

21st Century Philosophy

Instructor: Stefan Linqvist

Meeting: CRSC 117

Time: 1:00- 2:20, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Office Hours: Online (via Teams) Wednesday 12:00 -1:00 pm, or by appointment.

Course Synopsis:

An important development in Western, 21st century philosophy is a reckoning with its colonial past. This course will focus on Western environmental philosophy and its uncomfortable relationship with First Nations' worldviews in North America. The recent events at Fairy Creek, British Columbia are an example of how the Western ideal of pristine wilderness can conflict with First Nations' autonomy, identity, and rights. This course will first consider historical origins of the wilderness ideal, looking at how it helped to justify the dislocation of some First Nations communities in the USA and Canada. We will also look at the arguments presented by animal welfare advocates against indigenous whaling and seal harvesting. We then consider work by First Nations authors, outlining an alternative perspective on human/environment and human/animal relationships. The final part of the course considers options for modifying the Western outlook in environmental philosophy so that it might incorporate alternative viewpoints.

Method of Delivery:

This course will be taught in person as a discussion-focused seminar. Students unable to attend in person will be able to make up their participation marks through an online discussion board.

Assignments & Means of Evaluation, i.e.:

- Weekly reflection papers (roughly 2 pages): 60%
- Research Essay - 25%
- Seminar participation (in person and/or online discussion)- 15%

Required Textbooks:

Kimmerer, R.W. (2013) Braiding Sweetgrass. Milkweed Press.

Morito, B. (2004) Thinking Ecologically. Fernwood Press.

Coté, C. (2010) Spirits of Our Whaling Ancestors.

Additional articles/chapters available electronically.

Course Outline

Week 1 Introduction

- **Sept 9:** Introduction to the course.

Week 2: The Wilderness Ideal and First Nations

- **Sept. 14:** William Cronon (1996), "[The trouble with wilderness: or, getting back to the wrong nature.](#)" Environmental History 1:7-28.
- **Sept 16:** John O'Neil (2002), "[Wilderness, cultivation and appropriation](#)" Philosophy & Geography 5: 35-50.
- **Sept 17** Assignment: Write a short reflection on the effects of the wilderness ideal on First Nations sovereignty (1 page).

Week 3: Romanticizing Non-western Worldviews

- **Sept 21:** Gregory Smithers (2015), "[Beyond the 'Ecological Indian': Environmental politics and traditional ecological knowledge in North America.](#)" Environmental History 20: 83-111.
- **Sept 23:** Zaheer barber (2002), "[Orientalism, Occidentalism, Nativism: The Culturalist Quest for Indigenous Science and Knowledge.](#)" The European Legacy 747-758.
- **Sept 24:** Assignment. Write a short reflection describing at least one of the ways that non-western world views are romanticized by Westerners and some problems with this practice (2 pages).

Week 4: Braiding Sweetgrass, Part 1

- **Sept 28:** Planting Sweetgrass (pages 1-62).
- **Sept 30:** Tending Sweetgrass (pages 62-120).
- **Oct 1:** Assignment. Write a short reflection explicating and discussing an important concept of your choice in the readings for this week (2 pages).

Week 5: Braiding Sweetgrass, Part 2:

- **Oct 5:** Picking Sweetgrass (pages 121-204).
- **Oct 7:** Braiding Sweetgrass (pages 205-302).
- **Oct 8:** Assignment. Write a short reflection explicating and discussing an important concept of your choice in the readings for this week (2 pages).

Week 6: Braiding Sweetgrass, Part 3

- **Oct 12:** No class, reading break
- **Oct 14:** Burning Sweetgrass (pages 303-384)
- **Oct 15:** Assignment: Write a short reflection on whether the human/nature relationship outlined by Kimmerer can be reconciled with the Wilderness Ideal (2 pages).

Week 7: Animal Welfare and Ethical Consistency

- **Oct 19:** Peter Singer (2012) "All animals are equal" In Williston Ed Environmental Ethics for Canadians.
- **Oct 21:** Lisa Kemmerer (2004), "[Killing Traditions: Consistency in applied moral philosophy.](#)" Ethics, Place and Environment. 7: 151-171.
- **Oct 22:** Assignment. Explain and defend the Animal Welfarist position on whether it is morally permissible for humans to hunt and kill whales (2 pages).

Week 8: Spirits of our Whaling Ancestors, Part 1

- **Oct 26:** Ch 1: Tsawalk, The centrality of whaling to makah and nuu-chah-nulth life (pp. 15-41)
- **Oct 28:** Ch 2. Uvla, Worldviews collide: The Arrival of Mamalhn'i in Indian Territory (pp. 42-68).
- **Oct 29:** Assignment: Write a short reflection on whether the centrality of whaling in Makah culture is a relevant consideration from the Animal Welfarist position on whale hunting (2 pgs).

Week 9: Spirits of our Whaling Ancestors, Part 2

- **Nov 2:** Ch 3 Kutsa, Maintaining the cultural link to whaling ancestors (pp. 69-114)
- **Nov. 4:** Muu, The Makah harvest a whale (pp. 115-149)
- **Nov 5:** Assignment. Write a short reflection on discussing what you take to be the most morally significant aspect of the Makah whale harvest, and why. (2 pages).

Week 10: Spirits of our Whaling Ancestors, Part 3

- **Nov 9:** Ch 5 Sucha, Challenges to our right to whale (150-165).
- **Nov 11:** Ch 7 Atlpu, Restoring Nanash Aqtl Communities (193-208).
- **Nov 12:** Assignment. Write a short reflection explicating and discussing an important concept of your choice in the readings for this week (2 pages).

Week 11: Thinking Ecologically, Part 1

- **Nov 16:** Ch 1 Animistic and Classical World Views
- **Nov 18:** Ch 2 The Copernican Revolution, Mechanism and the Modern World View:
- **Nov 19:** Assignment: Briefly explicate Morito's theory about the rational desire for conceptual completeness in Western science and philosophy and critically evaluate this claim (2 pages).

Week 12 Thinking Ecologically, Part 2

- **Nov 23:** Ch 3, The Challenge of Evolutionary and Ecological Theories
- **Nov 25:** Ch 4, Values and World View. Ch 5, Ecology and Ethics
- **Nov 26:** Assignment. Write a short reflection explicating and discussing an important concept of your choice in the readings for this week (2 pages).

Week 13 Thinking Ecologically, Part 3

- **Nov 30:** Ch 6, Ethics and Policy
- **Dec 2:** Ch 7, Sustainable Development, Conservation and Sustainability.
- **Dec 3:** Assignment. Write a short reflection explicating and discussing an important concept of your choice in the readings for this week (2 pages).