Philosophy and the Environment

Instructor: Angus Taylor
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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, 2:30 to 3:30 and by appointment
Class times: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, 11:30 to 12:20
Classroom: Clearihue A203

Course Description:
This course investigates the moral and conceptual dimensions of environmental issues. Different philosophies of the relation between humans and nature will be compared. Issues to be addressed include: Does it make sense to attribute intrinsic value to non-human nature? What is the moral status of non-human animals? Is animal liberation compatible with promoting flourishing ecosystems? What political or cultural factors underlie environmental exploitation? Is industrial society in general, and capitalism in particular, compatible with environmentalism? What are some alternative visions of how humans should relate to their environments?

The Instructor
Angus Taylor has a Ph.D. in Social and Political Thought from York University, Toronto. He also has an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Toronto and an M.Sc. in History and Social Studies of Science from the University of Sussex. At York the topic of his dissertation was Karl Marx’s theory of history. He is the author of Animals and Ethics: An Overview of the Philosophical Debate, as well as of a number of papers on political philosophy and on environmental ethics.
Philosophy 333 (A01) 2

**Texts:**
Coursepack (available in the Bookstore), plus additional readings on-line

**Additional Readings:**

**Formal Course Requirements:**
- First mid-term exam (in class, Oct. 9) 25%
- Second mid-term exam (in class, Nov. 6) 25%
- Test (in class, Dec. 4) 10%
- Final exam (in Dec. exam period, 2 hrs. duration) 40%

*Please note:* Late assignments will not be accepted or missed exams rescheduled without a medical or other compelling reason, for which you must provide documentation justifying your absence (e.g., a medical certificate). If you know that you will be missing an exam, you must inform the instructor in advance. For policies regarding plagiarism and cheating, see pp. 33-35 of the 2015-16 Undergraduate Calendar.

**Grading:**
Exams will be marked on a percentage basis, with the percentage mark for the course being converted to a letter grade on the following basis:

- A+ = 90 - 100
- B+ = 77 - 79
- C+ = 65 - 69
- F = 0 - 49
- A  = 85 - 89
- B  = 73 - 76
- C  = 60 - 64
- A- = 80 - 84
- B- = 70 - 72
- D  = 50 - 59

During the term, graded work will be returned in class or during office hours. Final grades will not be posted by the instructor or the department, but will be available on-line.

*Note:* Students who are not fluent in English may find some of the readings or assignments in this course difficult. In written assignments or exams, students who persist in misspelling the word *argument*, or who persist in omitting or misusing apostrophes, or who display generally atrocious spelling or grammar, may be penalized.

*Note:* October 31 is the last day for withdrawing from this course without penalty of failure.
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<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Reading/Lecture Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 9, 11</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 6, 7, 9</td>
<td>Baxter: “The Case for Optimal Pollution”&lt;br&gt;Leopold, “The Land Ethic”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 10, 11</td>
<td>READING BREAK</td>
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<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>Heilbroner, from The Nature and Logic of Capitalism</td>
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<td>Nov. 17, 18, 20</td>
<td>Taylor, “Cascading Crises and System Failure”&lt;br&gt;Henning, “Standing in Livestock’s ‘Long Shadow’: The Ethics of Eating Meat on a Small Planet”&lt;br&gt;Hawken et al., Natural Capitalism, ch. 1 (on-line)</td>
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<td>Nov. 24, 25, 27</td>
<td>Taylor, “Inhaling All the Forces of Nature: William Morris’s Socialist Biophilia” (on-line)&lt;br&gt;Mellor, “Feminism and Environmental Ethics: A Materialist Perspective”</td>
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<td>Dec. 1, 2, 4</td>
<td>Daoism and Neo-Confucianism</td>
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<td>Dec. exam period</td>
<td>● TEST (Dec. 4)&lt;br&gt;● FINAL EXAM</td>
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