Philosophy 192 (UG16) – Environmental Ethics
TTh 6PM-7:50PM
Rankin 204B

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Office: Philosophy and Religious Studies House, Wright Street
Office Hours: TTh 4:40-5:40

Required Texts


Any other readings will be made available on e-learning.

Course Description and Objectives

In this course we will think about our relationship to the environment. This will be considered systematically and historically. It has only been recently that environmental ethics emerged as a sub-discipline within philosophy; thus most of our systematic focus will involve the works of various thinkers that are our contemporaries. However, views on the environment and the human being’s place in it have existed throughout history. We can learn from these past views in two ways. One way is by seeing mistakes that others have made before and so avoiding these mistakes ourselves. Another more positive way in which we learn from studying past views is by using them to see things that are obscure to us from the vantage point of our current prejudices. Given these two goals the attitude that is best adopted when approaching older texts is one of critical charity.

Some of the questions we consider this semester are as follows: Are there any living individuals other than humans that have moral standing? Do any non-living entities have moral standing? Is it ever ethical to allow non-human animal interests to take priority over human interests? Is anthropocentrism of some form tenable? Do we have obligations to future generations? In what sense, is the human being a part of nature? Is there any sense in which the human being is special in relation to other natural beings?
The objectives of this course are:

1) To introduce students to several of the ways in which the non-human environment, the human being, and the relation between the two have been conceived throughout the history of Western philosophy.

2) To introduce students to the challenges of formulating an environmental ethic by examining recent attempts to do so.

3) To help students practice reading texts both critically and charitably

4) To help students develop their abilities to analyze the arguments of others and argue for their own beliefs

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

1) understand some ecocentric and biocentric approaches to environmental ethics and the criticisms of these approaches

2) understand some anthropocentric and logocentric approaches to environmental ethics and the criticisms of these approaches

3) be familiar with criticisms of cost-benefit analysis as it relates to environmental issues

4) understand several of the ways that the non-human environment, the human being, and the human being’s relation to the environment have been historically conceived and how these conceptions shape current views on the environment.

All of these objectives will be assessed by means of quizzes and exams.

Course Requirements

Preparation
Students are expected to put in at least 2 hours work outside of class for each one hour of class time. This is the standard. You should expect to put in more time when exams are scheduled. Students are responsible for ALL assigned reading.

Assignments
Exams (60% of final grade): There will be two exams this semester. The midterm will be cumulative, and the final exam will be cumulative but will emphasize the latter half of the course. The exams will be comprised of short answer, multiple choice, and essay questions. Both of these exams are worth 30% of the final grade.

Quizzes (20% of final grade): The quizzes will cover material that we have just discussed in class. You will notice on the course schedule that the quizzes are due on Tuesdays; other than this restriction, there is no time limit on these quizzes. I will
make the quizzes available on Fridays, and you will have until the next class meeting to complete the quiz. Given the amount of reading we have for this course, it would be in your interest to complete the quiz as soon as you can. The quizzes will generally contain multiple choice, true/false, or fill in the blank questions.

Questions/thoughts about the Reading (10% of final grade): For several class meetings I will ask you to turn in a brief question/thought about the reading for the day. Since we usually are reading more than one piece, your question can deal with only one piece or all of them. There are 12 possible, but you only need to turn in 10. You will either get full credit, half credit, or no credit for your question/thought. A question/thought that shows little to no engagement with the material receives no credit. One that reflects some engagement gets at least half credit, but a thoughtful response that shows much engagement with the material will get full credit.

Class Participation (10% of final grade): I hope for this class to be a discussion oriented one. If you often partake in class discussion (even if not always) you will get full class participation. See the attendance policy for the ways that absences can affect your grade.

Grading Scale

100%-93%=A
92%-88%=AB
87%-83%=B
82%-78%=BC
77%-73%=C
72%-68%=CD
67%-60%=D
below 60%=F

There are 200 possible points.

Policies

Attendance
Any absences in excess of four will result in a lowering of your final grade by half a letter. So, for example, if you would have gotten an A, but you missed five classes, then you would receive an AB. I will make a note of class contribution. If you contribute to class discussions, this will help to raise your final grade.
Late Work/Extra Credit
Exams: If there is an outstanding reason as to why you must miss a scheduled exam, you must notify me well in advance. Excepting emergencies, there will be no possibility to make up an exam that you missed.

Quizzes: These must be taken before the class date on which they are due. There is no chance to make up a quiz that is missed.

Question/thoughts about the reading: These are due before the class on which they are assigned. There is no chance to make up one that is missed.

There is no extra credit.

Academic Integrity
The Carroll University Academic Integrity Policy is located in your student handbook ([https://my.carrollu.edu/ICS/Departments/Student_Affairs](https://my.carrollu.edu/ICS/Departments/Student_Affairs)). I encourage you to familiarize yourself with it. If a student violates this policy in any way, I reserve the right to impose a sanction of failure on the assignment/assessment or failure in the course. If you have questions about appropriate citations, please ask.

Disabilities
Any requests for accommodation must be made by the first week of class and through the Walter Young Center ([wyc@carrollu.edu](mailto:wyc@carrollu.edu), or call 262-524-7335).

Modifications to the Syllabus
The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as the curriculum and/or program require(s).

Course Schedule – Note that EEPB stands for Environmental Ethics and Policy Book and HLNW stands for Human Life and the Natural World: Readings in the History of Western Philosophy. This schedule could change throughout the semester, but you will be given ample notice if this happens.

Week 1 (preliminaries)
January 24 – syllabus, World Scientist’s Warning to Humanity, mention the history/contemporary focus of the course, survey, and 1.1 (with basic logic review) and begin 1.2
January 26 – EEPB 1.2-1.5; HLNW Aristotle (observation/question 1 due before class)

Week 2 (very brief review of standard ethical theories)
January 31 – EEPB 2.1-2.5; HLNW Mill (quiz 1 due before class)
February 2 – EEPB 2.6-2.9; HLNW Kant (observation/question 2 due before class)
**Week 3** (two competing strands of our intellectual tradition)
February 7 – *EEPB* pg. 52-58 *The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*; *HLNW*
Xenophon, Aquinas, Descartes (**quiz 2 due before class**)
February 9 – *EEPB* pg. 66-71 *Stewardship Versus Exploitation*; *HLNW* Genesis, St. Francis, Porphyry (**observation/question 3 due before class**)

**Week 4** (animal ethics)
February 14 – *EEPB* pg. 114-121 Preview; pg. 135-147 *Animal Liberation* (**quiz 3 due before class**)
February 16 – *EEPB* pg. 143-149 *The Case for Animal Rights*; *EEPB* pg. 150-161 *Interspecific Justice* (**observation/question 4 due before class**)

**Week 5** (anthropocentric/logocentric responses)
February 21 – “Kant on Duties Regarding Nonrational Nature” made available via e-learning (**quiz 4 due before class**)
February 23 – “Environmental Values, Anthropocentrism and Speciesism” made available via e-learning (**observation/question 5 due before class**)

**Week 6** (biotic ethics)
February 28 – *EEPB* pg. 183-189 *On Being Morally Considerable* (**quiz 5 due before class**)
March 2 – *EEPB* pg. 201-215 *The Ethics of Respect for Nature*; *HLNW* Darwin (**observation/question 6 due before class**)

**Week 7** (midterm week)
March 7 - review
March 9 - Midterm

**Week 8** (ecocentric approach)
March 21 – Midterm review; *EEPB* pg. 215-236 *The Land Ethic & The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic*
March 23 - *EEPB* pg. 215-236 *The Land Ethic & The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic* (**observation/question 7 due before class**)

**Week 9** (deep ecology and critics)
March 28 – *EEPB* pg. 259-272 Preview & *Self-Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World* (**quiz 6 due before class**)
March 30 – *EEPB* 273-279 *Will Ecology Become the “Dismal Science”? & Do What’s Natural, You Say?* (**observation/question 8 due before class**)

**Week 10** (letting the markets decide)
April 4 – *EEPB* pg. 311-326 Preview & *The Ethical Basis of the Economic View of the Environment* (**quiz 7 due before class**)
April 6 – *EEPB* pg. 327-334 *At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fátima, or Why Political Questions Are Not All Economic* (**observation/question 9 due before class**
Week 11 (cost-benefit analysis)
April 11 – EEPB pg. 336-347 Preview & Cost-Benefit Analysis: An Ethical Critique (quiz 8 due before class)
April 13 – EEPB pg. 347-352 Cost-Benefit Analysis Defended & Cost Benefit Analysis: Tool for All Seasons? (observation/question 10 due before class)

Week 12 (sustainability and future generations)
April 18 – EEPB pg. 364-372 The Tragedy of the Commons; pg. 397-401 An Essay on the Principle of Population; HLNW Godwin (quiz 9 due before class)
April 20 – EEPB pg. 408-413 Can the Supply of Natural Resources Really Be Infinite? Yes!; pg. 428-436 Future Generations (observation/question 11 due before class)

Week 13 (TBD)
April 25 (quiz 10 due before class)
April 27 (observation/question 12 due before class)

Week 14 (final week)
May 2 – review
May 4 – final 6 PM