

Philosophy and the Environment

Fall 2019

PHIL 333 A01 CRN TBA

/ ES 314 CRN TBA

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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 to consider reasonable responses to the environmental crises of our times. One key outcome of this course is that students will be better equipped both to discuss environmental issues with other concerned citizens and to address them in consistent ways in everyday life.

Texts

Most texts are on Coursespaces. Some material may be placed in the Reserve Room, 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 and contribute to the participation grade credit. Students are responsible for class lectures covered, and for informing themselves about announcements missed if absent. Class time will be devoted to brief presentation of key points from the material assigned, and to class discussion. Attendance, constructive engagement, and performance on 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

Mid-term test, worth	30%
A final, comprehensive, take-home exam, worth	40%
Class participation, including weekly assignments, worth	20%
Participation in experiential group	10%

1. **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.

2. **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. Completed exam must be brought to the Department of Philosophy **by NOON, 5 days after the last day of classes**. Late exams will **NOT** be accepted (they will receive 0%). Additionally you may be asked to submit **through Coursespaces** (further information on this will be provided at the end of the semester). 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.

3. **Class 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 required 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 quotations from the textbook or other texts).

You should clearly indicate a) your last and first name (in this order) b) the number of the assignment, c) the topic of the readings being discussed, and d) the date due. 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 (0%), ok (55%), fair (65%), good (75%), outstanding (85%).

4. **Participation in an experiential group** aimed at exploring constructive ways of engaging with the natural environment. Groups of 4-6 students (depending on class size) develop socio-environmental criteria, visit and assess a site in the Victoria area from the list provided, and provide a brief group report (worth 50% of the grade) and subsequent presentation regarding their visit (worth another 50% of the grade).

Schedule: **By the end of the fourth week** groups need to be set up and have selected a site/project to visit and have it approved by the instructor. **By the end of the ninth week** one-page reports on realised visits are to be handed in. Group presentations will be scheduled for a date **within the last two weeks** of the course. Presentations will be evaluated on 1) care of development of criteria, 2) on application of those criteria, 3) completeness and engagement in the (on site and background) research, and 4) clarity of presentation to the class. For further information, see the handout that will be placed on Coursespaces.

Grading scale and interpretation

Percentages will convert to a letter grade according to the standard University scheme:

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

What the Grading Scale Means:

- A+, A, or A-** Earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
- B+, B, or B-** Earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
- C+ or C** Earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
- D** Earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
- F** Work that is not worthy of course credit toward the degree.

Interpretation of these grade definitions is up to the discretion of the instructor. If you receive a grade during the course that you believe is unfair, please begin by discussing the matter with the instructor (or TA) in a respectful, open-minded manner. Rest assured that if you still believe the grade you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department. For additional information regarding grades, please see pp. 51-53 of the most recent edition of the *Uvic Undergraduate Calendar*.

All evaluations of tests and assignments will be calculated according to *percentage scores*. Letter grades and grade point scores are listed purely for reference. Final examinations are the property of Uvic and are not returned. They are available for viewing at the Records Office according to Uvic procedures and regulations (pp. 49-51 of the calendar).

Other matters

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 or an assignment 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.”

Counseling Services

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. Make sure you are familiar with UVic [Counseling Services](#), which is an excellent resource you have at your disposal on campus. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, if at any point you can benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact *Counseling Services*. They genuinely want to help, and why not take advantage of this free resource?

Important Dates

Please consult the UVic calendar’s [Academic Year Important Dates](#) for information about last possible dates to withdraw from courses without penalty, examinations period start/end dates, etc.

Technology in Classroom

Some students require laptops or voice recognition apps for their learning strategies, so I do not prohibit their use in the classroom. However, studies demonstrate that multi-tasking reduces the performance of *other nearby students*, so anyone caught on social media, internet surfing, etc. will be asked to leave and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

Academic Advising

For information about declaring a program, academic concessions or interpreting your Uvic CAPP report, please visit Undergraduate Advising or make an appointment with an adviser.

Territory Acknowledgment

The University of Victoria is committed to acknowledging and respecting the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the UVic Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement.

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 4-8 Sept	Introduction Film clip: <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i> Wednesday 4 September: FIRST DAY OF CLASSES
Week 2 9-15 Sept	Relation to the natural environment from pre-history to the present short extracts from Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato, Jonas, Marx **Friday 13 September: <u>groups for experiential learning to be explored</u>** **Assignments are due from this week onwards**
Week 3 16-22 Sept	Ethics and nature in the Mediaeval and Modern contexts White, plus extracts from Passmore (some optional readings may be made available)

	<p>**Friday 20 September, FIELD TRIP to Mystic Vale with Prof Val Schaeffer. Meet in front of the Bob Wright Building** TO BE CONFIRMED</p> <p>*20 Sept: last day for adding courses*</p>
Week 4 23-29 Sept	<p>Indigenous, Daoist and Buddhist counterpoints</p> <p>Gwaganad, Cavalcanti, Goodman, short extracts from <i>Tao Te Ching</i>, Brown; optional: Schumacher</p> <p>**Friday 27 September: <u>final date for groups to form and to select sites/projects to visit</u>**</p>
Week 5 30 Sept -6 Oct	<p>Nature in the contemporary context</p> <p>Myers, Baxter, Wulf on Humboldt</p>
Week 6 7-13 Oct	<p>Addressing environmental problems, Review, Mid-term</p> <p>Leopold,</p> <p>**Friday 11 October: <u>Mid-term test</u>**</p>
Week 7 14-20 Oct	<p>Addressing environmental problems</p> <p>Hardin, Monbiot, Naess,</p> <p>*Monday 14 October Thanksgiving Day*</p>
Week 8 21-27 Oct	<p>Addressing environmental problems</p> <p>Warren, Bookchin, Stone</p> <p>*** Friday 25 October, GUEST SPEAKER: Dr Colin Goldblatt on climate change, ATTENDANCE REQUIRED*** TO BE CONFIRMED</p>
Week 9 28 Oct – 3 Nov	<p>Global environmental change</p> <p>Klein “Introduction” and “Conclusion”, Serres, Garvey</p> <p>*Film: <i>This changes everything</i>*</p> <p>** Friday 1 November: <u>deadline for one page report on realised visits</u> **</p> <p>*31 October: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure*</p>
Week 10 4-10 Nov	<p>Global environmental change</p> <p>extract from Homer-Dixon Ch. 10 and from Ch. 11, Oliver-Smith</p>
Week 11 11-17 Nov	<p>Global environmental change</p> <p>Diamond “Prologue” and Ch. 14</p> <p>*Monday 11 November Remembrance Day*</p> <p>12-14 November READING BREAK</p>
Week 12 18-24 Nov	<p>Presentations of experiential group projects + Course Experience Survey (CES)</p> <p>*Possibly Film: <i>A Cut Above: My Grandfather Was a Logger</i>*</p>
Week 13 25 Nov–1 Dec	<p>Presentations of experiential group projects</p> <p>**4 December LAST DAY OF CLASSES: <u>Final take-home exam handed out</u>**</p> <p>*4 December National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women*</p>
Week 14 2-9 Dec -	<p>***9 December, before NOON: <u>Final exam submission (hardcopy AND on Coursespaces)</u>***</p>