

ETHICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

V36.0400/V83.0053

Fall, 2007

T Th 2-3:15 Silver 509

(you must also register for a discussion section)

Professor: Dale Jamieson, 246 Greene St. (Kimball Hall), 314E; 212-9985429; dwj3@nyu.edu; office hours T 3:30-5:30, and by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Justin Clarke-Doane, 5 Washington Place, 315; jcd305@nyu.edu; office hours Th 3:30-4:30, and by appointment

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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 (ed.), *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy* (J); Frederick Kaufman (ed.), *Foundations of Environmental Philosophy* (K), and Dale Jamieson *Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction* (JA). The latter book will be posted on blackboard as will many other course reading.

Recommended: A good resource for beginning philosophy students is Jim Pryor's *Philosophical Terms and Methods*, available on the web at <http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html>

Format: Each week will have two seventy-five minute lectures and a fifty minute discussion section. There may also be some guest lecturers.

Requirements: The first and most fundamental requirement is attending and being prepared to participate in every class (this includes doing all the reading). In addition, four essays will be assigned on roughly the following topics: moral theory, ethics and animals, values in nature, and ethics and climate change. You may write all four essays, three essays, or three essays and one rewrite. Your three highest 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. Essays are due on the following dates: 10.1, 10.22, 11.26, and 12.18. Late papers will be accepted at the discretion of the instructors, and only if we are notified by the due date at the latest 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 mark for each class that the paper is late. Essay topics will generally be distributed about 9 days before each paper is due.

Schedule:

Week 1 (9.4/6) The Environment as an ethical question, including discussion of the role of science and economics in thinking about the environment, and what it means to appreciate nature.

Read J Part III; JA Ch. 1; K Chs 3, 9 (especially JA Ch.1, White, O'Briant, Passmore, and Sagoff from K, and Freeman from J).

Week 2 (9.11/13) Metaethics, and the nature and function of morality.

Read J Ch. 11; JA Chs. 2-3; K Ch.2, 4 Wiggins, available at <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpl/paso/2000/00000100/00000001>, especially JA Ch. 3, K Ch. 4, and Wiggins

Week 3 (9.18/20) Normative theories: Consequentialism and Virtue theory.
Read J Ch. 12; JA Ch. 4.1-4.3; Hill in K; Hursthouse <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-virtue/>

Week 4 (9.25/27) Normative theories: Kantianism
Read: JA Ch. 4.4-4.5; Korsgaard
<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~korsgaard/CMK.FellowCreatures.pdf>

Week 5 (10.2/4) Speciesism
Read K Ch. 5; JA Ch. 5.1; Williams and Holland on blackboard

Week 6 (10.9/11) Animal Liberation, and Animal Rights.
Read JA Ch. 5.2; K Ch. 5; J Ch. 13

Week 7 (10.16/18) Duties to animals: killing animals, eating animals, captivity and companionship.
Read JA Ch. 5.3-5.4; K Ch. 5

Week 8 (10.23/25) The Value of Nature: Biocentrism versus(?) Anthropocentrism.
Read JA Ch. 6.1-6.3; J Chs. 14-15; K: chs 4, 6-8, especially JA, and Stone, Rodman, Thompson, Goodpaster, Cahan, and Gould from K

Week 9 (10.30/11,1) The Value of Nature: Moral values, aesthetic values, and prudential values.
Read J Chs 17-18; JA 6.4; K: Ch. 7 (especially Sober)

Week 10: (11.6/8) Conflicts and trade-offs: natives and exotics, animals and plants, the role of humans
Read JA Ch. 6.5; Cowan, "Policing Nature," available at <http://www.gmu.edu/jbc/Tyler/police.doc>

Week 11 (11.13/15) Nature's Future
Read JA Ch. 7

Week 12 (11.20) Preservation, Conservation, Restoration
Readings TBA

Week 13 (11.27/29) Climate Change: Science, Risk, Economics, and Justice
Readings: TBA

Week 14 (12.4/6) Climate Change: Future Generations, Respect for Nature, and Geoengineering (Galapagos case study)
Readings: TBA

12.11 Finale