

# Philosophy and the Environment PHIL 333 / ES 314 Fall 2021

## Humans and nature in the times of climate change

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Humans-nature interconnection, Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), "Le Chimborazo vu depuis le plateau de Tapia", *Vues des Cordillères, et monumens des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* (Paris: Schoell, 1810-1813)

Instructor: Thomas Heyd, Ph.D.  
Lectures: TWF 9:30-10:20  
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**Provisional outline:** Given changing circumstances, especially as arising in relation to Covid-19, there may be some changes to this outline throughout the course.

### 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.

### Course description

#### *Focus and outcomes*

The guiding theme in this course is how to live with nature in the times of climate change. Students will acquire conceptual tools to reflect about the relation of humans to nature, and on reasonable responses to the

environmental crises of our times, in particular climate change. Key outcomes will include that students will be better able to evaluate environmental issues and to assess environmental policies in their communities.

#### Course objectives

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

#### Texts

All texts will be found on *Brightspace*. To access the page, log in with your regular network ID. Please let me know immediately if you have any difficulty accessing the readings. Brightspace 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 Brightspace by NOON, on Wednesday 7 December**. 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 is an in-class sit-down test** that 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, as well as multiple choice, questions.

3. **Group work experiential project.** This project is to provide an *experiential* context for students to develop skills in reflecting on natural sites, processes or objects. (This project does *not* involve human subjects.) We will establish groups of 4-6 students (depending on class size) that will choose a particular topic and associated sites from a list of options. Groups will engage with topics and sites on the basis of course content and a set of the questions provided. In all cases, choices need to be approved by the instructor. All health precautions regarding Covid-19 in place are to be applied in a strict manner.

To receive a grade for the group work experiential project group members have to comply with ALL four of the following steps: a) join a group by Week 4, b) submit a specific topic and carefully laid out plan of action by Week 5, c) submit a report by Week 9, d) give a group presentation on the assigned day in the last two weeks of classes on a date to be specified by the instructor. Further information will be forthcoming after the start of the semester.

**4. Participation.** Assessed on the basis of a) *regular attendance*, b) *constructive participation in class discussion*, c) *weekly assignments* based on the course readings and analysis of the issues under discussion. *Class attendance will be taken, and is particularly expected in the case of guest speakers* (justified absences on guest speaker days should be discussed with the instructor ahead of time).

*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 and not copied from the textbook or other sources, be about a paragraph long, and submitted by Tuesday.

**IMPORTANT:** when submitting your assignments, at the head of the page please state, in this order, a) LAST NAME, First name your last and first name (e.g., JONES, Peter), b) course name (Phil 232), c) the date assignment is due (e.g., 9 September 2021), d) 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 two 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.*

Participation grade: 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 regular attendance, and class participation was constructive; a grade in the B range will be given if most of the assignments are handed in and most lectures have been attended and class participation was constructive; a grade in the C range will be given if less than 2/3 of assignments have been handed in and attendance has been less than 2/3 of the time; a grade in the D range will be given if half the required assignments and half the lectures were attended while class participation was constructive; any fewer assignments handed in in combination with less than half the lectures attended or non-constructive participation, will receive a grade in the F range.

#### **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. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students. B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material.

- C+ or C** Earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material, adequate skills to work with the course material are displayed, and 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.
- N** An N grade indicates that the student did not complete one or more of the course's essential requirements. N is a failing grade and factors into the student's GPA as "0".
- N** An N grade indicates that the student did not complete one or more of the course's essential requirements. In this course that means that a student has not completed the Final take-home exam or the Mid-term test or the Experiential project. N is a failing grade and factors into the student's GPA as "0".

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 of Philosophy. For additional information regarding grades, including N and DEF status, 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. Grades for assignments, mid-term, group work and final exam will be posted in the commentary sections of the assignment dropboxes on Brightspace. The final course grade will be calculated according to the percentages indicated above. However, this will not be done automatically on Brightspace, so ignore the 'Grades' section on Brightspace.

#### **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 and University academic regulations*

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; using the words or ideas of others without giving appropriate credit; multiple submissions; falsifying materials subject to academic evaluation; cheating on assignments, papers, tests and examinations; unauthorized use of an editor; aiding others to cheat. Please view the UVic Libraries guide <https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/> to avoid plagiarism and cheating.

Tip: generally, use your own words to express your thoughts. If you must quote, be absolutely sure that you place text quoted in quotation marks or indent it. Attention: whenever you use more than 3 words or an idea of another, you are required to give credit! Failure to do so will result in a Fail grade.

I reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software or other platforms to assess the integrity of student work. Penalties for violations vary, with first violations generally resulting in a failing grade on the work. Please view [https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk\\_0xsM\\_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItem=policies](https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItem=policies). All students in this course should complete the *Integrity Matters* module that is available in Brightspace ([here](#)) before you hand in *any* coursework for evaluation. Students need to self-enrol in this module by searching for it under the Discovery tab (drop-down menu) on the Brightspace homepage. Before starting the course, review [“Standards for professional behaviour: Tri-Faculty Student Code of Conduct”](#).

#### *Copyright Statement*

All course content and materials are made available by the instructor for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students registered in their class. This includes all lecture notes, exams and quizzes that I make available to you. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked with ©. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires the written permission of the instructor, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300). Any evidence you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

#### *Technology in the classroom*

Some students require laptops or voice recognition apps for their learning, so they are not prohibited in the classroom. However, studies demonstrate that multi-tasking reduces the performance of other nearby students, so anyone on social media, internet surfing, etc. may be asked to leave and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

#### *Inclusivity/diversity*

The University of Victoria is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all students, staff, and faculty. We affirm the diverse identities of persons and that the rights all individuals have to be treated with dignity and respect irrespective of their gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, class, or national origin. This basic commitment entails, among other things, specific recognition and support for trans, queer, two-spirited, and non-binary people, and we respect the rights of individuals to self-determination and self-description. 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. Information regarding accommodation of religious observance can be located in the UVic Calendar at <https://www.uvic.ca/equity/education/religious/index.php>.

#### *New Student Connect Program*

“The New Student Connect program is an online university community where new students from all over the world connect with others entering their first-year at UVic. The Connect program offers the opportunity for new students to connect with both peers and programming relevant to their needs.” This is a good way to learn from other students “about student life, the UVic student community, services available to new students, and ways to get the right support when new students need it.” For further information see: <https://www.uvic.ca/services/studentlife/initiatives/new-student-connect/index.php>

#### *Student Mental Health Supports / UVic Support Connect,*

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 times. It is hard to shake the stigma associated with problems like depression and anxiety, however, if at any point you believe that you could benefit from help with mental health issues, please contact the new UVic Student Wellness Centre / UVic Support Connect. In addition to providing face to face help, they offer a 24 x 7 phone & online mental health counselling and support program, no matter where you are located, at any time. This 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. 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. We all benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. The sooner you let any of these services know your needs the quicker they can assist you in achieving your learning goals. Resources:

- Mental Health Counselling Services, already mentioned above. See <https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>.
- University Health Services (UHS), which 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 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, see: <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. Covid-19 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*

Important dates for the 2021-2022 Academic Year are found here: <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>. Please consult the 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.

### **Schedule of lectures, assignments and tests**

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

Week 1 5-11 Sept	<b>Humans and environments in Pre-history</b> <b>Film: <i>The Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i></b> by Werner Herzog (Director) <b>*Wednesday 7 Sept, first day of classes*</b> <b>**Attention: prepare first assignment, due Tuesday 13 of September**</b>
Week 2 12-18 Sept	<b>Ideas of nature and humans: from Ancient Greece to Modernity</b> Readings: short extracts from Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato, White, Passmore <b>**Tuesday 13 Sept: assignment about these readings is DUE (ahead of lectures!)*</b> <b>**Ryan Hilperts, M.A. (E.S.), Redfish School of Change and Senior Academic Coordinator, School of Environmental Studies, Guided walk** TO BE CONFIRMED</b>
Week 3 19-25 Sept	<b>Indigenous views of nature</b> Readings: Gwaganad, Cavalcanti Optional reading: Rose "An Indigenous Philosophical Ecology: Situating the Human"

	<p><b>Friday 23 Sep: required film, <i>Uranium</i></b>  <b>**Wednesday 21 Sep: <u>Exploration of groups and topics</u>**</b>  <b>*23 Sept: last day for adding courses*</b></p>
Week 4 26 Sept – 2 Oct	<p><b>Daoist and Buddhist views of nature</b>  Readings: short extracts from <i>Tao Te Ching</i>, Goodman, Schumacher  <b>**Friday 30 Sept: <u>Final date for groups to form and select topics and sites</u>**</b></p>
Week 5 3-9 Oct	<p><b>Contemporary views of nature</b>  Readings: Myers, Baxter, two extracts from Wulf on Alexander von Humboldt’s science  Optional reading: Russow, “Why do species matter?”  <b>**Friday 7 Oct: <u>Plan of action for group work required</u>**</b></p>
Week 6 10-16 Oct	<p><b>Exploitation vs. community control of natural environments +  Review and Mid-term Test</b>  Readings: Hardin, Monbiot  <b>**Monday 10 October, Thanksgiving Day**</b>  <b>**Wednesday 12 October, Columbus’ encounter with the Americas**</b>  <b>**Friday 14 Oct: MID-TERM TEST**</b></p>
Week 7 17-23 Oct	<p><b>Ecofeminism, and the deep-ecological “extended self”</b>  Readings: Warren, Shiva, Naess  Optional reading: Amigo, “Brazil’s Radical Farmers”</p>
Week 8 24 -30 Oct	<p><b>Technology and a new ethic, land ethic and Indigenous adaptations</b>  Readings: Jonas, Leopold, Oliver-Smith</p>
Week 9 31 Oct - 6 Nov	<p><b>Rights of nature and climate change</b>  Readings: Stone, Serres, extracts from Garvey  Optional reading: Roy, “New Zealand river granted same legal rights as human being”  *31 October: Last day for withdrawing from courses without penalty of failure*</p>
Week 10 7-13 Nov	<p><b>Climate change and effective responses</b>  <b>Tues 8 Nov: required film, <i>This changes everything</i> by Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis</b>  <b>**Tuesday 8 Nov: <u>Experiential group work reports due</u>**</b>  <b>*9-11 November, READING DAYS*</b>  <b>**11 November, Remembrance Day**</b></p>
Week 11 14-20 Nov	<p><b>Environmental challenges and cultural resilience</b>  Readings: Klein, “Introduction”, “Conclusion”; de Souza et al., “Climate change and cultural resilience in late pre-Colombian Amazonia”  Optional readings: Rackete, Siegle</p>
Week 12 21-27 Nov	<p><b>Eco-anxiety and community resilience + <u>Group Work presentations</u></b>  Readings: extracts from Homer-Dixon Ch. 10 and Ch. 11 (TBA)</p>
Week 13 28 Nov – 4 Dec	<p><b><u>Group Work presentations + Summary-Conclusion</u></b>  <b>**Friday, 2 Dec, last day of classes: FINAL EXAM take-home exam questions handed out**</b>  <b>**2 December, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**</b></p>
Week 14 5-11 Dec	<p><b><u>Final Exam Submission</u></b>  <b>***BEFORE NOON, Wednesday 7 December: Final Exam submission to Brightspace***</b>  <b>NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTED</b></p>

