

PHIL 4220/6220: Environmental Ethics

Dr Piers Stephens

Course Description: In this course, we shall begin by looking at the history and key debates in environmental thought in the USA, and by guiding this through to an overview of contemporary issues in the field of philosophy commonly known as environmental ethics. The key questions of this field include those of the value of nature, the clash of anthropocentric vs ecocentric ethics, the definition of “nature” itself as against humans and/or their artefacts, and the role of technology and technical fixes in relation to environmental problems. These concerns will lead us into a broader evaluation of environmental thought at the international scale, examining it in relation to preceding traditions of moral and political thought as well as contemporary concerns with sustainable development, and steadily moving from the core issues of North American environmental ethics, many with a background in the wilderness tradition, through to the related but distinct West European traditions of green politics, predominantly derived from a mixture of romanticism and the leftist political heritage. Emphasis will accordingly be placed both on the distinctiveness of these lines of environmental thought, springing as they do from different histories and conditions, and on the possibilities for future syntheses in which each side may draw upon the best in the other.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Required Reading

David Schmidtz & Elizabeth Willott (Eds), *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works* (2001) (EE).

Marius de Geus, *The End of Overconsumption: Towards a Lifestyle of Moderation and Restraint* (2003) (TEO).

Recommended Reading

Vernon Pratt, Emily Brady & Jane Howarth, *Environment and Philosophy* (1999).

Course Requirements:

Two short essays (5-7 pages each) - 25% each

Research proposal (1 – 2 pages) - 10%

Researched essay (10 – 12 pages) - 40%

Contact Details, Attendance Requirements, etc

My office hours, in Peabody Hall room 121, are from 11.30am-1pm on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, or by appointment. I can also be contacted at other times if urgent, so please do feel free to contact me with any questions or worries. Since the

course aims to develop your capacities to analyze and argue well in the field, attendance is obligatory, though illness related absence is excused if supported by a medical note. Absences due to other unavoidable circumstances or difficulties may also be excused if I am informed in advance. The reading allocated below on a session by session basis is *required* and will be central to the business of each seminar. My email address is piers@uga.edu

Assignments and Academic Honesty Issues

Intellectual integrity is the foundation of the academic community, and thus of the value of your work and grades. Violations of academic honesty and integrity therefore strike at the heart of the UGA learning community and constitute a serious offence against your fellow students and instructors. Such violations include cheating, plagiarism, fabrication and misrepresentation of work (e.g. by distorting sources or claiming sole authorship of a collective work), submitting the same paper or extremely similar papers for two different courses without the consent of both instructors, the obstruction or sabotaging of others' work, or assisting others in engaging in any of these breaches of academic honesty. Full details of the UGA Academic Honesty Policy, "A Culture of Honesty" are given at http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm and you are urged to view it. All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. If students are in any doubt as to the validity of their likely actions in constructing a piece of work, they should please see me for advice first.

Detailed Schedule of Reading and Assignments

8/18 American & European traditions: Course introduction and overview.

8/20 Reading: EE xi-xxi, 6-14

8/25 EE 15-32

8/27 EE 33-44

9/1 EE 83-103

9/3 EE 104-120

9/8 EE 120-136

9/10 EE 159-177

9/15 EE 285-305 **Short Essay 1 Assigned**

9/17 EE 265-283

9/22 EE 248-262

9/24 EE 231-47

9/29 EE 330-340, 348-360

10/1 EE 373-393

10/6 EE 394-424

10/8 EE 434-443

10/13 EE 454-466 **Essay 1 Deadline; Essay 2 Assigned**

10/15 EE 466-492

10/20 EE 493-505

10/22 EE 535-566

10/27 EE 188, 205-230

10/29 EE 189-204

11/3 TEO P13-38

11/5 TEO P39-56

11/10 TEO P57-78

11/12 TEO P81-97 **Essay 2 Deadline**

11/17 TEO P98-117 **Research Proposal Due**

11/19 TEO P118-134

11/23-27: Thanksgiving break

12/1 TEO P137-56

12/3 TEO P157-75

12/8 TEO P176-98 **Research Essay Deadline**