

Environmental Ethics: Humans, Culture & Sustainability

UNH Course Code: PHL320/SUS320

Subject Areas: Philosophy, Sustainability, Ethics, Cultural Studies, Environmental Studies

Level: 300

Prerequisites: One two-hundred or two one-hundred level courses in the subject area(s) of instruction

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

DESCRIPTION

The general aim of this course is to explore ethical and conceptual issues regarding the creation of ecologically sustainable societies. What, exactly, should we seek to sustain, and why? What would a genuinely sustainable society look like? You will ask whether economic growth facilitates or undermines sustainability; investigate sustainable political and social practices, businesses, and lifestyles, and discuss population and consumption issues.

You will explore the philosophical foundations of a plausible environmental ethic that may merge human responsibilities towards nature and our ecosystems to our ongoing quest for flourishing and self-understanding in a globalized, highly interconnected, overpopulated, ecologically deteriorating world. After an initial exploration of the roots of the current environmental crisis, the class will evaluate and consider potential responses. You will examine such issues as the impact of different worldviews upon environmental behavior, our responsibilities to future generations, climate change and the challenges it poses to our moral psychology, as well as to our ethical and political systems more generally. You'll consider the potential of developing specific environmental virtues that may contribute to flourishing in what many now call "The Anthropocene" – the epoch in which human activity has become the main driver of Earth's biological and geological evolution.

The readings in the course are designed to both articulate and challenge typical Western ways of looking at "the environment". Not all cultures have the same concept of the environment and what it entails. You'll examine the very need for an "environmental ethic" and whether it reflects a degree of alienation from nature that is not necessarily replicated elsewhere in the non-Western world. Since many questions of environmental ethics operate through issues of scale (climate change, for instance, is both global and local), we will constantly be asking whether a Western understanding of "the environment" helps or hurts when projected onto the rest of the world and used as a conceptual model and/or a basis for policy-making.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Cognitive Skills: Disciplinary & Cultural Knowledge

- Investigate controversial concepts such as sustainability, human flourishing, obligations to non-human nature and future generations, environmental justice.
- Become acquainted with the philosophical complexities inherent to ethical reflection on nature.
- Examine environmental topics from a non-Western (cultural, philosophical, moral) lens.
- Learn to apply fundamental notions in ethical theory to contemporary environmental issues, and particularly to assess the ethical consequences of human actions.
- Explore the concept of "environmental virtue" in its ethical, psychological, cultural and political dimensions.

- Develop and articulate persuasive perspectives and positions in regards to pressing environmental issues.

Analytical Skills: Critical Thinking in Oral & Written Work

- Demonstrate ability to summarize, synthesize, and critically analyze ideas from multiple sources in order to draw well-supported conclusions useful to real-life environmental problem-solving.
- Express viewpoints from a multicultural perspective.
- Acquire the capacity to evaluate the logic of arguments and strength of evidence using deductive and inductive methods.
- Learn to recognize unexpressed premises, hidden value judgments, and fallacious reasoning in the environmental discourse.

Affective & Behavioral Skills

- Increase intercultural competency through the exploration of how changes in the environment have impact on diverse groups of people around the world.
- Increase awareness of one's personal impacts on the environment, and develop a disposition to taking responsibility for them.
- Learn to configure well-reasoned value judgments, showing awareness and respect for multiple and often widely diverse value systems.
- Develop and practice civility in class discussions and written academic work through the practice of dialogue and philosophical exchange.

INSTRUCTIONAL FORMAT

This course will meet once a week for 160 minutes. You are required to read all the weekly materials and prepare 2 pertinent, written questions/comments, to be handed in at the beginning of class in order to set off discussions. The course is meant to stimulate active dialogue rather than merely promote the absorption of relevant concepts and theories. Typical class activities will therefore consist of a lecture by the instructor, always to be followed by a discussion of the main topics covered. All doubts you may have will be addressed by the instructor during class: for that to be possible, however, it is important that you actually do voice your doubts in class, and do so in sharp, concise, and effective ways. The course touches on a vast number of conceptual as well as real-world issues. The instructor's lectures will range as widely, and it will often be your task to "connect the dots" – in itself a skill, relevant to both real-life policy making and ethical theorizing.

Special Accommodations: If you require any special accommodations or have any special learning needs, please inform the instructor and the onsite academic affairs staff on the first day of class.

FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

The instructor will use numerous and differentiated forms of assessment to calculate the final grade you receive for this course. For the record, these are listed and weighted below. The content, criteria and specific requirements for each assessment category will be explained in greater detail in class. However, you must complete all grading assessment categories to receive a grade for this course. In addition, your work and behavior in this course must fully conform to the regulations of the CEA *Academic Integrity Policy* to which you are subject. Finally, all formal written work you carry out in this course (research papers, projects, studies, etc.) must be submitted in electronic format. Your instructor may also require that you hand in a hard copy of such work.

Workload Expectations: In conformity with CEA policy, all students are expected to spend at least two hours of time on academic studies outside of, and in addition to, each hour of class time.

Grade Disputes: Any grade dispute you encounter in this course must immediately be discussed with the instructor and definitively resolved before the last week of class. Only end-of-term assignments graded after the end of your program are subject to CEA's formal grade appeal procedure. For more information, see [CEA Academic Policies](#).

Class Participation	10%
Written Questions/comments	10%
Research Paper	20%
Group Presentations	30%
Final Exam	30%

Class Participation: This grade will be calculated to reflect your participation in class discussions, your capacity to introduce ideas and thoughts dealing with the required texts, your ability to use language effectively, and your analytical skills in intellectual, constructive argumentation. When determining your class participation grade, traditional criteria such as material preparation, completed reading before class, and collaborative group work are all evaluated. But it is the active, meaningful and informed verbal and written contribution that you make that is most important to your overall participation grade. Indeed, willingness to share views in classroom discussions and the insightfulness of your comments and questions about assigned readings will all be taken into account when evaluating your participation. Additionally, it is important to demonstrate a positive and supportive attitude to the instructor and your classmates, and give full attention to class activities (i.e., cell-phones off, laptop for notes only, etc.). Whereas attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively towards the grade, laxity in these areas will have a negative effect. The instructor will use the following specific criteria when calculating your class participation grade:

Criteria for Assessing Class Participation	Grade
You make major and original contributions that spark discussion, offering both critical and analytical comments clearly based on readings and research and displaying a working knowledge of theoretical issues.	A+ (9.70–10.00)
You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings and independent research.	A-/A (9.00–9.69)
You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.	B/B+ (8.40–89.90)
You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.	C+/B- (7.70–8.39)
You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.	C (7.00–7.69)
You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject, attending class having manifestly done little if any preparation.	D (6.00–6.69)
You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion, a result of frequent absence and complete un-preparedness.	F (0–5.90)

Written questions/comments (10%): At the outset of each class, you are required to hand in two brief but well articulated written questions/comments (no more than 800 words total) relating to the weekly material assigned.

In order of complexity, the criteria used to measure the quality of written questions/comments include the following:

1. Relevance: Is the question/comment relevant to the discussion?
2. Evidence: Does the student support questions/comments well, using data gathered in this class?
3. Clarity: Is the question/comment clear, complete and concise?
4. Intellectual cleverness: does the question/comment shed additional light into the key variables determining the business ethics issue?
5. Adequacy: Is the question/comment pertinent and adequate to the subject matter?
6. Implications: does the analysis of the issue being raised broaden its scope to detect further implications conducive to a better definition of any of the existing models?

Research Paper (20%): You are required to write a 1500-word paper on a topic of your choice, selected from among the assigned readings. However, you must expand and elaborate on such topic through independent, external research. The paper will test your analytical, synthetic, and critical skills.

Group Presentation (30%): Predetermined groups of students will develop a PowerPoint presentation ranging from 12 to 15 slides, written in formal English and engaging with assigned as well as subsidiary readings. Satisfactory presentations require some outside research effort and include appropriate citations. Critical perspectives on materials discussed are strongly encouraged. Each student involved in the presentation will have to hand in a written report (no more than 500 words total), summarizing the content of her own exposé as well as, more briefly, that of her peers. The report will also have to include concise peer reviews.

Final Exam (30%): The final exam is designed to establish and communicate the progress the student has made towards meeting the course learning objectives listed above. It is designed to test the student’s ability in three important areas of competency: the amount of information mastered; the accuracy in interpreting and discriminating information; the ability to categorize business ethics and management problems into conceptual models studied; and the ability to present pertinent and relevant information in an attractive, sharp, concise and effective manner and format.

CEA Grading Scale				
Letter Grade	Numerical Grade Low Range	Numerical Grade High Range	Percentage Range	Quality Points
A+	9.70	10.00	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	7.00	7.69	70.0 – 76.9%	2.00
D	6.00	6.99	60.0 – 69.9%	1.00
F	0.00	5.99	0 - 59.9%	0.00
W	Withdrawal			0.00
INC	Incomplete			0.00

CEA ATTENDANCE POLICY

Every student is expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and be thoroughly prepared for the day’s class activities. In compliance with NEASC and UNH accreditation requirements, CEA instructors compile regular attendance records for every course and take these records into account when evaluating student participation and performance.

- In each three-credit 15-week course, a maximum of the equivalent of two weeks of accumulated absences due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transport delay and other related impediments will be tolerated.
- Your final course grade will drop one full letter grade (e.g. A- to B-) for each additional class missed beyond this two week period, regardless of the reason for your absence.
- You will automatically fail a course if your absences exceed the equivalent of three weeks of class.

Furthermore, to comply with immigration and financial regulations, you must maintain full-time student status and attend at least 12 hours of class every week. Consequently, the Dean and Program Director will dismiss from all CEA courses, programs, activities and housing any student who fails to maintain full-time status.

Arriving Late for Class: Consistently arriving late is disruptive and shows a lack of respect for instructor and fellow students. For persistent lateness, the instructor deducts percentage points from the total 10% earmarked for Participation as indicated in the syllabus. Missing a significant portion of one of your classes may constitute a full day’s absence. If you arrive late due to serious and unforeseen circumstances, or if you must leave class early

due to illness or emergency, you must inform the instructor. The instructor will determine if the amount of class time missed constitutes a full or partial absence.

Missing Examinations: Examinations will not be rescheduled except in cases of genuine emergencies. Pre-arranged travel or anticipated absence does not constitute an emergency situation. Authorizing make-up examinations is at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

CEACLASSROOM: CEA'S MOODLE CMS

CEA instructors use the open source course management system (CMS) called Moodle that creates an interactive virtual learning environment for students and educators alike. This web-based platform provides you with 24/7 access to the course syllabus, daily schedule of class lectures and assignments, non-textbook required readings, and additional resources directly related to your studies. Moodle includes the normal array of forums, uploadable and downloadable databases, wikis, and related academic support designed for helping you achieve the many course learning objectives. The ceaClassroom website is located here: <https://www.ceaClassroom.com/>

During the first week of class, the CEA academic staff and instructors will provide you with log-in information and corresponding passwords to access this site. They will also help you navigate through the many functions and resources Moodle provides. While you may print a hard copy version of the syllabus that is projected on the first day of class, it is the class schedule on Moodle that is the definitive and official one, given that the instructor will be announcing updates and additions there and nowhere else. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to all Moodle materials related to your course and that you monitor Moodle on a daily basis so as to be fully informed of required course assignments and any scheduling changes that might occur.

REQUIRED READING

Listed below are the required course textbooks and additional readings. Whether you buy your books from our locally affiliated merchants or whether you acquire these before arrival, you must have constant access to these resources for reading, highlighting and marginal note-taking. It is required that you have unrestricted access to each. Additional copies will be placed on reserve in the Academic Affairs office for short-term loans. Access to additional sources required for certain class sessions will be provided in paper or electronic format consistent with applicable copyright legislation. In addition, the Academic Affairs Office compiles a bank of detailed information about the many libraries, documentation centers, research institutes and archival materials located in the host city and accessible to CEA students. You will be required to use these resources throughout your studies. Direct access to additional resources and databanks are available to you through the online library of the University of New Haven.

D.W. Jamieson – *Ethics and the Environment*, Cambridge University Press, 2008 (pp. 234)

L. Gruen, D.W. Jamieson, C. Schlottmann - *Reflecting on Nature: Readings in Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2012 (pp. 319)

J. Broome – *Climate Matters*, W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2012 (pp. 209)

H. Shue, S. Gardiner, S. Caney, D. Jamieson (eds.) *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, Oxford University Press, 2010 (pp. 351)

Environmental Ethics: Humans, Culture & Sustainability

Course Content

SESSION	TOPIC	ACTIVITY	STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS
1	Images of Nature	<p style="text-align: center;">Introduction to the Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement of expectations - Overview of study material <p style="text-align: center;">Lecture & Discussion</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Jamieson – <i>Ethics and the Environment</i>, Chapter 1, pp. 1-25 • <i>Reflecting on Nature</i> (pp. 1-23) From "Genesis" Aristotle, from <i>Physics</i> Aristotle, from <i>Politics</i> Locke, from <i>The Second Treatise of Government</i> Darwin, from <i>On the Origin of Species</i> Muir, "Anthropocentrism and Predation" Leopold, from <i>The Land Ethic</i> Thoreau, from <i>Walking</i> • B. McKibben – <i>The End of Nature</i>, Chapter 1, 2, pp. 3-80 • W. Steffen <i>et al.</i> – "The Anthropocene" <i>Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of Sciences</i>, vol. 36, nr. 1938, 2011: pp. 842-867 http://rsta.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/369/1938/842.full.pdf+html
2	Ethics and the Environment I	Lecture & Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Jamieson – <i>Ethics and the Environment</i>, Chapter 3, pp. 46-75 • <i>Reflecting on Nature</i> (pp. 41-56) R. Routley - "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?" B. Williams - "Must a Concern for the Environment be Centered on Human Beings?" K. Goodpaster - from "On Being Morally Considerable"

3	Ethics and the Environment II	Lecture & Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Jamieson – <i>Ethics and the Environment</i>, Chapter 4, pp. 76-102 • <i>Reflecting on Nature</i> (pp. 57-89) R. Elliot - "Normative Ethics" R. Sandler - "Environmental Virtue Ethics" P. W. Taylor - from <i>Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics</i> J. B. Callicott - from <i>Beyond the Land Ethic</i> • D. Jamieson – “When Utilitarians Should Be Virtue Theorists” <i>Climate Ethics</i>, pp. 315-331
4	Group 1 Presentation	Presentation & Discussion	Link, analyze, present, and critically discuss 3 among the pieces assigned in weeks 1-3 (included)
5	Non-Human Animals	Lecture and Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Jamieson – <i>Ethics and the Environment</i>, Chapter 5, pp. 102-144 • <i>Reflecting On Nature</i>: (pp. 143-159; 191-195) P. Singer - "All Animals are Equal" L. Gruen - "The Moral Status of Animals" C. Diamond - "Eating Meat and Eating People" P. Singer and J. Mason - from <i>The Ethics of What We Eat</i>
6	The Rest of Nature	Lecture & Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Jamieson – <i>Ethics and the Environment</i>, Chapter 6, pp. 145-180 • <i>Reflecting On Nature</i> (pp. 226-255) E. Sober - "Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism" S. Sarkar - from <i>Biodiversity and Environmental Philosophy</i> H. Rolston III - "Biodiversity"

7	Group 2 Presentation	Presentation & Discussion	Link, analyze, present, and critically discuss 3 among the pieces assigned in weeks 4-6 (included)
8	Public Goods and Collective Action	Lecture & Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G. Hardin - "The Tragedy of the Commons" <i>Science</i>, Vol. 162, No. 3859, 1968: pp. 1243-1248 http://cecs.wright.edu/~swang/cs409/Hardin.pdf • E. Ostrom, et. al. - "Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges" <i>Science</i>, Vol. 284, No. 5412, 1999: pp. 278-282 http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/reprint/284/5412/278.pdf. • M. Van Vugt - "Averting the Tragedy of the Commons" <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i>, 18, 2009: pp. 169-173
9	Climate Change I: Basics	Lecture and Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Broome: <i>Climate Matters</i>, Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-72 • D. Jamieson - 'Moral and Political Challenges of Global Climate Change', in S. Moser and L. Dilling (eds.), <i>Creating a Climate for Change</i>. Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 475-482
10	Climate Change II: Justice and Institutional Obligations	Lecture and Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflecting on Nature</i> (277-287) E. Posner & C. Sunstein, from <i>Climate Change Justice</i> • H. Shue – “Global Environment and International Inequality”, <i>Climate Ethics</i>, pp.101-111 • H. Shue – “Subsistence Emissions and Luxury Emissions”, <i>Climate Ethics</i>, pp. 200-214 • S. Caney – “Cosmopolitan Justice, Responsibility, and Global Climate Change”, <i>Climate Ethics</i>, 122-145

11	Group 3 Presentation	Presentation & Discussion	Link, analyze, present, and critically discuss 3 among the pieces assigned in weeks 8-10 (included)
12	Climate Change III: Responsibility and Individual Obligations	Lecture and Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Broome - <i>Climate Matters</i>, Chapter 5, pp. 73-96 • W. Sinnott-Armstrong - "It's Not My Fault" <i>Climate Ethics</i>, pp. 332-346 • M. Hordequin – “Climate, Collective Action, and Individual Ethical Obligations”, <i>Environmental Values</i> 19, 2010: 443-464 • M. Di Paola – “Climate Change: Who Does What, Why, and How”, in M. Di Paola and G. Pellegrino (eds.), <i>Canned Heat: The Ethics and Politics of Climate Change</i>, Routledge Publishing, 2014, (pp. TBA)
13	Climate Change IV: The Future	Lecture and Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Broome - <i>Climate Matters</i>, Chapters 6-10, pp. 97-192 • D. Parfit – “Energy Policy and the Further Future”, <i>Climate Ethics</i>, pp. 112-122
13	Human Flourishing on a Changing Planet	Lecture and Discussion	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N. Bostrom – “Existential Risk Reduction as a Global Priority” <i>Global Policy</i>, Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2013 (pp. 15-31) • M. Di Paola: “Virtues for the Anthropocene” <i>Environmental Values</i>, forthcoming 2014 (pp. TBA) http://www.whpress.co.uk/EV/papers/Di%20Paola.pdf
14		FINAL EXAM	