



University of
New Haven

Environmental Ethics: Humans, Culture & Sustainability

SECTION I: Course Overview

Course Code: PHL320CDG/ SUS320CDG

Subject Areas: Philosophy, Sustainability

Prerequisites: See Below

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The general aim of this course is to explore the ethical challenges involved in the creation and maintenance of sustainable societies. In particular, we will ask what exactly it is that we should seek to sustain, why, how, and who or what should do so. We will consider the sustainability of current political, business, and cultural practices, as well as individual lifestyles. A study of the phenomenon of climate change and of the notion of “the Anthropocene” – this new epoch in which no earthly place, entity, form, process, or system escapes the reach and influence of human activity - will be a particularly weighty element in this course.

You will explore the philosophical foundations of a plausible environmental ethic that may reconcile human responsibilities towards non-human nature and the future to our ongoing quest for meaning in a globalized, highly interconnected, unprecedentedly populated, rapidly urbanizing, ecologically deteriorating world. You will examine the challenges that understanding and living up to these responsibilities pose to our psychology and our ethical and political systems.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Discuss controversial concepts such as sustainability, human flourishing, obligations to non-human nature and future generations, and environmental justice.
- Apply fundamental notions in ethical theory to contemporary environmental issues and assess the ethical consequences of human actions.
- Develop and articulate persuasive perspectives and positions in regards to pressing environmental issues.

- Recognize unexpressed premises, hidden value judgments, and fallacious reasoning in the environmental discourse.
- Assess how changes in the environment have differential impacts on diverse groups of people around the world.
- Demonstrate awareness of one’s personal impacts on the environment, particularly in urban contexts, and take responsibility for them.

PREREQUISITES

Prior to enrollment, this course requires you to have completed **one** 200 level course or **two** 100 level courses in the subject area(s) of instruction.

CROSS-LISTED COURSE

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the content, this course is cross-listed with Philosophy (PHL320CDG) as well as Sustainability (SUS320CDG). Working with their home institution academic advisor, students select the course code that most closely corresponds to their degree requirements.

SECTION II: Instructor & Course Details

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

Name: TBA
Contact Information: TBA
Term: SEMESTER

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This class will meet once weekly for 150 minutes each session. All students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared for the day’s class session.

CEA enforces a mandatory attendance policy. You are therefore expected to attend all regularly scheduled class sessions, including any field trips, site visits, guest lectures, etc. that are assigned by the instructor. The table below shows the number of class sessions you may miss before receiving a grade penalty.

ALLOWED ABSENCES – SEMESTERS		
Courses Meeting X day(s) Per Week	Allowed Absence(s)	Automatic Failing Grade at X th Absence
Courses meeting 1 day(s) per week	1 Absences	4 th Absence

For every additional absence beyond the allowed number, your final course grade will drop down to the subsequent letter grade (ex: A+ to A). As a student, you should understand that the grade penalties will apply if you are marked absent due to tardiness or leaving class early. In the table below, you will find the grade penalty associated with each excessive absence up to and including automatic course failure.

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ATTENDANCE DOCKING PENALTIES				
Absence	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Penalty	No Penalty	0.5 Grade Docked	1 Grade Docked	Automatic Failure
HIGHEST POSSIBLE GRADE AFTER ATTENDANCE PENALTIES				
Grade	A+	A	A-	F

CEA does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. As such, no documentation is required for missing class. Similarly, excessive absences, and the grade penalty associated with each, will not be excused even if you are able to provide documentation that shows the absence was beyond your control. You should therefore only miss class when truly needed as illness or other unavoidable factors may force you to miss a class session later on in the term.

GRADING & ASSESSMENT

The instructor will assess your progress towards the above-listed learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted and will count towards your final grade. The following section (Assessment Overview) will provide further details for each.

Class Participation	10%
Class Debate	10%
Essay	30%
Reflections	20%
Final Exam	30%

The instructor will calculate your course grades using the CEA Grading Scale shown below. As a CEA student, you should understand that credit transfer decisions—including earned grades for courses taken abroad—are ultimately made by your home institution.

CEA GRADING SCALE			
Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	Percentage Range	Quality Points
A+	9.70 – 10.0	97.0 – 100%	4.00
A	9.40 – 9.69	94.0 – 96.9%	4.00
A-	9.00 – 9.39	90.0 – 93.9%	3.70
B+	8.70 – 8.99	87.0 – 89.9%	3.30
B	8.40 – 8.69	84.0 – 86.9%	3.00
B-	8.00 – 8.39	80.0 – 83.9%	2.70
C+	7.70 – 7.99	77.0 – 79.9%	2.30
C	7.40 – 7.69	74.0 – 76.9%	2.00
C-	7.00 – 7.39	70.0 – 73.9%	1.70
D	6.00 – 6.99	60.0 – 69.9%	1.00

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F	0.00 – 5.99	0.00 – 59.9%	0.00
W	Withdrawal	N/A	0.00
INC	Incomplete	N/A	0.00

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Your course instructor will provide further details and instructions during class time.

Class Participation (10%): Student participation is mandatory for all courses taken at a CEA Study Center. The instructor will use the rubric below when determining your participation grade. All students should understand that attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively toward the participation grade. The instructor will prompt class discussions by randomly sampling out students and ask them to individuate and explain salient ethical issues pertaining to the weekly topics at hand. This exercise is premised on a clear understanding of weekly materials, which is in itself premised on the punctual and consistent weekly completion of assigned readings.

CLASS PARTICIPATION GRADING RUBRIC	
Student Participation Level	Grade
You make major & original contributions that spark discussion, offering critical comments clearly based on readings, research, & theoretical course topics.	A+ (10.0 – 9.70)
You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings & independent research.	A/A- (9.69 – 9.00)
You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.	B+/B (8.99 – 8.40)
You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.	B-/C+ (8.39 – 7.70)
You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.	C/C- (7.69 – 7.00)
You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject. You are not prepared for class and/or discussion of course readings.	D (6.99 – 6.00)
You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion. You are consistently unprepared for class and/or discussion of the course readings.	F (5.99 – 0.00)

Class Debate (10%): Students will form two debate teams and be presented with a debate topic. They will prepare a written and oral argument in defense of the position they take. They will then debate the case in class. Each student needs to put in one argument in favor of their team's position, justify it and anticipate and rebut at least one objection to it. This should be individually signed on the written record. Individuals as well as teams will be evaluated both on the written and the oral performance.

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Essay (30%): Philosophy's method is dialogical, much like statistics' method is quantitative. It is impossible to do statistics without equations and it is impossible to do philosophy without outlining and debating an argument. Students will submit a 5 to 7 page essay on a timely topic of their choice, relevant to the themes of this course. In the essay, students will synthesize course readings and discussions into ethical recommendations.

Reflections (20%): Students must submit two 1-2 page reflections, on the course topic of their choice, throughout the semester. These reflections should demonstrate that the student has read and understood the course readings for that particular week, as well as highlight the ways in which students are beginning to apply their learning from the course into their academic and professional goals.

Final Exam (30%): Students will write individual 1500 words commentaries on philosophical issues inspired by the book *Love in the Anthropocene*, in reference to prompts provided by the instructor.

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading assignments for this course will come from the required textbook, the selected readings listed below. All required readings—whether assigned from the text or assigned as a selected reading—must be completed according to the due date assigned by the course instructor.

All required readings will be available to students on the Moodle Platform or online.

I. REQUIRED TEXT(S): All required readings will be available to students on the Moodle Platform or online. The required text(s) are listed below:

Thiele, Leslie Paul, *Sustainability*, Polity Press, 2018 (2013), pp. 256

II. SELECTED READING(S): The selected readings for this course are listed below. You will not need to purchase these readings; the instructor will provide these selected readings to you in class (either in paper or electronic format).

Brennan, Andrew and Yeuk-Sze Lo, "Environmental Ethics", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Zalta, Edward N. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/ethics-environmental/>

Di Paola, Marcello, "Virtue", *Encyclopedia of the Anthropocene*, Elsevier 2018

Goodpaster, Kenneth, E. "On Being Morally Considerable", *The Journal of Philosophy* 75 (6), 1978: 308-325

Jamieson, Dale W., "The Moral and Political Challenges of Global Climate Change", *Creating a Climate for Change*, Elsevier, 2006, https://as.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu-as/faculty/documents/moral_and_political_challenges_of_climate_change.pdf

Jamieson, Dale W., "When Utilitarians should be Virtue Theorists", *Utilitas* 19 (2), 2007: 160-183

Jamieson, Dale W. and Marcello Di Paola, 'Climate Change and the Challenges to Democracy', in *University of Miami Law Review*, 72 (2), 2018: 369-424

Manela, Tony, "Gratitude to Nature", *Environmental Values* 27 (6), 2018: 623-644.

Routley, Richard, "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?", *Proceedings of the 15th World Congress of Philosophy 17th to 22nd September, 1971* (Varna, Bulgaria: Sofia Press, 1973), 205-210

Scheffler, Samuel, *Death and the Afterlife*, Oxford University Press, 2013

Steffen, Will et al. – "The Anthropocene", *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of Sciences*, vol. 36, nr. 1938, 2011: 842-867

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RECOMMENDED READINGS

The recommended reading(s) and/or text(s) for this course are listed below. These recommended readings are not mandatory, but they will assist you with research and understanding course content. Most are available at the CEA Resource Center for short-term loans.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books, I, 1-8, II, 1, IX, 4, 7-8, X, 1-4, 7-9, any edition, also here:

<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.html>

Attfield, Robin, *Environmental Ethics: An Overview for the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd edition, Polity, 2014, https://www.amazon.com/Environmental-Ethics-Overview-Twenty-First-Century-ebook/dp/B00JJT6J1W/ref=mt_kindle?_encoding=UTF8&me

Derr, Patrick and Edward McNamara, *Case Studies in Environmental Ethics*, Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, https://www.amazon.com/Case-Studies-Environmental-Ethics-Patrick-ebook/dp/B00E2Q797U/ref=mt_kindle?_encoding=UTF8&me

Feinberg, Joel, “The Rights of Animals and Future Generations”, in *Philosophy and Environmental Crisis*, ed. W.T. Blackstone, University of Georgia Press, 1974, pp. 43-68

Francis I, *Laudato Si'*: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Hourdequin, Marion, *Environmental Ethics: From theory to practice* (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2015): https://www.amazon.it/Environmental-Ethics-Practice-Marion-Hourdequin-ebook/dp/B00OMVLYFS/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1469429385&sr=1-1

Jamieson, Dale W. *Ethics and the Environment* (Cambridge University Press, 2008): https://www.amazon.com/Ethics-Environment-Introduction-Cambridge-Applied-ebook/dp/B001ELJV68/ref=mt_kindle?_encoding=UTF8&me

Jamieson, Dale W. *Reason in a Dark Time: Why the Struggle Against Climate Change Failed, and What It Means for Our Future* (Oxford University Press, 2014): https://www.amazon.com/Reason-Dark-Time-Struggle-Against-ebook/dp/B00I7V0USG/ref=sr_1_1?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1469395406&sr=1-1&keywords=reason+in+dark+time

Jamieson, Dale W. and Marcello Di Paola, “Political Theory for the Anthropocene”, in D. J. Held and P. Maffettone, Sebastiano, *Global Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 254-280

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In order to ensure you success abroad, CEA has provided the academic resources listed below. In addition to these resources, each CEA Study Center provides students with a physical library and study areas for group work. The Academic Affairs Office at each CEA Study Center also compiles a bank of detailed information regarding libraries, documentation centers, research institutes, and archival materials located in the host city.

- **UNH Online Library:** As a CEA student, you will be given access to the online library of CEA’s School of Record, the University of New Haven (UNH). You can use this online library to access databases and additional resources while performing research abroad. You may access the UNH online library [here](#) or through your MyCEA Account. You must comply with UNH Policies regarding library usage.
- **CEAClassroom – Moodle:** CEA instructors use Moodle, an interactive virtual learning environment. This web-based platform provides you with constant and direct access to the course syllabus, daily schedule of class lectures and assignments, non-textbook required readings, and additional resources.

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Moodle includes the normal array of forums, up-loadable and downloadable databases, wikis, and related academic support designed for helping you achieve the learning objectives listed in this syllabus.

During the first week of class, CEA academic staff and/or faculty will help you navigate through the many functions and resources Moodle provides. While you may print a hard copy version of the syllabus, you should always check Moodle for the most up-to-date information regarding this course. The instructor will use Moodle to make announcements and updates to the course and/or syllabus. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to all Moodle materials and that you monitor Moodle on a daily basis in case there are any changes made to course assignments or scheduling.

To access Moodle: Please log-in to your MyCEA account using your normal username and password. Click on the “While You’re Abroad Tab” and make sure you are under the “Academics” sub-menu. There you will see a link above your schedule that says “View Online Courses” select this link to be taken to your Moodle environment.

COURSE CALENDAR

Environmental Ethics: Humans, Culture & Sustainability

SESSION	TOPICS	ACTIVITY	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS
1	<p>Course Introduction: Review Syllabus & Study Material, Classroom Policies, Relevance of Environmental Ethics, Statement of expected results</p> <p>Class Discussion: Uncovering the reasons for our moral judgments of Goodness, Badness, Rightness, Wrongness, Praiseworthiness, Blameworthiness</p>	Introduction to the Course & Class Discussion	Brennan, Andrew and Yeuk-Sze Lo, “Environmental Ethics”, in <i>The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i> , ed. Zalta, Edward N. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/ethics-environmental/
2	Context & Key Concepts: Nature, Culture and Value	Lecture & Discussion	R. Routley, “Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?”, 205-210
3	More-than-human Ethics: Animals, Plants, & Future People	Lecture & Discussion	K. Goodpaster, “On Being Morally Considerable” 308-325
4	Global Interconnectedness: Forces of the Anthropocene: Business, Technology, and Ecological Changes	Lecture & Discussion	W. Steffen et al. – “The Anthropocene” 842-867
5	Virtue (I)	Lecture & Discussion	M. Di Paola – “Virtue”, 2018
6	Virtue (II)	Lecture & Discussion	D. Jamieson – “When Utilitarians Should be Virtue Theorists” 160-183
7	Sustainability (I): Dimensions of Sustainability Time	Lecture & Discussion	Thiele, <i>Sustainability</i> , pp. 1-38
8	Sustainability (II): Space & Resilience	Lecture & Discussion	Thiele, <i>Sustainability</i> , pp. 39-89 Essay Due

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9	Sustainability (III): Technology	Lecture & Discussion	Thiele, <i>Sustainability</i> , pp. 90-115
10	Climate Change (I): Moral Challenges	Lecture & Discussion	D. Jamieson, "Moral and Political Challenges of Global Climate Change", <i>Creating a Climate for Change</i> , 2006, https://as.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu-as/faculty/documents/moral_and_political_challenges_of_climate_change.pdf
11	Climate Change (II): Political Challenges	Lecture & Discussion	Jamieson, Dale W. and Marcello Di Paola, 'Climate Change and the Challenges to Democracy', in <i>University of Miami Law Review</i> , 72 (2), 2018: 369-424
12	The Future of Humanity	Lecture & Discussion	S. Scheffler, <i>Death and the Afterlife</i> , 15-81
13	Love of Nature & Gratitude to Planet Earth	Lecture & Discussion	T. Manela, "Gratitude to Nature", 623-644
14	Class Debate		Assignments: Written submission Oral debate
15	FINAL EXAM		

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SECTION III: CEA Academic Policies

The policies listed in this section outline general expectations for CEA students. You should carefully review these policies to ensure success in your courses and during your time abroad. Furthermore, as a participant in the CEA program, you are expected to review and understand all CEA Student Policies, including the academic policies outlined on our website. CEA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. For the most up to date policies, please review the policies on our website.

Class & Instructor Policies can be found [here](#)

General Academic Policies can be found [here](#)