PHIL 349: Environmental Philosophy

Time and place
8:30-10:00 Tuesday and Thursday, Arts W-20

Instructor
Greg Mikkelsen
Leacock 913, 514-398-8630
Office hour: 10:15-11:15 Tuesday

Course description
Ecological problems ramify daily, posing daunting questions about what to do and why. Adequate answers to such questions demand not only scientific knowledge, but also wisdom about humanity's place in nature. This course will help students cultivate such wisdom, through an introduction to environmental ethics, as well as related topics in environmental science and political ecology.

Required readings
Available at The Word bookstore, 469 Milton Street

Available on reserve at the library

Available through MyCourses
All other readings
Course requirements

Animal report: 5% of grade
Brief the class on one extinct animal featured in Fuller's *Lost Animals*, and one wild animal extant in Québec (see [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)).

Class participation: 10%
Do all the readings before class, and come prepared to discuss them.

Quiz: 15%
In class Thursday January 19th

Debate: 15%
Many class sessions feature a debate between two students, for and against the position taken in one of the readings for that day. Each debater presents her case in 10 minutes, and rebuts the case made by her opponent in five minutes. The grade for this assignment is for the debate as a whole – in other words, both debaters get the same grade, no matter who wins.

Essay: 25%
This paper conveys the argument you plan to make in your debate.
Failure to follow any of the essay instructions below is grounds for a failing essay grade.
1,000-1,500 words of text (excluding title page, tables, figures, bibliography, etc.), double-spaced: Must include word count.
1. Right after signing up for a debate (Tuesday January 10th), set up an appointment for a tutorial session at the McGill Writing Centre, so that the tutorial takes place around two weeks before said debate (see [www.mcgill.ca/mwc/tutorial-service/appointments](http://www.mcgill.ca/mwc/tutorial-service/appointments)).
2. Write your paper, receive feedback on it at the tutorial, and get a signed note from the tutor confirming that you attended the session.
3. Re-write the essay in light of the advice you get from the tutor, and bring a hard copy of the revised paper, along with the tutor's note, to my office hours the week before your debate. (If you cannot make those hours, we can arrange to meet elsewhere.)
4. Re-write again the paper in light of my comments, and submit it to me via e-mail the day of the debate.

Final examination: 30%
Schedule
Introduction
Thursday January 5th: What it's all about

Part 1: Environmental science
Tuesday January 10th: WWF; Living Planet Report 2016 Pp. 18-44, 74-83
Thursday January 12th: Broome, Climate Matters Pp. 16-36
Tuesday January 17th:
Meadows et al., The Limits to Growth Pp. 25-44
York, "Ecological Paradoxes"
Knight et al., "Could working less reduce pressures on the environment?"
Thursday January 19th: Quiz

Part 2: Environmental ethics

Animals
Tuesday January 24th: Singer; Practical Ethics Pp. vii-xiii, 1-15, 48-70
Thursday January 26th: Singer Pp. 94-122
Tuesday January 31st: Singer Pp. 216-275
Thursday February 2nd: Miller, "Do Animals Have Interests Worthy of Our Moral Interest?"

Organisms
Tuesday February 7th:
Miller, "Is Health an Anthropocentric Value?"
Kallhoff, "Plants in Ethics"

Ecosystems
Thursday February 9th: Leopold; A Sand County Almanac Pp. vii-ix, 3-40
Tuesday February 14th: Leopold Pp. 41-94
Thursday February 16th: Miller, "Value as Richness"
Tuesday February 21st: Leopold Pp. 95-153
Thursday February 23rd: Miller, "Axiology"
Tuesday March 7th: Leopold Pp. 154-187
Thursday March 9th: Kelly, A Theory of the Good Pp. 66-107
Tuesday March 14th: Leopold Pp. 188-226
Thursday March 16th:
Cafaro, "Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson"
Norlock, "Building Receptivity"

Part 3: Political Ecology
Tuesday March 21st: Schweickart, After Capitalism Pp. xiii-xxix
Thursday March 23rd: Schweickart Pp. 1-57
Tuesday March 28th: Schweickart Pp. 58-124
Thursday March 30th: Schweickart Pp. 125-133
Tuesday April 4th: Schweickart Pp. 134-164
Thursday April 6th: Schweickart Pp. 165-206

Conclusion
Tuesday April 11th: Review for final exam
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).