

Philosophy and the Environment

Spring 2017

PHIL 333 A01 CRN 22417 / ES 314 CRN 21571

Instructor: Thomas Heyd, Ph.D.
Office: Clearihue B 309
Class meetings: Tue, Wed, Fri: 11:30-12:20
Classroom: MacLaurin D115
Office Hours: Tue, Fri 1:40-2:30, or by appt.
Tel.: (250) 853 3767
e-mail: heydt@uvic.ca



Course description

Focus and outcomes

This course aims to provide students with the conceptual tools to think about the relation of humans to nature, and about the philosophical responses to the environmental crises of our present time. It is expected that students will strengthen their capacity to think through environmental issues and to address them in deeper ways in everyday life.

Texts

Most texts are on Coursespaces. Some material may be placed in the Reserve Room in the McPherson Library.

Course organisation

Readings and student engagement

Assigned weekly readings need to be done *ahead of class lectures*. Attendance during class periods, constructive participation, and tolerance with regard to the views of others, will be expected. Students are responsible for class lectures covered, and for informing themselves about announcements missed if absent. Weekly class time will be devoted to brief presentation of key points from the material assigned, and to class discussion. Attendance, constructive engagement, and performance of weekly assignments all contribute to the participation grade credit.

Tips for best performances

- Do readings ahead of class periods, and do weekly assignments.
- Come to class, and constructively participate in class discussion.
- Speak to the instructor if failing to understand the material.

Grading

Participation, including weekly assignments, worth	20%
Mid-term test, worth	30%
Participation in experiential group	10%

A final, comprehensive, take-home exam, worth

40%

1. **Participation** is assessed on the basis of a) *regular attendance*, b) *constructive participation in class discussion*, c) *weekly assignments* based on the course readings and personal analysis of the issues under discussion. Class attendance will be taken, and is particularly encouraged in the case of guest speakers. Justified absences should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time.

Assignments

You are expected to write on each week's readings to help you to engage with the material and concepts before the lecture. Answers should be about a paragraph long, and handed in on the first day of classes every week (usually Tuesdays). The paragraph should address the questions that will be announced as the course progresses. (If no questions have been set for a particular week, a paragraph with a summary of key arguments found in the readings should be written up.) It is essential that what you write is in your own words (it should **not** be copied from the textbook or other texts).

You should clearly indicate a) the week the assignment is for, b) the particular readings being discussed, c) the date due, and d) your last and first name. Feedback will be given on the first sets of assignments, and occasionally thereafter. *Both* quantity and quality of assignments, and of contributions to class discussion, will be taken into account in grading. At the end of the semester the total of the assignments minus two will be graded on a scale of fail, ok, good, very good.

2. **The mid-term test** will cover both readings and lectures. Both understanding and recall of material covered, and reflective analysis, will be expected. Test and exam questions may be a combination of short answer, long answer, and possibly true-false and multiple choice questions.

3. **Participation in experiential group** aimed at exploring constructive ways of engaging with the natural environment. Groups of 4 students a) select a relevant site/project in the Victoria area, b) determine socio-environmental criteria for assessing the activities performed there, c) after visiting a site, assess the selected activity by those criteria, c) give a brief class presentation of conclusions arrived at by the group. Some possible sites: 1) the Lifecycles Fruit Tree Project, 2) Recyclistas, 3) urban gardens (for example at UVic), 4) T'Souke First Nation renewable energy project, 5) community-based, native plant restoration projects, 6) native plant restoration at UVic (e.g., Mystic Vale, First Nations House, elsewhere), 7) OurEco-village, 8) organic farming in Victoria area (e.g., Madrona farm), 9) passive heating/cooling of houses in Victoria, 10) environmentally friendly industrial or transport projects in Victoria and area.

Schedule: By **3 February** groups need to be set up and have selected a site/project to visit. On **3 March** one-page reports on realised visits are to be handed in. Group presentations in the final week of classes. Presentations will be evaluated on care of development of criteria and in application of those criteria, completeness and engagement in the (on site and background) research, and clarity of presentation to the class.

4. **The final exam** will be a comprehensive take-home exam with long as well as short answer questions. Questions will be handed out on the last day of classes, and the completed exam must be brought to the Department of Philosophy **no later than 7 April, by NOON**. Late exams will **NOT** be accepted (they will receive 0%). **Exams also have to be submitted simultaneously through Coursespaces.** Understanding of material covered and reflective analysis will be expected. Answers to questions will be assessed on the basis of the following three criteria: (1) explanation of key points, (2) well-developed discussion of points presented, (3) clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

Numerical and letter grades

Grades will be given as percentile marks. The percentile mark for the course will be converted to a letter grade in the following manner: A+ = 90 - 100, A = 85 - 89, A- = 80 - 84, B+ = 77 - 79, B = 73 - 76, B- = 70 - 72, C+ = 65 - 69, C = 60 - 64, D = 50 - 59, F = 0 - 49. The A range means exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. A grade in the B range means a very good, good and solid performance. A grade in the C+ or C range means satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory, performance. A grade of D or D- indicates merely passable or marginal performance. An F indicates unsatisfactory performance.

Late assignments

Late assignments will **not** be accepted (they will be worth 0%) and exams will **not** be rescheduled. If a test is missed for significant reasons of a medical sort (provide medical certificate), or for other serious, **documented** personal reasons, arrangements will be made to accommodate the student within reason. Documented evidence for having legitimately missed an exam and an explanatory statement in writing have to be received **no more than ten days after the deadline or exam missed**.

Academic integrity

The University Calendar states that "Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. ... Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community." Violations of academic integrity include plagiarism, multiple submissions, falsifying materials subject to academic evaluation, cheating on work, tests and examinations, and aiding others to cheat. Penalties for these violations vary, with first violations generally resulting in a failing grade on the work. Please familiarise yourselves with the policies at <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#>.

Transition and inclusivity/diversity

New students needing assistance may contact the Transition Office, www.uvic.ca/transition. This course is committed to inclusivity and diversity, in line with University Senate policy (1999) that "UVic is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members."

Schedule of lectures and tests

Please note that this schedule is *subject to changes*. Weekly reading assignments will be confirmed in class, so please be attentive to announcements both in class and on *Coursespaces*. *Informed* participation in class discussion will be expected, so *please read the assigned texts in advance*. Readings are from the Coursespaces website, unless otherwise indicated.

Week 1 2-8 Jan	Introduction Jonas Film clip: Cave of Forgotten Dreams
Week 2 9-15 Jan	Nature, urban contexts, and sustainability in the Ancient World Serres plus short extracts from Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato **Groups formation to be explored**
Week 3 16-22 Jan	Ethics and nature in the Mediaeval and Modern context White plus short extracts from Passmore, Kant, Mill, Marx Some optional readings may be made available *20 Jan, last day for adding courses*
Week 4	Indigenous, Daoist and Buddhist counterpoints

23–29 Jan	Gwaganad, Cavalcanti, Goodman, short extracts from <i>Tao Te Ching</i> , Schumacher
Week 5 30 Jan – 5 Feb	Nature in the contemporary context Myers, Baxter, Wulf/Humboldt **3 February: Final date for groups to form and select sites/projects to visit**
Week 6 6-12 Feb	Addressing environmental problems I Hardin, Monbiot Review **10 February: Mid-term**
Week 7 13-19 Feb	READING WEEK 13 February **Louis Riel Day** No new readings, no worksheets
Week 8 20-26 Feb	Addressing environmental problems II Naess, Leopold, Warren 28 February: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure
Week 9 27 Feb – 5 Mar	Addressing global environmental crises I Bookchin, Sylvan-Plumwood Wednesday 1 March: Guest speaker: TBA *Film: Uranium* *28 February: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure* ** Friday 3 March: Deadline for one page report on realised visits **
Week 10 6-12 Mar	Addressing global environmental crises II Stone, Hawken, Garvey *Film: A Cut Above: My Grandfather Was a Logger
Week 11 13-19 Mar	Addressing global environmental crises III Klein, Serres, Diamond Optional supplementary: Marcuse (in library)
Week 12 20-26 Mar	Addressing global environmental crises IV / presentations Homer-Dixon, Oliver-Smith Film (TBA)
Week 13 27 Mar – 2 Apr	Presentations of experiential group projects, <i>Course Experience Survey</i>
Week 14 3-9 Apr	**Tuesday 4 April: LAST DAY OF CLASSES: Final take-home exam handed out** ***Friday 7 April: Final exam submission (hardcopy AND on Coursespaces), by NOON***