

University of California, Davis
Department of Philosophy
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
PHI 220, Winter 2018
2275 SSH, Thurs 3:10-6 PM

Contact information

Instructor: Professor Roberta Millstein

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Office Hours: Wed 2:30-3:30 PM, Thurs 2-3 PM, and by appointment

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Required readings

Required (and optional) readings available on course website on Canvas, <https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/>

Course description

This graduate seminar will focus on some of the topics that make environmental ethics distinct from ethics as it is more typically construed: it will focus on the moral considerability of entities beyond that of individual organisms. We will begin with a brief overview of the field of environmental ethics, followed by some classic articles that seem to attribute intrinsic value to biotic communities/ecosystems. From there we will examine some candidates that could potentially undergird the moral considerability of ecosystems: goal-directedness, ecosystem health/function, ecosystem integrity, interdependency, resilience. But, shifting gears a bit, we will see that some arguments related to the ones we've been examining have implications for non-living systems as well, which has implications for our duties beyond the planet earth. We will spend the last three weeks of the class exploring those implications.

Course requirements

Your grade will be based on the following:

10% - In-class participation

10% - Online participation

20% - Coordination of seminars

60% - Term paper - Sketch due by 11 PM Sat, **Mar. 10**; final version due by 11 PM on Sat, **Mar. 25**.

In-class participation - You are expected to come to all classes having done the readings and you are expected to participate in class discussions.

Online participation - Post to the SmartSite Forums **by 1 PM before every seminar** concerning the readings for the day – ask questions, raise objections, give reflections, etc.

Coordination of seminars: You will coordinate at least part of one seminar (perhaps more, depending on the number of students in the class) using a visual aid such as handout or PowerPoint-type slides – contact me before class for help with photocopying or projector set up. Your job as coordinator is to stimulate and lead discussion. So, you should **1)** Give enough of a summary of the readings to stimulate discussion, but don't attempt a point-by-point summary (we can always turn to the article during discussion if necessary). Be sure to provide an overview of the overall argument. Seek out additional references if necessary. And,

2) raise issues for discussion (not simply, “what did you think about that?”). As coordinator, it is OK if there are parts of the articles that you didn’t understand; ask those questions for group discussion.

Term paper: Your paper may analyze any of the readings discussed in class, any of the optional readings, or offshoots of those readings (follow the citations of class readings or look for papers that cite the class readings). Contact me if you wish to do something other than the above. Prepare your paper (more or less) in the style of a *Philosophy of Science* article. Your paper should be approximately 5000 words (the length of a Philosophy of Science Association conference paper).

Important note on plagiarism/cheating: 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 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 that prevent you from doing your work, come talk to me.

Tentative Schedule - All dates and readings are subject to change.

Date	Topic	Author-year	Paper/chapter title	Coor.
Jan 11	introduction	Millstein 2013	“Environmental Ethics”	RLM
Jan 18	ecosystems’ intrinsic value	Leopold 1949	“The Land Ethic”	Patrick
	ecosystems’ intrinsic value	Rolston 1982	“Are Values in Nature Subjective or Objective?”	Patrick
Jan 25	moral considerability	Goodpaster 1978	“On Being Morally Considerable”	Noel
	moral considerability	Cahen 1988	“Against the Moral Considerability of Ecosystems”	Rick
Feb 1	ecosystem health/function	McShane 2004	“Ecosystem Health”	Tiernan
	ecosystem health/function	Odenbaugh 2010	“On the Very Idea of an Ecosystem”	Tiernan
Feb 8	ecosystem integrity	Westra 2001	“From Aldo Leopold to the Wildlands Project: The Ethics of Integrity”	Ryan L
	ecosystem integrity	Morito 1999	“Examining Ecosystem Integrity as a Primary Mode of Recognizing the Autonomy of Nature”	Sarah
Feb 15	interdependency	Lema 2014	“The Ethical Implications of Organism-Environment Interdependency”	Jordan
	resilience	Kortetmaki 2017	“Applying the Capabilities Approach to Ecosystems: Resilience as Ecosystem Capability”	Khang
Feb 22	function (non-living)	Brennan 1984	“The Moral Standing of Natural Objects”	James
	historical origins/process	Elliott 1982	“Faking Nature”	James
Mar 1	moving away from earth	Lee 1994	“Awe and Humility: Intrinsic Value in Nature. Beyond an Earthbound Environmental Ethics”	Ryan S
	moving away from earth	Reiman 2009	“Is space an environment?”	Ryan S
Mar 8	ethics of terraforming	Sparrow 1999	“The Ethics of Terraforming”	Michael
	ethics of terraforming	Schwartz 2011	“Our Moral Obligation to Support Space Exploration”	Michael
Mar 15	relevance of anthropocentrism	Manson 2012	“Anthropocentrism, Exoplanets, and the Cosmic Perspective”	Megan
	relevance of anthropocentrism	Wilks 2016	“Kantian Foundations for a Cosmocentric Ethic”	Megan