Environmental Ethics

Course prefix: PHIL

Course number: 4176

Section: AM

CRN (you may add up to five):
89667

Instructor First Name: Abigail

Instructor Last Name: Mills

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

Conceptual and normative foundations of environmental attitudes and values. Impacts of traditional and modern beliefs that shape human attitudes toward nature on creating a more compatible relationship between humans and their environment. Credit not allowed for both PHIL 4176 and PST 4176.

Course learning outcomes:

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the literature, thinkers, concepts and schools of thought that are useful for approaching environmental questions.
2. Identify the competing interests and stakeholders affected by environmental decisions.
3. Express their personal values and approach to ethical challenges, and confidently make informed environmental decisions.
4. Participate in public debates and controversies regarding the environment (such as making informed decisions in voting, participating in public forums, or making personal lifestyle choices).

Required course materials:

All readings will be available through Canvas. No textbooks or other course materials need to be purchased.

Grading policy:

The final grade is based on four components:

- Case Studies 35%
    - One case study is assigned for each of five course units. These involve an in-class group discussion and an out-of-class written report.
- Consensus Conference 25%
    - The consensus conference will take place during the final three class periods. Students will organize and act out a conference on a topic of their choosing. This involves in-class participation over several days, out-of-class preparation, and an out-of-class written report.
- Exam 1 20%
    - An in-class, handwritten exam.
- Exam 2 20%
    - An in-class, handwritten exam.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following scheme:

- A >90% Excellent
- B 80-89% Above Average
- C 70-79% Average
- D 60-69% Below Average
- F <59% Unacceptable

Attendance policy:

Attendance is not an independent factor of your grade, but it is necessary to do well in the course. Every component of your grade is either fully in-person (the exams) or partially in-person (case studies and consensus conference). This means that you will lose points if you are not in class on the days we work on those assignments. The points for in-class activities cannot be made up in case of absence, except for a few instances (pre-arranged religious obligations, exam conflicts, or illnesses/emergencies **documented through the Office of Student Life**).

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts in English or other languages, or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence