

# Philosophy and the Environment

Fall 2020  
PHIL 333 / ES 314



Instructor: Thomas Heyd, Ph.D.  
Lectures live and posted as video  
Videos: posted weekly by TWF 10:30-11:20 on the Brightspaces website  
Office hrs: TF 11-11:30am (by Zoom)  
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**Provisional outline:** Given changing circumstances in relation to Covid-19, there may be some changes to This outline before the course starts.

## Lectures

Normally lectures will be conducted over Zoom at the scheduled class time, **10:30 – 11:20 pm** Pacific Time. You will find the link to join the meetings on the Brightspaces website page. The same link will work for the duration of the course. **All lectures will be recorded and video recordings posted weekly** on the web page, in case that you cannot be present synchronously (no attendance taken). Lecture periods will give you an opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion. Additional materials, including videos with essential course content, will also be posted on the Brightspaces website.

## 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.

### Course objectives

- To learn about theories of philosophy and environment, and their application to our contemporary world.
- To explore key debates in philosophy and environment.
- To practice the use of argumentative reasoning in this context.

### Technical Help

You'll find a link to the Zoom Help Centre on the Brightspaces website along with a link to UVic's Learn Anywhere site. That site is designed to help students navigate all aspects of UVic's online learning environment. Don't hesitate to ask me for help with any technical issues that you run into. If I can't help I'll find someone who can.

### Texts

All texts will be found on *the Brightspaces website*. To access the page, log in with your regular network ID. Please let me know immediately if you have any difficulty accessing the readings. Please let me know immediately if you have any difficulty accessing the readings. This page will also be used to post announcements, to give you online access to lecture notes, handouts and assignment sheets and to collect short answer assignments.

### Course organisation and student engagement

To facilitate comprehension and class discussion, assigned weekly readings are to be read *ahead of lectures*. Constructive participation and tolerance of the views of others are expected. Everyone is encouraged to be self-reflective about his or her own beliefs, and to constructively contribute to class discussion. Throughout the course, work will be assessed on the basis of A) care in the explanation of key points, B) quality of development of points presented, C) effective and correct use of the English language and clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

### Tips for best performances

- Do readings *ahead of class periods*, read material attentively (by asking questions about the material), and do weekly assignments.
- *Participate* in class discussion with constructive contributions.
- *Contact the instructor* if failing to understand the material.

### Graded student activities

1. Final take-home exam	40%
2. Mid-term test	30%
3. Experiential project	20%
4. Participation, including weekly assignments	10%

1. **The final exam** will be a comprehensive take-home exam with short answer and long answer questions. Questions will be handed out on the last day of classes, and the completed exam must be submitted to The Brightspaces website **by NOON, five (5) days after the last day of classes**. Late exams will **NOT** be accepted (they will receive 0%). 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) accurate presentation of the views discussed and explanation of key points, (2) well-developed discussion of points presented, (3) effective and correct use of the English language and clarity, neatness, and organisation of points.

2. **The mid-term take-home test** will cover both readings and further points raised in lectures. Both understanding and reflective analysis will be expected. Test questions will likely consist of a combination of shorter and longer answer questions.

3. **Experiential project**. This project is to provide an *experiential* context for students to develop skills in reflecting on natural sites, processes or objects. We will establish groups of 4-6 students (depending on class size) that will choose a type of site in which various degrees of human-natural interaction are manifested. They will consider these sites on the basis of course content and a set of the questions provided. In view of precautions because of Covid-19, consideration of sites **should not require face to face interactions**. Options to consider include online

information on community climate change adaptation projects, urban farming, small-scale renewable energy projects, and natural conservation areas. In all cases, choices of sites need to be approved by the instructor. Groups are expected to produce a brief group report (worth 50% of the grade) on their reflections and analysis, later followed by a presentation in the final weeks of classes (worth another 50% of the grade).

Schedule: *By the end of the fourth week* a selection of site, process or object is to be approved by me. *By the end of the ninth week* written reports are due. Presentations will be scheduled for a date *within the last two weeks* of the course. Further information will be forthcoming after the start of the semester.

**4. Participation.** Assessed on the basis of a) *weekly assignments* based on the course readings, b) *constructive participation in course forums and live sessions*. A grade in the A range will be given if all required assignments were handed in, done up to a sufficient level for receiving a pass, combined with constructive course participation; a grade in the B range will be given if most of the assignments are handed in and course participation was constructive; a grade in the C range will be given if less than 2/3 of assignments have been handed in, while course participation was constructive; a grade in the D range will be given if half the required assignments, while course participation was constructive; any fewer assignments handed in or non-constructive participation, will receive a grade in the F range.

*Weekly response assignments.* You are expected to write up a brief response to a question regarding each week's readings to help you engage with the material and concepts before the lecture. Answers to questions posed should be in your own words (not copied from the textbook or other sources), be about a paragraph long, and submitted by Tuesday. At the head of the page please state, in this order, a) your last and first name (e.g. JONES, Peter), b) the date assignment is due (e.g. 9 January 2018), c) the particular readings discussed (e.g. Singer and Taylor). Feedback will be given on the first sets of assignments, and occasionally thereafter. At the end of the semester the total of the assignments minus the two with the lowest grades will be graded on a *pass or fail* basis. *Both* quantity and quality of assignments will be taken into account in grading. (All assignments that *pass* will be assigned 85%.) *No late assignments will be accepted.*

#### **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 that you received is unfair you can appeal the matter to the chair of the department. For additional information regarding grades, please see 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.

### **Territory acknowledgment**

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples, on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. This acknowledgment entails a commitment to ongoing dialogue and reconciliation with the peoples of these lands. For information about support for indigenous students and efforts to foster reconciliation, please visit the UVic Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement.

### **Other matters**

#### *Late assignment and extensions*

Late weekly assignments will *not* be accepted and tests will *not* normally be rescheduled (no make-up exams). If a test is missed for serious, *documented*, reasons, the final exam will be weighted so as to incorporate the weighting of the missed exam. Documented evidence for having legitimately missed a test and an explanatory statement in writing have to be received *no more than ten days after the deadline or test missed*. Late assignments will have 5% subtracted per working day from grade unless documentation of illness or family emergency is provided.

#### *Academic integrity*

The University Calendar states that “Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility and... 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#>.

#### *Intellectual property of materials on the Brightspaces website*

Please note that all assignments for this course and all materials posted to the Brightspaces website are the intellectual property of myself and the University of Victoria. Do not circulate this material or post it to note-sharing sites without my permission. Posting course materials to note-sharing sites or otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcI.html>). Any evidence you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

#### *Transition and inclusivity/diversity*

Students who are new to the University and would like assistance may contact the Transition Office, [www.uvic.ca/transition](http://www.uvic.ca/transition). UVic is committed to providing a safe, supportive learning environment for all members. Information about UVic policies on human rights, equity, discrimination and harassment are available at [www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQ0pzdAN](http://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/HkQ0pzdAN). If you have any particular concerns about these matters in our course please don't hesitate to contact me.

#### *Religious Accommodation*

Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVic Calendar at <https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/religious/index.php>.

#### *Counselling Services*

Many, if not most, students experience some difficulties with their mental health during their years as undergraduate students. This may especially be the case during the present Covid-19 crisis. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, but if at any point you believe that you could benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact UVic Counselling Services, which is an excellent resource at your disposal on campus. They genuinely want to help, so do consider taking advantage of this free resource.

#### *Health Services and Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL)*

A note to remind you to take care of yourself, especially in these times. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. The sooner you let any of these on-campus services know your needs the quicker they can assist you in achieving your learning goals.

Resources include

- Counselling Services, already mentioned above. See <https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>.
- University Health Services (UHS) provides a full-service primary health clinic for students and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives. <http://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>
- Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Center for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible. CAL staff members are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>. Please note that instructors cannot provide CAL-type accommodations without CAL documentation.

#### *Food bank and Community Cabbage*

Sometimes students run out of money for food. Health restrictions permitting, these two options are available at the Students' Union: 1) "The UVSS Food Bank & Free Store is run by a team of dedicated staff and volunteers and offers all UVic students access to food essentials and free household items", see <https://uvss.ca/foodbank/>. 2) "The Community Cabbage is a student organization at the University of Victoria. We serve a free weekly hot meal to the campus community prepared from reclaimed food – edible but unsellable food donated by grocery stores. A crew of volunteers turn these ingredients into a healthy and delightful vegetarian meal at a community kitchen. Anyone is welcome to come cook with us and/or eat with us!" See <https://uviccommunitycabbage.wordpress.com/about/>.

#### *Important dates and academic advising*

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

#### **Tentative schedule of lectures and tests**

Please note that this schedule is tentative and will adjusted as we proceed through the semester. Any changes to the schedule will be announced on the Brightspaces website. *Informed* participation in class discussion will be expected, so please read the assigned texts in advance. Readings are on the Brightspaces website.

Week 1 7-13 Sept	<b>Introduction: humans and the natural environment from the Pleistocene to the Anthropocene</b> <b>Film clip:</b> <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i> Readings: Jonas, short extracts from Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato <b>*Wednesday 9 Sept: first day of classes*</b>
Week 2 14-20 Sept	<b>Ethics and nature in the Mediaeval and Modern context</b> White, plus short extracts from Passmore, Kant, Mill, Marx

**\*\*Assignments are due from this Tuesday 15 of September onwards\*\***

Week 3 21-27 Sept	<b>Indigenous, Daoist and Buddhist counterpoints</b> Gwaganad, Cavalcanti, Goodman, short extracts from <i>Tao Te Ching</i> <b>*25 Sept: last day for adding courses*</b>
Week 4 28 Sept – 4 Oct	<b>Nature in the contemporary context</b> Myers, Baxter, Wulf on Humboldt
Week 5 5-11 Oct	<b>Addressing environmental problems</b> Hardin, Monbiot, Leopold, Naess
Week 6 12-18 Oct	<b>Living with nature, Review, Mid-term</b> Stone <b>**Friday 16 October: Mid-term test will be made available**</b> <b>**12 October, Thanksgiving Day and Day of Columbus' Arrival in the Americas**</b>
Week 7 19-25 Oct	<b>Addressing global environmental change</b> Stone, Serres
Week 8 26 Oct-1 Nov	<b>Addressing global environmental change</b> Garvey, Klein "Introduction" and "Conclusion" <b>**Film: <i>This changes everything</i>*</b> <b>*31 October: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure*</b>
Week 9 2-8 Nov	<b>Global environmental change</b> Extracts from Homer-Dixon Ch. 10 and Ch. 11 Oliver-Smith, Diamond Prologue
Week 10 9-15 Nov	<b>Global environmental change</b> Diamond Ch. 14 <b>*9-11 November, READING DAYS*</b> <b>**11 November, Remembrance Day**</b>
Week 11 16-22 Nov	<b>Global environmental change</b> Serres, Oliver-Smith
Week 12 23-29 Nov	<b>Work and the Anthropocene, and student presentations</b> Schumacher, Arias Maldonado
Week 13 30 Nov – 6 Dec	<b>Summary-conclusion, student presentations, Course Experience Survey, and Final Exam</b> <b>**4 December, Last Day of Classes. Final take-home exam questions handed out **</b> <b>**4 December, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**</b>
Week 14 7-13 Dec	<b>***9 December, before noon, Final Exam submission on the Brightspaces website***</b>