

**Phil 250: Environmental Ethics**

**Spring 2013**

**Monday, Wednesday 7:40–9:00 PM, Hardenbergh Hall A2**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Preston Greene

**OFFICE HOURS:** 3 Seminary Place, Room 005

**CONTACT:** iampreston@gmail.com

**COURSE GOALS:**

We'll be learning about a number of difficult moral issues in environmental ethics, relating to such topics as climate change, animal welfare, food, and population growth. In the first part of the course, we will learn about different approaches to ethical questions generally, as well as proposed approaches that are distinctive of environmental ethics. In the second part of the class we investigate these debates, and spend some time thinking about the biases that may be engaged by those on both sides of an issue that make resolution difficult.

The class is designed to allow you to develop skills for reasoning effectively and impartially about difficult moral issues. This will partly involve learning different theoretic frameworks for investigating ethical questions, and partly involve developing philosophical critical thinking skills that are relevant to thinking through any difficult issue. By the end of the course you will hopefully have formed reasoned opinions, based on the evidence available to you, about the various issues we discuss.

**READINGS**

There is a sakai website for the class that is available once you are enrolled. You can find it by going to <http://sakai.rutgers.edu> and clicking on the "Environmental Ethics" tab. All readings can be found on sakai site, as well as class announcements. You will also receive announcements through your Rutgers email address, so make sure to check it frequently.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Short Assignments/Participation: 10%

Research Poster: 15%

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 25%

Paper (4-6 pages): 30%

## ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the university absence reporting website: [sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](http://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

## INITIAL READING LIST

### Jan 23: Introduction

### Jan 28: What Is Environmental Ethics?

Rolston, III, "Environmental Ethics"

### Jan 30: Moral Theories and Anthropocentrism

Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (selection)

Shafer-Landau, *Normative Ethics* Chp. 9

*Optional:*

Mill, *Utilitarianism* (selection)

### Feb 4: Moral Theories (cont.)

Shafer-Landau, *Normative Ethics*, Chp. 10

Frasz, "Environmental Virtue Ethics"

*Optional:*

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (selection)

### Feb 6: Moral Theories (cont.)

Sylvan, "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?"

Merchant, "The Death of Nature"

### Feb 11: Anthropocentric Environmentalism vs. Deep Ecology

Naess, "The Deep Ecology Movement"

Watson, "A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Biocentrism"

### Feb 13: Animal Welfare

Rachels, "The Basic Argument for Vegetarianism"

Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* Chp. 17

### Feb 18: Animal Welfare (cont.)

Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People"

Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights"

Feb 20: Animal Welfare (cont.)

Singer, "All Animals Are Equal"

Scruton, "The Conscientious Carnivore"

Feb 25: Animal Welfare (cont.)

Kagan, "Do I Make a Difference?"

Feb 27: Exam Review

Mar 4: Exam 1

Mar 6: Moral Psychology and the Environment

Feinberg, "The Paradox of Hedonism"

Partridge, "Why Care About the Future?"

Mar 11: Climate Change

Watch *An Inconvenient Truth*

Shue, "Subsistence Emissions vs. Luxury Emissions"

Gardiner, "The Perfect Moral Storm" (selection)

Mar 13: Climate Change (cont.)

Finish *An Inconvenient Truth* and discuss

Mar 25: Climate Change (cont.)

Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World*  
(selection)

Mar 27: Climate Change (cont.)

Watch *The Great Global Warming Swindle*

Baer, "The Right to Develop in a Climate Constrained World"

Apr 1: Climate Change (cont.)

Finish *The Great Global Warming Swindle* and discuss

Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*  
(selection)

Apr 3: Food

Union of Concerned Scientists, "Industrial Agriculture: Features and Policy"

Optional:

Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma* Chps. 8 and 9

Apr 8: Food (cont.)

The Economist, "Voting with Your Trolley"

The Economist, "Good Food?"

Apr 10: Food (cont.)

Fromartz, "Backlash: The Meaning of Organic"

Apr 15: Food (cont.)

Manning, *Food's Frontier*, 191--207

Pretty, *Agri-Culture*, 3--10 and 126--145

Apr 17: Food (cont.)

Princeton University, "A Sweet Problem: Princeton Researchers Find that High-Fructose Corn Syrup Prompts Considerably More Weight Gain"

Grist, "Researchers: HFCS Is Much Worse than Table Sugar"

Apr 22: Population Growth

Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons"

Simon, "The Ultimate Resource"

Apr 24: Population Growth (cont.)

McKibben, "A Special Moment in History"

Wolf, "Population and the Environment"

Apr 29: Population Growth (cont.)

Worldwatch Institute, "The Economic Conundrum of an Aging Population"

May 1: Exam Review

May 6: Exam 2