

Philosophy 3530-001: Environmental Ethics  
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MWF 9:30-10:20  
Old Main | Room 201

**Required Text:**

*Environmental Ethics* (2016) 7th edition by Louis Pojman, Paul Pojman, and Katie McShane ISBN 978-1285197241

- At USU Bookstore (buy: new \$99.95, used \$69.95; rent: new \$65.00, used \$42; ebook \$24.49)
- On [Amazon](#) (buy: new \$87.23, used \$81.30; rent: \$19.99; eText: buy \$92.49, rent \$21.40)
- On [Chegg Books](#) (buy: new \$82.49, used \$80.49; rent: \$19.49; eText: rent \$21.40)

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce you to the main topics of environmental ethics. After reviewing some key concepts in ethics and major ethical theories, we will devote the first part of the course examining theoretical questions of environmental ethics. We will distinguish between instrumental, intrinsic, extrinsic, and final values, and examine the ways in which these values are said to be grounded according to anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric accounts. Does nature have value only because we value it, or does it have its own value? Is it valuable only because it is useful to us? Or is it valuable for its own sake? Which things in nature are valuable? Which are not? Why? How ought we respond to these values? In the second half of the course we will concentrate on the practical issues of environmental ethics. We will consider questions such as, what is environmental racism? What is sustainability? Why is there world hunger? Do we have an obligation to alleviate it? What kind of food is ethical? Why is climate change happening? How does human activity contribute to it? What ought we to do about it? What is our moral responsibility with respect to minimizing and distributing the burdens of global pollution?

**General Objectives of the Course**

At the end of the course, you will be asked to evaluate the course's success at meeting these objectives:

2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual-cultural activity (music, science, lit, etc.).
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

### **Teaching Philosophy:**

My goal is not to convince you that any of the authors in our text have all the answers. It is to help you understand their thoughts so that critical reflection on those thoughts can play a meaningful role in forming your own.

## II. DOING YOUR PART

It's your decision whether or not to remain in this course. If you decide to stay, I would like you to understand this decision as a kind of commitment: a commitment to participate actively in your own learning, to take responsibility for your education, to be an active learner in this course. Philosophy requires a lot of reading, and it is very difficult reading. You will need to devote a significant amount of time to keeping up with the course's reading. You will need to carefully follow the schedule at the end of the syllabus, regularly participate in class discussions, read all the assigned readings very carefully, and seriously prepare for the online quizzes.

## III. HOW YOU AND I WILL MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

Measuring your progress in points will make it easy for you to determine your own grade and progress at any time. The total possible number of points for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be assigned on the standard point/percentage scale:

**A: 93.0-100; A-: 90.0-92.9; B+: 87.1-89.9; B: 83.0-87.0; B-: 80.0-82.9; C+: 77.1-79.9; C: 73.0-77.0; C-: 70.0-72.9; D+: 67.1-69.9; D: 63.0-67.0; D-: 60-62.9; F: 0.0-59.9.**

### **What do grades mean at USU?**

A is for excellent work.

B is for very good work.

C is for adequate or average work.

D is for below average, inadequate work.

F is for unacceptable work, i.e., work that is not at the college level.

### **Components of Course Grade**

**Canvas quizzes (5): 8 pts/quizz; 40%**

**Group presentation:** 20%

**Final paper:** 25%

**Attendance:** 5%

**Participation:** 10%

**Total:** 100%

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**Homework:** You have homework due every week. It consists of reading the assigned materials.

**Canvas quizzes:** These quizzes will be taken on Canvas. They are a substitute for exams and therefore will be difficult. You will need to study for them. Study questions will be provided for each quiz. Each quiz will test you on *memorization* and *understanding*. In preparing for the quiz you should study the following: philosophers (who said what), terms and concepts (what do they mean?), theories (what does each theory try to explain, show, state?), arguments (what are the arguments provided in support of each theory?), objections (what are some problems with a given argument, theory, concept?) There will be 5 quizzes with 10 multiple choice questions each. Each quiz will last 45 minutes. The quizzes will be timed and administered on Canvas. You will be given a time window to complete the quizzes (from Friday to Saturday nights). Each quiz is worth 8% of your final grade, and 40% of your final grade in total. You may go over the correct answers to the quiz on Sundays from 12 am to 11.59 pm.

\**Note* that people have done well on the quizzes when they did not copy the text from the slides, did not take notes verbatim but rather printed out the slides before class and took notes next to the slides.

**Extra credit:** I will drop the lowest score of one of your Canvas quizzes. This is the only 'extra credit' you will get in this course. If you excel on all five of them, extra points will be added to your final grade. There is no other extra credit offered in this class.

**Group assignments:** In the second half of the course, we will devote 25 minutes to group presentations. The group presentation should be on the specified topic, presenting a specific ethical problem relevant to the class topic for that week. The problem should be presented clearly. The group will need to provide arguments as to why this is a problem, and consider objections, and solutions to the said problem. Group members will receive one grade, and, for this reason, are encouraged to work as a *team*. To ensure that everyone is doing their fair share of work, each group member

will e-mail me their peer review reports, grading everyone's performance in the group, including one's own. Group presentations are worth 20% of the final grade.

**Final Paper:** At the end of the term you will be asked to submit a thesis paper (1000 – 1500 words) on any topic we have covered in class. In it, you will need to take a stand on an environmental issue or policy and defend your point of view with evidence and arguments. You will need to demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired in the course, and outline potential steps for solving the issue at hand. The final paper is worth 25% of the final grade.

**Late Work** will not be accepted. There will be no make-up quizzes or exams. This policy may be overridden only by extenuating cases. In order to make-up a quiz or paper, the following conditions must be met: (i) the instructor must be notified well in advance, (ii) the student must have a formal written excuse, and (iii) the quiz or paper must be made-up within one calendar week.

**Attendance:** Your presence in class is absolutely necessary to ensure the fullest realization of our learning objectives. More than **four** absences, for any reason, create an academic problem, which may result in you being dropped from the course. Once you have passed the allowed number of absences, 1% will be taken off from your attendance points for each additional absence. Attendance is worthy 5% of your final grade.

Please be aware that people who are sleeping in class will be marked absent because it is not enough to be physically present in class. You also have to be conscious.

If you need to leave early, please consult me before class.

**Latenesses** will also affect your attendance record. Two latenesses will count as one absence. If you do arrive late, make sure to notify me at the end of the class that you were here. Otherwise, once marked absent, the attendance record will not be changed.

**Participation:** Participation means contributing to the class discussions by asking questions, making comments, and answering questions. This will enable me to learn your names. I will be keeping track of each student's participation. Participation is worth 10% of your final grade.

**Note taking:** every student must carry a notebook with them to class. You will need it for writing your reflection journal entries as well as note taking. Research shows that note taking significantly improves students' ability to remember and understand the material they have learned. You should write down ideas. *You should not be copying the text of the slides, as the slides are available on Canvas, and you are wasting time re-writing them.* Instead, you should be summarizing the material in your own sentences. This is a very good way to learn.

Hand-written notes are superior to typed-up notes because writing notes by hand engages your mind to a much greater extent than typing does. For this reason, I recommend to all of you to write your notes by hand.

**Electronic devices class policy:** Cell phone and smart watch use during class is not allowed for any reason. Please be sure that they are turned off. If you use your cell phone in class, you will be asked to leave, and attendance points will be subtracted.

You may use a laptop or tablet for note-taking *only*. Your use of a laptop or a tablet for note taking during class will be reflected in your record, and you will be required to e-mail me the notes within 15 minutes after class. The notes must be at least 375 words-long. You should put the word count at the top of the document. Otherwise, your use of electronic devices in class is not permitted. In your electronic notes, you **may not** copy the text from the slides.

**Course Evaluations:** at some point during the semester you will be asked by USU to evaluate this course. The procedure will be done online. It is an USU policy that you should e-mail me a confirmation code you will receive after completing the course evaluations. Your participation is mandatory. In evaluating this course, you should refer to the **General Objectives of the Course** on the syllabus.

**Cheating and Plagiarism policy:** If you are cheating on a quiz or exam, you will receive an F on that quiz or exam (no retakes). If you plagiarize an essay, full penalties of the university will be strictly enforced.

Here is **Utah State University's Policy on Academic Honesty**

<<http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3140>>:

The University expects that students and faculty alike maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. For the benefit of students who may not be aware of specific standards of the University concerning academic honesty, the following information is quoted from The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University (revised September 2009), Article VI, Section 1:

### **Section 1. University Standard: Academic Integrity**

Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the University by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty and by reporting all violations or suspected violations of the Academic Integrity Standard to their instructors.

**The Honor Pledge**—To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor

Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

Violations of the Academic Integrity Standard (academic violations) include, but are not limited to:

1. **Cheating:** (1) using or attempting to use or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity, including working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually"; (2) depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work; (4) acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission; (5) continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity; (6) submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or (7) engaging in any form of research fraud.
2. **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
3. **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

## **Section 2. Reporting Violations of Academic Integrity**

The Academic Integrity Violation Form (AIVF) provides guidance to instructors and students, ensures minimum due process requirements are met, and allows tracking of repeat offenders at the University level. The AIVF is available through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Once an instructor has determined that an academic violation has occurred and that a sanction is appropriate, an AIVF must be submitted prior to application of the sanction. The student may appeal the determination that an academic violation occurred if the AIVF is not filed.

All submitted AIVF forms are kept in the Vice President for Student Affairs Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Utah State University. When a resolution has been reached between the student and instructor, a Resolution Report detailing the action taken and agreement of both parties on that action shall be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. If no Resolution Report

has been filed for a submitted AIVF within the semester, the Campus Judicial Officer will investigate to determine if a solution was reached and why no Resolution Report was filed.

### **Section 3. Discipline Regarding Academic Integrity Violations**

An instructor has full autonomy to evaluate a student's academic performance in a course. If a student commits an academic violation, the instructor may sanction the student. Such sanctions may include: (1) requiring the student to rewrite a paper/assignment or to retake a test/examination; (2) adjusting the student's grade—for either an assignment/test or the course; (3) giving the student a failing grade for the course; or (4) taking actions as appropriate. Additional disciplinary action beyond instructor sanction shall be determined by the Judicial Officer and the University.

The penalty that the University will impose on a student for the first Academic Integrity violation is placement on academic integrity probation after the first offense.

The penalties that the University may impose on a student for multiple or egregious academic integrity violations are:

1. **Probation:** continued participation in an academic program predicated upon the student satisfying certain requirements as specified in a written notice of probation. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary penalties if the student does not comply with the specified requirements or is found to be committing academic integrity violations during the probationary period. The student must request termination of the probation in writing.
2. Performance of community service.
3. **Suspension:** temporary dismissal from an academic program or from the University for a specified time, after which the student is eligible to continue the program or return to the University. Conditions for continuance or readmission may be specified.
4. **Expulsion:** permanent dismissal either from an academic program or from the University.
5. Assigning a designation with a course grade indicating an academic integrity violation involving academic integrity. Conditions for removal may be specified, but the designation remains on the student's transcript for a minimum of one year; provided however, that once the student's degree is posted to the transcript, the designation may not be removed thereafter.
6. Denial or revocation of degrees.

**USU useful links (also posted on CN under 'Pages'):**

**Canvas:**

<https://usu.instructure.com/>

Canvas help: <<http://guides.instructure.com>> You will also see more help options by clicking "help" in the upper right corner of the Canvas homepage. I am not qualified to give tech help for Canvas; if you need help, contact MSU's Office of Information Technology: < <https://it.usu.edu/>>

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**

<https://www.usu.edu/drc/>

**Sexual Harassment/Misconduct Resources**

<http://aaeo.usu.edu/sexual-misconduct/sexual-assault-resources>

**USU Writing Center**

<https://writing.usu.edu/>

**USU Library**

<https://library.usu.edu/>

**Office of Information Technology (IT)**

<https://it.usu.edu/>

**LGBTQA Center**

<https://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa/index>

***Philosophy at USU:*****Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies Department (LPCS)**

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/>

**Philosophy Club and Honors Society**

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/philosophy/clubs-activities>

**Philosophy Major and Minor Requirements**

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/philosophy/WEB%20--%202017%20PHILOSOPHY%20MAJOR%20BA%20BS.pdf>

**Philosophy Scholarships**

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/languages/scholarships/scholarships-and-fellowships>



*Philosophy Research Sources*

**How to write a good philosophy paper:**

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

**Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>

**The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

<http://www.iep.utm.edu>

**Philosophy Bites Podcast**

<http://philosophybites.libsyn.com>

**Philosophy of TED Talks**

<https://www.ted.com/talks?topics%5B%5D=philosophy>

## V. COURSE SCHEDULE

Keep tabs on what's required a few days ahead on the schedule so that you can be prepared for due dates.

**Course Outline\* Subject to Change:**

**WEEK 1 8/27, 8/29 & 8/31 WELCOME! What is Ethics and Environmental Ethics?**

Readings: Paul Pojman, Introduction (pp. 1-3); Katie McShane, "What is Ethics?" (pp. 3-11).

**WEEK 2 9/5 & 9/7 What is Environmental Ethics?**

**9/3 NO CLASS – LABOR DAY**

Readings: Chapter 1 – Introduction, Article 1: Clare Palmer, "Contested Frameworks in Environmental Ethics" (pp. 14-24), Article 2: Thomas E. Hill Jr., "Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments" (pp. 26-35), Article 3: Henry Shue, "Global Environment and International Inequality" (pp. 37-47)

**WEEK 3 9/10, 9/12, & 9/14 Animal Rights**

Readings: Chapter 3 – Animal Rights, Article 7: Immanuel Kant “Rational Beings Alone Have Moral Worth” (pp. 85-87), Article 9: Peter Singer, “A Utilitarian Defense of Animal Liberation” (pp. 96-105), Article 12: Dale James, “Against Zoos” (pp. 121-127)

#### **WEEK 4 9/17, 9/19, & 9/21 Nature and Naturalness**

Readings: Chapter 4 – Nature and Naturalness, Article 13: Holmes Rolston III, “Naturalizing Values: Organisms and Species” (pp. 130 – 142), Article 14: Ned Hettinger, “Comments on Holmes Rolston's "Naturalizing Values"” (pp. 144 – 147)  
*Canvas Quiz 1 is due Saturday, 9/22 at 11.59 pm the latest*

#### **WEEK 5 9/24, 9/26, & 9/28 Individualist Biocentrism**

Readings: Chapter 5 – Individualist Biocentrism, Article 17: Albert Schweitzer, “Reverence for Life” (169 – 176), Article 18: Paul Taylor, “Biocentric Egalitarianism” (pp. 177 – 192), Article 20: Jason Kawall, “Reverence for Life as a Viable Environmental Virtue” (pp. 202-215)

#### **WEEK 6 10/1, 10/3, & 10/5 Holism**

Readings: Chapter 6 – Holism, Article 22: Arne Naess, “Ecosophy T: Deep Versus Shallow Ecology” (pp. 222 – 230), Article 24: Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic” (pp. 237 – 247), Article 28: Lilly-Marlene Russow, “Why Do Species Matter?” (pp. 286 – 293)  
*Canvas Quiz 2 is due Saturday, 10/6 at 11.59 pm the latest*

#### **WEEK 7 10/8, 10/10, 10/12 Environmental Justice**

Readings: Chapter 7 – Environmental Justice, Article 31: Robert Billard, “Overcoming Racism in Environmental Decision Making” (pp. 315 – 328), Article 32: Peter Wenz, “Just Garbage: The Problem of Environmental Racism” (pp. 332 – 340), Article 33: Maria Mies, “Deceiving the Third World: The Myth of Catching-Up Development” (pp. 341 – 349)

#### **WEEK 8 10/15 & 10/17 Environmental Justice and Ecofeminism**

Readings: Chapter 7 – Environmental Justice, Article 35: Linda Robyn, “Indigenous Knowledge and Technology: Creating Environmental Justice in the Twenty-First Century” (pp. 367 – 380), Article 36: Vandana Shiva, “Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation” (pp. 383 – 389), Article 37: Karen Warren, “The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism” (pp. 389 – 402)

*Group 1 presentation: a case of environmental injustice - causes and solutions*

**10/19 NO CLASS – FALL BREAK**

*Canvas Quiz 3 is due Saturday, 10/18 at 11.59 pm the latest*

#### **WEEK 9 10/22, 10/24, & 10/26 Sustainability**

Readings: Chapter 8 – Sustainability, Article 41: William Rees, “Sustainable Development: Economic Myths and Ecological Realities” (pp. 433 – 441), Article 42: Mark Sagoff, “At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, or Why Political Questions Are Not All Economic” (pp. 441 – 450)

### **WEEK 10 10/29, 10/31, 11/2 Sustainability**

Readings: Chapter 8 – Sustainability, Article 43: John Cobb, “Towards a Just and Sustainable Economic Order” (pp. 451 – 462), Article 44: Fred Magdoff & John Bellamy Foster, “What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know about Capitalism” (pp. 464 – 482)

***Group 2 presentation: Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments***

### **WEEK 11 11/5, 11/7, & 11/9 Food Ethics**

Readings: Chapter 9 – Food Ethics, Article 49: Michael Allen Fox, "Vegetarianism and Treading Lightly on the Earth" (pp. 533 – 539), Article 50: Jonathan Rauch, "Can Frankenfood Save the Planet?" (pp. 542 – 548), Article 51: Mae Ho, "The Unholy Alliance" (pp. 549 – 558), Article 55: Eric Schlosser, Marion Nestle, Michael Pollan , Wendell Berry, Troy Duster, Elizabeth Ransom, Winona Laduke, Peter Singer, Vandana Shiva, Carlo Petrini, Eliot Coleman, and Jim Hightower, "One Thing to Do about Food" (pp. 595 – 603)

***Group 3 presentation: food ethics***

***Canvas Quiz 4 is due Saturday, 11/10 at 11.59 pm the latest***

### **WEEK 12 11/12, 11/14, 11/16 (movie week) Climate Change**

Readings: Chapter 10 – Climate Change, Article 56: Naomi Oreskes, “The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change: How Do We Know We're Not Wrong?” (pp. 608 – 622), Article 57: Livestock's Role in Climate Change and Air Pollution: UN Report: Climate Change and Livestock (pp. 628 – 646), Article 60: Stephen Gardener, “Ethics and Global Climate Change” (pp. 674 – 687)

### **WEEK 13 Film and Readings Discussion**

**11/19** Readings: same as due last week

**11/21-23 NO CLASSES – THANKSGIVING**

### **WEEK 14 11/26, 11/28, & 11/30 Climate Change Solutions**

Readings: Chapter 10 – Climate Change, Article 61: David Keith, “Engineering The Planet” (pp. 690 – 695), Article 62: Christopher Preston, “Re-Thinking the Unthinkable: Environmental Ethics and the Presumptive Argument Against Geoengineering” (pp. 697 – 709)

*Group presentation 4: an ethical problem of climate change*

**WEEK 15 12/3, 12/5, & 12/7 Pollution**

Readings: Chapter 12 – pollution, Article 69: Hilary French, "You Are What You Breathe" (pp. 781 – 788), Article 70: David Watson, "We All Live in Bhopal" (pp. 789 – 793),

*Group presentation 5: pollution*

*Canvas Quiz 5 is due Saturday, 12/8 at 11.59 pm the latest*

**FINAL PAPER DUE DATE TBA**

*Good luck!*