

University of California, Davis
Department of Philosophy
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
PHI 120, FALL 2020
Online via Canvas and Zoom TR 10:30-11:50 AM

Contact Information

Instructor: Professor Roberta Millstein

Office Hours: T 1-2 PM and R 12:30-1:30 PM on Zoom, and by appointment [changed]

E-mail: RLMillstein@UCDavis.edu (*the best way to reach me*)

Phone: 530-754-0715 (*Not a good way to reach me*)

Philosophy Dept. Office, my mailbox: 1240 SSH **Philosophy Dept. Phone:** 530-752-0703

Required Texts

All required readings will be available on the course website on Canvas, <https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/>

All Zoom class meetings will be recorded and available on Canvas (barring any technological snafus)

Course Description

Many people are concerned about a variety of environmental issues, from pollution to global warming to the extinction of species. They say that we “should” do something about those issues. But what ethical assumptions underlie that “should”? Is it a concern for human well-being? For animals? For all life? For species? Or, even more broadly, for ecosystems? In other words, which things count morally? The answers matter not only because we need to justify our actions, but because different answers may imply different courses of action. In this class, we will *explore* the various answers that can and have been given to this question, and see how well these answers hold up when applied to contemporary environmental case studies.

The goals of this course are: 1) to introduce you to some of the major issues within environmental ethics; 2) to encourage you to critically examine your own beliefs as well as the beliefs of others; 3) to provide the opportunity to discuss, both in class and in a more sustained written form, your ideas and arguments about important issues in environmental ethics. This class fulfills the Writing Experience (WE) GE requirement.

Class Policies

- If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please email me, visit my Zoom office hours, or make a Zoom appointment to discuss *as soon as possible*.
- You are responsible for *all* material covered in class, including announcements, discussions, etc. *Take notes on discussions as well as lecture*. Be aware that the topics in this class build on one another, so you will need to keep up.
- Use gender neutral language in gender neutral contexts (so, “humankind” rather than “mankind”, etc.).
- Zoom policies:
 - ***Do not share the Zoom links or Zoom recordings with anyone outside of the class.***
 - Log on with the name that is on the roster (first name and last name) or email me if you would prefer to use a different name for the duration of the class.
 - Keep your Zoom microphone muted when you are not speaking.
 - Please feel free to use the Zoom chat to ask questions or make comments (class related only).
 - If you feel comfortable using video, please keep your video on.
 - I will pause periodically to ask for questions and comments. Please take advantage of this!
 - Close any apps on your device that are not relevant and turn off notifications.

Class Requirements

Your grade will be based on the following (all dates subject to change):

- 10%** - Comments/questions on each day's readings, **posted to Discussions on Canvas before class.**
Approximately one paragraph, you should give your reflections on the reading and/or ask questions about parts you did not understand – in short, demonstrate that you did the reading.
Each on-time posting is graded credit/no credit. Late=no credit.
- 60%** - Three 2-page analytical essays submitted on Canvas by **Mon Oct 26, Mon Nov 16, and Mon Dec 7**
- 30%** - Comprehensive take-home final short essay exam submitted on Canvas by **1 PM, Wed, Dec 16.**

Writing Experience (WE) GE: The analytical essays will receive feedback from the instructor and are intended to build skills throughout the quarter.

You must complete the three analytical essays and the final exam in order to pass the class. In the case of a borderline grade, **class participation** will be given serious consideration.

Important note on plagiarism/cheating (see also “Avoiding Plagiarism” document below):

It is a violation of the [Code of Academic Conduct](#) to turn in work that is not your own. This includes: turning in the work of another student with your name on it, buying/copying a paper off the Internet, using the words *or* ideas of others without proper quotation and citation. In accordance with Regulation 550 of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate, **a grade of "0" will be assigned to examinations or assignments on which cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty is admitted or determined to have occurred by proper adjudication.** If you have trouble with the class material or have personal issues preventing you from doing your work, come talk to me. **University requirement:** [Verify your participation.](#)

Tentative Reading Schedule - All dates and readings are subject to change. All readings will be available on the course website on Canvas, <https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/>

Date	Topic	Reading (by author)
Oct 1	Introduction	Syllabus
Oct 6	Anthropocentric ethics	Phil: Hinman (excerpt), Case: ProCon.org
Oct 8	Anthropocentric ethics	Phil: Dillon (excerpt), Case: Peppard
Oct 13	Individualism: Animals	Phil: Singer, Case: Case 3
Oct 15	Individualism: Animals	Phil: Regan, Case: Case 19
Oct 20	Individualism: Animals	Phil: Warren, Case: Case 2
Oct 22	Individualism: All life	Phil: Taylor, Case: Jackson
Oct 27	Individualism: All life	Phil: Varner, Case: FresnoBee
Oct 29	Species/biodiversity	Phil: Russow, Case: Science Daily
Nov 3	Species/biodiversity	Phil: Bradley, Case: Science Daily
Nov 5	Video: Green Fire	<i>no reading, but post comments to Canvas by noon Nov 6</i>
Nov 10	Ecocentrism	Phil: Leopold, Case: Case 23
Nov 12	Ecocentrism	Phil: Westra, Case: Perlman
Nov 17	Ecocentrism	Phil: Hettinger & Throop, Case: Case 5
Nov 19	Ecocentrism v. Individualism	Phil: Sagoff, Case: Case 25
Nov 24	Ecocentrism v. Individualism	Phil: Shrader-Frechette, Case: Case 16
Nov 26	Thanksgiving - NO CLASS	<i>no reading</i>
Dec 1	All encompassing: Deep Ecology	Phil: Devall & Sessions, Case: Case 10
Dec 3	All encompassing: 3rd World Critique	Phil: Guha, Case: Case 4
Dec 8	Anthropocentric ethics revisited	Phil: Norton, Case: ENS
Dec 10	Anthropocentric ethics revisited	Phil: McShane