welfare and Environmental Harm

Jamieson, ch. 5.3-5.4

Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases"

Pollan, M. 2003. "An Animal's Place." *New York Times*. Here: <http://michaelpollan.com/articles-archive/an-animals-place/>

UN report, "Livestock's Long Shadow"

McMahan "Eating Animals the Nice Way"

Hopkins and Dacey, "Vegetarian Meat"

Shultz-Bergin, "Anecephalic Mammalian Lumps"

W15: T 5/3 Final Period (3 hrs)

Presentations of Paper Topics
