Ethics and the Environment
ENVST-UA 400.001; PHIL-UA 53.001 / 8289
Fall, 2019
2:00pm-3:15pm MW, 25 West 4th Street, Room C-20

Students must also register for either
ENVST-UA 400.002; PHIL-UA 53.002 / 8290
Tuesday, 12:30pm-1:45pm, 25 West 4th Street, Room C-5

or

ENVST-UA 400.003; PHIL-UA 53.003 / 8291
Tuesday, 3:30pm-4:45pm, Tisch Hall, 40 West 4th Street, Room LC6

Instructors
Dale Jamieson, 285 Mercer Street, Room 705/707, dwj3@nyu.edu; office hours, Thursday 2-5, and by appointment.
Kyle Ferguson, 285 Mercer Street, Room 902, kyle.ferguson@nyu.edu; office hours, Tuesday 11-12, 2–3, and by appointment.

Course Description
Environmental philosophy is a large subject that involves questions in metaphysics, philosophy of science, and history of philosophy, as well as in such normative areas as ethics, aesthetics, and political philosophy. This class is primarily devoted to these normative areas. Beginning with some basic concepts in value theory, the goal is not to arrive at definite solutions to specific environmental problems, but rather (i) to improve your ability to think critically, read closely, and to argue well about environmental issues; (ii) to introduce you to some major controversies in environmental philosophy; and (iii) to aid you in arriving at your own rational and clear-minded views about the matters under discussion.

Texts
Dale Jamieson Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction (EE); Christopher Schlottmann, Lori Gruen and Dale Jamieson, Reflecting on Nature (RON). Both books are available on Amazon and similar sites, and will soon be available in the bookstore. You can access EE electronically through the library at https://www.cambridge-org.proxy.library.nyu.edu/core/books/ethics-and-the-environment/F0460CB49E38A26348E8D76FC05915A2. You are also required to read, in addition, Harry Frankfurt’s short book, On Bullshit, which is readily and cheaply available on Amazon or at many bookstores, and can also be found online at: http://www2.csudh.edu/ccauthen/576f12/frankfurt_harry__on_bullshit.pdf. Many of the readings from RON are available on the Internet or will be posed on Classes.
Additional course readings will also be posted on Classes. Many of these additional readings appear in Christopher Schlottmann et. al, Philosophy and Society: A Reader (EAS), the text that is used for the Environmental Studies core course, Environment and Society.

**Format**
Each week will have two seventy-five minute lectures and a seventy-five minute discussion section.

**Requirements**
The first and most fundamental requirement is attending and being prepared to participate in every class, whether recitation or lecture (this includes doing all the reading). You cannot pass the class if you fail to attend at least 10 recitations. The second requirement is to send a brief email to Kyle Ferguson the day before each recitation (i.e., by 11:59pm on the Monday before the recitation). In this email, you are expected to summarize one of the main claims made in the readings (no more than 1 paragraph) and present a question or comment on that claim (no more than 2 sentences). This assignment is intended to get you thinking about the readings prior to section and facilitate discussion during class. It will be counted as a completion grade, and you can skip 3 of these weekly emails without penalty (i.e., submitting 10 out of 13 emails is sufficient for full credit, though we encourage you to submit them all).

In addition, 3 essays of 1000–1500 words will be assigned. You cannot pass the class if you do not write all the essays in accordance with the schedule and requirements specified below. Essay topics will generally be distributed about a week and a half before each paper is due. If you choose, you will have the opportunity to rewrite one of the first 2 essays based on feedback from the instructors. Your 3 highest essay grades will determine your course grade, in conjunction with an assessment of the degree to which you have satisfied the first and most fundamental requirement, and the second requirement. The first and most fundamental requirement will count 10%, the second requirement, 15%, and the third requirement, 75% (each paper counting 25%). Essays should be submitted electronically at NYU Classes > Ethics & The Environment > Assignments > Essay n. Due dates are as follows: Essay 1 is due on October 1st; Essay 2 is due on November 5th; the optional rewrite of either Essay 1 or 2 is due on December 2nd, and Essay 3 is due on the day the final examination is scheduled, December 16th (please note that there will be no final or other in-class examinations). Papers will not be accepted via email, unless prior approval has been given. Late papers will be accepted at the discretion of the instructors, and only if we are notified at least one day prior to the due date that the paper will be late. Unless there is an excuse involving serious morbidity or mortality, grades will be reduced at the rate of one grade per day, and papers that are more than one week late will not be accepted.
Accommodations
Students who require accommodation for a disability should consult with the Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/students-with-disabilities. For students with religious obligations that conflict with class obligations, we will confirm to the university policy as stated here: https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html

Plagiarism
Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to an academic dean. Plagiarism includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else’s work as your own; or copying verbatim from any source. You are subject to CAS’s guidelines on plagiarism: https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html.

A Helpful Hint:
Some good resources for beginning philosophy students can be found on Jim Pryor’s website:
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html
http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html

Schedule
Week 1: Course Introduction
9/2 Labor Day (no class)
9/4 Introductory lecture

Week 2: Ethics
9/9: The Environment as an Ethical Question
Read EE Ch 1
Recommended White in RON
9/11: Human Morality
Read EE Ch 2
Recommended Leopold in RON

Week 3: Metaethics
9/16: Overview
Read EE Ch 3
9/18: The “last man” argument
Read Routley, and Williams, both in RON
Week 4: Normative Ethics
9/23: Overview
Read EE Ch 4
9/25: Virtue ethics
Read Sandler in RON

Week 5: Animals
9/30: Overview
Read EE Ch 5
Recommended: Gruen in RON
10/1: First Essay Due
10/2: All animals are equal
Read Singer in RON

Week 6: The Value of Nature
10/7: Overview
Read EE Ch 6
10/9: Read Goodpaster, Taylor, and Callicott, all in RON

Week 7: Animals and Nature
10/15: Divorce or happy marriage?
Read Sagoff and Jamieson, both in RON
10/16: Wild animal suffering
Read Delon & Purves, “Wild Animal Suffering is Intractable,” available at

Week 8: Sustainability and Future Generations
10/21: Sustainability
Read Barry in RON
10/23: Future Generations
Read Cowan and Parfit, “Against the Social Discount Rate”

Week 9: Climate Change and Justice
10/28: Read Steve Gardiner, “Ethics and Climate Change,
10/30: Read Anil Agrawal & Sunita Narain, “Global Warming in an Unequal World,”
available in RON and here:

Week 10: Am I Responsible for Climate Change?
11/4: Read Nolt, "How Harmful Are the Average American's Greenhouse Gas
Emissions?"
11/5: Second Essay Due
11/6: Read Jamieson, “Responsibility and Climate Change”
Week 11: Population and Consumption
11/11: Population
11/13: Consumption

Week 12: Nature’s Future: The Anthropocene
11/18: Read Jamieson & Di Paola, “Political Theory for the Anthropocene;”

Week 13: Conservation: Goals and Effectiveness
11/25: Reading continued
11/27 No class

Week 14: Ethics and Compassion
Optional rewrite due
12/4: Reading continued

Week 15: Thinking and Loving
12/9: Thinking (class ends at 3pm for evaluations)
12/11 Loving
12/16: Third Essay Due

**NB:** *This syllabus is subject to revision at the instructor’s discretion*