

Philosophy 240: Environmental Ethics

Time and Place: Spring 2011; MW 11-12:15; Clapp 224

Instructor: Susan Hawthorne

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Office hours: Monday, 12:15-1:15, at Blanchard, and by appointment

Course Description:

A fundamental problem we face as humans is how we should relate to the natural world. We will consider many issues that can complicate—or guide—our thinking and action concerning the environment. Students will learn a range of perspectives on environmental issues, and improve their ability to argue for particular points of view both orally and in writing. Students will develop a project that engages with the natural world and/or with issues presented in class, such as a relevant form of activism, volunteer work, or creative expression.

Course Goals

In addition to the introducing you to some core issues and ideas in environmental ethics, this course aims to help students gain skill in:

- Analyzing difficult ideas and texts,
- Creative and reflective thinking about philosophical issues,
- Thoughtful and open-minded discussion of controversial issues
- Argumentative writing and critical thinking, and
- Ability to use each of these skills in out-of-class contexts.

Texts to Buy:

Title: Climate Ethics **Author:** Gardiner, Stephen **Copyright:** 2010 **ISBN:** 9780195399615 **Publisher:** Oxford University Press

Ella

The rest of the **readings** will be posted on the course ella site at <<https://ella.mtholyoke.edu>>. Log onto the site, and click on “Resources” to find pdfs or links for the assigned papers within folders dated according to due dates. .

I will also post **assignments**, the **syllabus**, the “**Engagement Projects**” document, **Announcements**, and other course materials on ella.

You will hand in your papers via the “Assignments” function on ella.

Email

From time to time, I will email announcements such as changes in the reading schedule, or reminders of on-campus events.

Evaluation

Assignments have the following weights:

Engagement project 30%

Weekly journal	20% (2% each; 12 weeks; 2 misses without penalty)
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	25%
Class participation	5%

More about the engagement/CBL project:

See separate document, “Engagement Projects” for project requirements and grading criteria.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE REGARDING DUE DATES: All assignments must be uploaded to ella (or turned in in the case of hard copy portfolios) by the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. *Journal entries cannot be turned in late.* I will accept Paper 1 or 2 or your portfolio late, but will penalize them by 3 points on a 100 point scale for each day late (so, if you hand in Paper 1 after class on the day it is due, it is graded 3 points lower than it would have been. If you hand it in 3 days after it is due, it will be graded 9 points lower, etc.). Per school policy, work cannot be turned in after the end of the exam period without permission for an incomplete from the appropriate Dean.

More about the weekly journal: The journal helps with several class goals. It gives you a focus for careful and reflective reading and analysis, helps you prepare arguments for future argumentative essays, and helps you connect these to outside-of-class experience, especially your own engagement/CBL project.

The journal is due *before class* each Wednesday. Late papers receive no credit (you get 2 misses without penalty—use them wisely!)

Each journal entry should be approximately one to two (no more!) double-spaced, typewritten pages long (300-500 words). Each should have two parts: For the first part, select a sentence or very short passage from the assigned readings for that week. Copy the sentence/passage at the top of the page (give a page number). Then, discuss the passage’s significance. You may agree with it, disagree with it, find it puzzling, find that it inspires a new perspective, or that it reinforces a thought you had earlier—the point of this part is to thoughtfully consider the passage, *in the context of the author’s goals*.

The second part of the entry should reflect on how the passage, or the reading as a whole, relates to your project. Note that some weeks this will be important and clear. Other weeks the connection will be limited. When the latter is true, you can keep this part very short. *But be careful not to do that too often, or you will miss important connections.*

After the first few entries, I will not comment much on these papers, and they are meant to be informal, though they must be thoughtful and clearly stated. Grades will be a 0 (no paper), 1, 2, or 3.

3 = Paper demonstrates careful reading of assigned material and thoughtful response to the chosen passage. Ideas are expressed clearly and concisely, with appropriate vocabulary and good spelling and grammar.

2 = Paper demonstrates reading and general understanding of the assigned material. The response to the prompt or chosen passage is clear, but lacks detail or

depth. Writing acceptable, but may have some disorganization, poor word choices, or spelling or grammatical errors.

1 = The response to the prompt or chosen passage suggests incomplete reading or poor understanding of the assigned material. Relevance of the comments to the chosen topic is unclear, or the discussion is overly brief or incomplete. There are frequent flaws in organization, word choice, spelling, and/or grammar.

More about papers: Each paper will be an approximately 5-page argumentative essay. I will provide detailed expectations well before the due dates.

For Students with Disabilities:

I am happy to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Talk to me at the beginning of the course to work out details.

Academic Honesty:

All are expected to complete course requirements with fairness and honesty. Scholastic dishonesty includes plagiarizing, cheating on assignments, and engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work. You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the guidelines in Mount Holyoke’s web site, *The Proper Use of Sources Tutorial* at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/ris/Plagiarism/>. I encourage students to discuss or consult with other students, or with outside resources as needed. But all written assignments must be in *your own words*. If you have any questions regarding the citation standards for assignments, ask.

SCHEDULE OF READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

ONGOING: Journal entries due every Wednesday before class.

Class Date	Topic	Reading Due	Due Dates
Jan 26	Introduction		
Jan 31	The moral community enlarged? Animals	Varner, Regan	Schedule project discussion with mentor
Feb 2	SNOW DAY		
Feb 7	Plants	Attfield	
Feb 9	Do species matter?	Wilson, Rolston, Russow	Project proposal due
Feb 14	Nature of nature: what is wilderness?	Cronon, Kane	Projects begin; revised proposal due
Feb 16	Ecosystems	Leopold, Cahen	
Feb 21	Deep Ecology	Naess, Bookchin, Guha	
Feb 23	Ecofeminism	Gruen, Lee-Lampshire	
Feb 28	Human Needs, Human	Hardin, Monbiot	

	Wants, Human Nature	Claxton	
Mar 2	Pragmatism	Minteer, Weston	Check-in with mentor before spring break
Mar 7	Ecosystem services	Foley, Goulder, McCauley	
Mar 9		None	<i>In-class project check-in, discussion;</i> Argumentative essay #1 due
Spring Break			
Mar 21	Sustainability	Norton	
Mar 23	"	Lichtenberg	
Mar 28	Population, food: Global	TBD	
Mar 30	NO CLASS		
Apr 4	Population, food: U.S.	TBD	
Apr 6	Population, food: Veg? Vegan? Omnivore?	TBD	
Sunday, Apr 10, 7 PM			Film: <i>Darwin's Nightmare</i>
Apr 11	Environment, race, and political power	Medard, Hecky	
Apr 13	"	Carlson, Dowie, Grossman	
Apr 18	"	Guest lecture, Hans Carlson	Check in with mentor this week
Apr 20		None	<i>In-class project check-in, discussion</i>
Apr 25	Climate change	Selections from Gardiner, TBD	
Apr 27	"	"	
May 2	"	"	Project portfolio due
May 7			Argumentative essay #2 due