Environmental Ethics

Government 60.10
Fall 2016
Dartmouth College

Professor Julie Rose
Office: Silsby 202
Office Hours: TBD

2A (TTh 2:25-4:15)
X: Wednesday 4:35-5:25
Classroom: TBD

Course Description

This course examines how principles of justice apply to our environmental choices and public policies. We will first consider different ethical perspectives on our relationship to non-human animals and the environment. Subjects include: population growth and control; the siting of toxic waste; the use of animals; the protection of endangered species; the conservation of ecosystems; and the human re-creation of nature. In the final section of the course, we will examine in greater depth the ethics of climate change, considering how developed and developing nations are differentially responsible for climate change and its remediation, what our obligations are to future generations, and what obligations individuals bear to contribute to sustainability and limit consumption.

There are no pre-requisites for the class and first-years are welcome.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:
- Identify and describe the leading approaches to, and the key questions and concepts of, environmental ethics
- Engage with questions about the value of nature, our obligations to other species and future generations, and the just allocation of environmental risks and benefits
- Construct and evaluate philosophical arguments about environmental ethics and policy
- Analyze the theoretical foundations and disputes underlying contemporary debates about environmental policy, and use those theoretical resources to reach more well-grounded and reasoned positions

Course Requirements

There are four course requirements:
- Participation (incl. quizzes) 20% of final grade
- Midterm exam 25%
- Paper (6-8 pages) 25%
- Final exam 30%

Make-up exams will not be granted without a valid reason and advance notice. Unless there is a valid excuse, late papers will be penalized a full letter grade for every day late.
Your participation grade depends on your punctual attendance, your contributions to class discussions, and regular quizzes. You must do the assigned reading in advance of each class and participate in class discussions. If you are hesitant about participating, meet with me. However, do not speak simply for the sake of doing so. Comments that indicate that you have not done the reading will hurt rather than help your participation grade.

There will be frequent unannounced quizzes on the assigned readings. These will be open book and open note. You must be in class that day to take the quiz; no make-up quizzes will be granted. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Readings

Required readings will be posted on Canvas.

The readings will be limited to around 75-100 pages per week. The readings require careful attention, so read thoroughly and carefully. It is to be expected that you will need to read some of the texts more than once to understand the arguments.

It is advisable, though not required, to bring your text with you to class.

Class Format

Class sessions will combine lecture and discussion (sometimes in small groups, sometimes as a whole). I encourage you to interrupt the lectures to ask clarificatory or substantive questions. It is important that you come to class having done the assigned readings and prepared to discuss them. I will sometimes call on students who have not volunteered an answer; you are welcome to pass. There will be regular unannounced quizzes on the readings. There will be two in-class debates.

Class Policies

Office Hours: I will hold regular office hours on TBD. If you would like to meet another time, do not hesitate to email me and we can make an appointment.

Honor Policy: Students are required to abide by the Academic Honor Principle (http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/honor). Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are ever in doubt about what the honor code requires, or what citations are required or how much collaborating or paraphrasing is permissible, do not hesitate to ask me. Otherwise, err on the side of caution.

X-Hours: I may use some x-hours; if so, I will give advance notice.

Laptops and electronics: Laptops and other electronics are prohibited in class. You will remember more and be more present if you take notes by hand. See: www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom
Median Grade: In accordance with the Government Department policy, unless there are extraordinary circumstances, the median grade will not exceed a B+.

Learning disabilities: Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services are encouraged to see me privately as early as possible in the term. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (205 Collis Student Center, 646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Religious observances: Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments
Subject to change with advance notice.

Week 1: Introduction

Course Overview
- Dale Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, pp. 1-25 (25 pp.)
  Optional:
  - Richard Sylvan, “Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental Ethic” (8 pp.)
  - Bryan Norton, “Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism” (13 pp.)

Speciesism
- Dale Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, pp. 102-112 (10 pp.)
- Bernard Williams, “The Human Prejudice” (18 pp.)
- Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal” pp. 1-9 (9 pp.)
  Optional:
  - Peter Singer, “Man’s Dominion” pp. 185-212 (28 pp.)

Week 2: The Moral Status of Animals

Animal Suffering
- Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal” pp. 9-23 (14 pp.)
- Robert Nozick, “Animals and Constraints” (3 pp.)
- Dale Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, pp. 112-116 (5 pp.)

Animal Rights

Last updated: May 27, 2016
• Immanuel Kant, “Duties to Animals” (2 pp.)
• Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights” (8 pp.)
• Christine Korsgaard, “Facing the Animal You See in the Mirror” (6 pp.)
• Dale Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, pp. 116-120 (5 pp.)

Week 3: Human Use of Animals

Class Debate on Factory Farming
• Michael Pollan, “An Animal’s Place” (9 pp.)
• Dale Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, pp. 121-144 (25 pp.)
• Mark Bittman, “Hens, Unbound” (3 pp.)

Using Animals for Research
• Carl Cohen, “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research” (6 pp.)
• Hugh LaFollette, “Why Cohen is Mistaken” (9 pp.)

Week 4: Biocentrism and Ecocentrism

April 20: Biocentrism and Ecocentrism
• Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic” (8 pp.)
• Dale Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, pp. 145-153 (9 pp.)
• Mark Sagoff, “Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce” (10 pp.)
• Elliot Sober, “Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism” (19 pp.)
• John Muir, “Hetch Hetchey Valley” (2 pp.)
• Dale Jamieson, Ethics and the Environment, pp. 153-175 (24 pp.)

April 22: Conflicts with Human Interests
• Holmes Rolston III, “Feeding People versus Saving Nature?” (19 pp.)
• Ramachandra Guha, “Radical Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique” (13 pp.)

Week 5: Economic Approaches

In-class midterm exam on weeks 1-4.

Population Growth and the Tragedy of the Commons
• Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons” (6 pp.)
• Elinor Ostrom, et al., “Revisiting the Commons” (5 pp.)
• Amartya Sen, “Population: Delusion and Reality” (15 pp.)

Week 6: Economic Approaches, cont. and Environmental Justice

Cost-Benefit Analysis
• William Baxter, “The Case for Optimal Pollution” (4 pp.)
• Larry Summers, “Memo on Dirty Industries” (2 pp.)
• Steven Kelman, “Cost-Benefit Analysis: An Ethical Critique” (8 pp.)

Consumer and Citizen Preferences
• Mark Sagoff, “The Allocation and Distribution of Resources” (20 pp.)

Week 7: Environmental Justice, cont., and Climate Change

Environmental Justice
• Kristen Shrader-Frechette, *Environmental Justice*, pp. 3-17, 71-94 (39 pp.)
• Christian Hunold and Iris Marion Young, “Justice, Democracy, and Hazardous Siting” (13 pp.)

Climate Change Ethics Overview
• Stephen Gardiner, “Ethics and Global Climate Change” in CE (37 pp.)

Week 8: Climate Change – Future Generations

Obligations to Future People
• Brian Barry, “Justice Between Generations” (17 pp.)
• Derek Parfit, “Energy Policy and the Further Future” in CE (9 pp.)
• Henry Shue, “Deadly Delays, Saving Opportunities” in CE (12 pp.)
• Simon Caney, “Climate Change, Human Rights, and Moral Thresholds” in CE (10 pp.)

The Global Distribution of Emission Rights
• Peter Singer, “One Atmosphere” in CE (20 pp.)

Week 9: Climate Change – Global Justice

The Ethics of Cap and Trade
• Robert Goodin, “Selling Environmental Indulgences” in CE (17 pp.)
• Michael Sandel, “It’s Immoral to Buy the Right to Pollute,” with replies (4 pp.)
• Michael Sandel, “ Tradable Pollution Permits” (4 pp.)

Climate Engineering
• Readings TBD

Week 10: Climate Change – Individual Obligations

] What to do?
• Dale Jamieson, “When Utilitarians Should Be Virtue Theorists” in CE (12 pp.)