

PHIL 446: Current Issues in Political Philosophy

2:35-3:55 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays, Leacock 210

Topic for Winter 2012: Political Ecology

Instructor

Greg Mikkelson

Office hours: 12:00-2:00 PM Wednesdays

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Course description

In this course, we will compare the actual and possible effects of capitalism vs. democracy on the more-than-human biosphere. Can a capitalistic economy develop a mutualistic relationship with the rest of nature? Could a more democratic system do so? In order to answer these questions, as well as a host of related ones, we will read:

1. A paradigmatic text by the founder of ecological economics, who has asserted that the needed "steady-state" economy is compatible with capitalism;
2. A critique of the for-profit corporation, which is the dominant institution of capitalism; and
3. An argument for an alternative to capitalism called "economic democracy", which would replace corporations with worker cooperatives, and private with public investment.

Requirements

Class participation: 10% of grade

Attendance is crucial, but do not come to class if you have not done the reading ahead of time. Please focus your comments and questions on the text for the day.

Very short paper, with oral defense: 20%

500-750 words in the main text

Due, via e-mail to the instructor, eight days before said defense

Final paper: 30%

2,000-3,000 words in the main text

Due the last day of class

Oral exam: 40%

Arranged at students' convenience any time between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, and between Monday and Friday, during exam period

Last day of class: Everyone gets the same list of 10-15 questions, to prepare answers to ahead of time.

Day of exam: Each student gets their assignment of two questions from the above list, then 30 minutes for final preparation of answers to these two questions, and then 30 minutes to answer those and follow-up questions.

Readings

Required books available at The Word, 469 Milton

Daly, H. E. and J. Farley. 2011 (second edition). Ecological Economics: Principles and Applications. Island. Washington, DC.

Glasbeek, H. 2002. Wealth by Stealth: Corporate Crime, Corporate Law, and the Perversion of Democracy. Between the Lines. Toronto, ON.

Schweickart, D. 2011 (second edition). After Capitalism. Rowman and Littlefield. Lanham, MD.

Other reading(s) available through WebCT

Schedule

Week 1

Tuesday January 10th: Introduction

Thursday January 12th

Readings:

Peacock, "Symbiosis"

Week 2

Tuesday January 17th

Reading: Daly and Farley, Introduction and Part 1 (Chapters 1-3)

Thursday January 19th

Reading: Glasbeek, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2

Week 3

Tuesday January 24th

Reading: Daly and Farley, Chapters 4 and 5

Thursday January 26th

Reading: Glasbeek, Chapters 3-6

Week 4

Tuesday January 31st

Reading: Daly and Farley, Chapters 6 and 7

Thursday February 2nd

Reading: Glasbeek, Chapters 7 and 8

Week 5

Tuesday February 7th

Reading: Daly and Farley, Chapters 8-10

Thursday February 9th

Reading: Glasbeek, Chapter 9

Week 6

Tuesday February 14th

Reading: Daly and Farley, Chapters 11-13

Thursday February 16th

Reading: Glasbeek, Chapter 10

Week 7

Tuesday February 28th

Reading: Daly and Farley, pp. 261-311

Thursday March 1st

Reading: Glasbeek, Chapters 11 and 12

Week 8

Tuesday March 6th

Reading: Daly and Farley, pp. 311-351

Thursday March 8th

Reading: Glasbeek, Chapters 13 and 14

Week 9

Tuesday March 13th

Reading: Daly and Farley, Chapters 18 and 19

Thursday March 15th

Reading: Schweickart, prefaces and Chapter 1

Week 10

Tuesday March 20th

Reading: Daly and Farley, Chapters 20 and 21

Thursday March 22nd

Reading: Schweickart, Chapters 2 and 3

Week 11

Tuesday March 27th

Reading: Daly and Farley, Chapters 22 and 23

Thursday March 29th

Reading: Schweickart, pp. 85-151

Week 12

Tuesday April 6th

Reading: Daly and Farley, Chapter 24 and "Looking Ahead"

Thursday April 8th

Reading: Schweickart, pp. 151-206

Week 13

Tuesday April 10th

Reading: Margil, "A New Democracy in Action"

Thursday April 12th: Conclusion

Final paper due at beginning of class

Etc.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest) for more information).

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change