

Syllabus, Philosophy 2070
Philosophy of the Environment
Winter 2010

Instructor

Stefan Linquist
Office: MACK 358
Hours: Wed. 1:30–2:30, Fri. 11:30–12:30

Lecture

Monday & Wednesday
ROZH 101
3:30–4:20

Teaching Assistants:

Andrew Robinson	arobin07@uoguelph.ca	MACK 356 (office hours: Wednesday 2:30–3:20)
Megan Penney	mpenney@uoguelph.ca	MACK 368 (office hours: Monday, 2:00–3:00)
Adam Langridge	alangrid@uoguelph.ca	MACK 360 (office hours: Thursday, 2:30–3:30)
Michal Arciszewski	marcisz@uoguelph.ca	MACK 360 (office hours Thursday 12:30–1:30)
Niels Feuerhahn	nfeuerha@uoguelph.ca	MACK 368 (office hours: Monday, 3:00–4:00)

Course Description

This course will critically examine popular beliefs about the environment and humanity's relationship to it. We begin with the foundations of modern environmentalism. This movement was grounded on an image of Mother Nature as an interconnected whole whose components hang together in delicate balance. Human progress and development supposedly threaten the balance of Nature. We will consider whether this picture withstands philosophical and scientific scrutiny. The second part of the course investigates recent debates over climate change. Often, people or governments who are reluctant to take action to prevent climate change are disparaged as irresponsible or unscientific. What do these accusations say about public perceptions of science and policy? How accurate is the public understanding of climate change? Does it matter? The third part of the course will investigate economic approaches to environmental decision making. For example, is it possible to quantify the value of biodiversity or the cost of pollution in economic terms? Or, does an economic framework overlook important ethical and aesthetic reasons for valuing nature?

Course Objectives

- By critically engaging with the core themes of the course students will develop their skills in philosophical analysis and argumentation.
- Students will gain experience in conducting independent research and in communicating the results of that research, both verbally and in writing.
- Students will deepen their understanding of environmental science and philosophy to the point where they are able to identify and evaluate the ideologies and theories on which public policy is often based.

Reading (required)

- *Philosophy of the Environment Courseware*. (Courseware articles also available online at the class Courselink page or at www.biophilosophy.ca under "Teaching" "Philosophy 2070").
- M. Sagoff, 2008 *The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law and the Environment*. Cambridge.

Assessment

Participation	10%	Quizzes	20%
Skeptical Env. Assignment	10%	Midterm	20%
Climate Chg. paper	20%	Final	20%

Course Outline

Part 1: A Critical Look at the Foundations of Environmentalism.

Week 1 - Sounding the alarm bell.

11/01 Introduction to course themes.

13/01 Newton and Dillingham, "The Silence of the Birds" (p. 100-113).

Tutorial: Discuss skeptical environmentalism assignment

Assigned: Skeptical environmentalist group projects.

Week 2 - Eco holism and the Land Ethic.

18/01 Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (p. 137-141; 197-202).

20/01 Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (p. 237- 295).

Quiz 1

Tutorial: Group meetings for skeptical environmentalism projects.

Assigned: Skeptical environmentalist projects cont'd.

Week 3 – The balance of Nature.

25/01 *Read*: E.P. Odum, "The Strategy of ecosystem development" (p.262-270).

27/01 *Read*: J. Kricher, "Nothing endures except change" (165-174).

Tutorial:

****Present skeptical environmentalist group projects****

Week 4 – Deep Ecology and its critics.

01/02 G. Sessions, Deep Ecology (p. 105-125).

03/02 Elliot Sober, "Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism" (174-185).

Quiz 2

Tutorial: Review for midterm

Week 5 – Deep Ecology and its critics (con't).

08/02: Elliot Sober, "Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism" (185 – 194).

10/02: ****Midterm Exam****.

****Midterm****

Assign: Climate change paper topics.

Tutorial: TBA

Winter Break

Part 2: Climate Change and the Scientific Method.

Week 6 – Introduction to the climate change controversy.

21/02 G. Monbiot, "Introduction" (p. ix-xiii) & Chapter 1, "A Faustian pact" (p. 1-19).

24/02 G. Monbiot, "The denial industry" (p. 20-42).

Quiz 3

Tut: How to write a philosophy paper.

Assign: Outline for paper topics.

Week 7 – Scientific misconduct and climate change science.

01/03 ****Guest lecture: by Dr Z. Geladof****

03/03 Woodward & Goodstein, "Conduct, misconduct and the structure of science" (p. 12-22).

Tutorial: Outline for paper topics due.

Discussion of climate change issues.

Week 8- How justified are public concerns over climate change?

08/03 E. Crist, "Beyond the climate change crisis" (p. 29-55).

Quiz 4

10/03 Guest lecture: TBA

Tutorial: Paper outlines handed back and discussed.

Part 3: Economic analysis and environmental values.

Week 9 – Distinguishing preferences and Values.

15/03 *Economy of the Earth* Ch. 1 "Introduction" (p. 1-23).

17/03 *Economy of the Earth* Ch. 2 "Why political questions are not all economic" (p. 24-46).

Tutorial: Discuss economic approach to env. decision making.

Week 10 – Can we put a price on nature's services?

22/03: *Economy of the Earth* Ch.3_ "Allocation and distribution of resources" (p. 46-66).

****Climate chg. papers due in class****

24/03 *Economy of the Earth* Ch.5_ "Can we price nature's services?" (p. 87-108).

Tutorial: Arboretum visit.

Assign: Self guided fieldtrip to grocery store.

Week 11 – Consumption and overpopulation .

29/03 – *Economy of the Earth*, Ch.6 “Do we consume too much” (p. 119-127). ***Quiz 5***

31/04 – *Economy of the Earth*, Ch8 “The concept of place in env. Ethics” (p. 157-173).

Tutorial: Report on grocery store fieldtrip.

Week 12 – Defending cost-benefit analysis.

05/04 Read: Schmidtz “A place for cost benefit analysis.”

07/04 Review for final exam.

Tut: Review for final.

20/04 Final exam: Tues 08:30AM - 10:30AM

More info on assignments and exams.

Reading

Students are expected to have completed the reading assignment before class on the day on which it is assigned.

Quizzes

Quizzes will take place at the beginning of class. They will consist of a few questions to assess students' comprehension of the readings up to and including those assigned on the day of the quiz.

Skeptical Environmentalist assignment

This assignment aims to evaluate the factual claims surrounding Bjorn Lomborg's *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. Students will work in small groups to collaboratively review primary scientific literature and related policy documents. These findings will be presented in short, collaborative summary document (about 1000 words) and presented verbally in tutorial sections. A high quality group project will be comprehensively researched and clearly presented.

Climate Change paper

This assignment aims to evaluate conceptual and ethical issues surrounding the climate change debate (1500–2000 words). A specific set of guidelines for writing this paper will be provided. Generally speaking, the aim of this assignment is to develop students' skills in analytical thinking and writing. As such, greater emphasis will be placed on the quality of argumentation and clarity of expression than on breadth of background research.

Exams

Prior to each exam students will be provided with a list of 15–20 short-answer questions based on the readings and lecture. The examination questions will be drawn from those questions.

Other important stuff

Assignments: All assignments must be submitted in class on the due dates and will not be accepted late without documented or otherwise legitimate justification.

E-mail Communication: As per university regulations, all students are required to check their uoguelph e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the university and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement... When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor [or designated person] in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. Where possible, this should be done in advance of the missed work or event, but otherwise, just as soon as possible after the due date, and certainly no longer than one week later. Note: if appropriate documentation of your inability to meet that in-course requirement is necessary, the course instructor, or delegate, will request it of you. Such documentation will rarely be required for course components representing less than 10% of the course grade. Such documentation will be required, however, for Academic Consideration for missed end-of-term work and/or missed final examinations. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/co8/c08-ac.shtml>). Also: (www.uoguelph.ca/baco)

Drop Date The last date to drop one-semester Winter 2010 courses, without academic penalty, is **Friday March 12, 2010 (the 40th day of class)** For regulations and procedures see the Undergraduate Calendar. (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>)

Copies of out-of-class assignments Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Academic Misconduct The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and enjoins all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent offences from occurring. The University of Guelph takes a serious view of academic misconduct. It is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and to abide by the University's policy. In the definition of academic misconduct are such activities as cheating on exams, plagiarism, misrepresentation, and submitting the same material in two different courses without written permission from the relevant instructors. To better understand your responsibilities, read the Undergraduate Calendar. (www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c01/index.shtml) for a statement of Students' Academic Responsibilities; also read the full Academic Misconduct Policy (www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml). You are also advised to make use of the resources available through the Learning Commons (www.Learningcommons.uoguelph.ca/) and to discuss any questions you may have with your instructor, TA, or academic counsellor. Instructors have the right to use software to aid in the detection of plagiarism or copying and to examine students orally on submitted work. For students found guilty of academic misconduct, serious penalties, up to and including suspension or expulsion, can be imposed. Hurried or careless submission of work does not exonerate students of responsibility for ensuring the academic integrity of their work. Similarly, students who find themselves unable to meet course requirements by the deadline or criteria expected because of medical, psychological or compassionate circumstances should review the university's regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration in the calendar (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>) and discuss their situation with the instructor and/or the program counsellor or other academic counsellor as appropriate.