



Philosophy & the Environment

Professor Craig Callender

TuTh 11-12:20

SEQUOIA 147

SYLLABUS

Contact

Professor: Craig Callender 8077 HSS, 858-822-4911, ccallender@ucsd.edu
Office hours: Thurs 2-3pm and by appointment
TA: Travis Chamberlain imadynamic@gmail.com

Topic and Goals

This course explores contemporary environmental issues from the perspective of philosophy, primarily applied ethics, political philosophy, and philosophy of science. This quarter we'll cover some of the following topics:

- Ethics, Food and Animals
- Wilderness, Ecology and Ethics: What is Natural?
- The Land Ethic
- Biodiversity, Assisted Migration and Rewilding
- Climate Ethics, Economics and the Future
- Property, Pollution and Justice

In each section, we'll mix theoretical problems in philosophy with practical problems facing conservation today.



The main goal of the course is that students come to appreciate and understand the way that ethical values and arguments underlie many of today's debates about the environment. These arguments will have relevance to many decisions you'll make in life, ranging from small personal ones (e.g., what car should I buy? what should I eat?) to your views on major public policy choices (e.g., climate change). By the quarter's end, successful students will be able to identify the values at stake in environmental decisions and see the strengths and weakness of various positions. Along the way, they will also improve certain skills, such as the ability to critically read and appraise an academic essay, the ability to write such an essay, the ability to create and complete an independent project, and more.

PHILOSOPHY 26

Reading

No books needed! All reading will be available via Tritoned. If you wish to purchase something, my recommendations are the two classics, John McPhee's *Encounters with the Archdruid*, and Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*, each of which can be purchased online for under \$10.

Participation

Every single lecture will contain material not found in the reading. Anything short of regular attendance will severely damage your grade. Attendance will be taken. Your participation grade, however, is more than your attendance; thoughtful contributions to class will increase your grade.

Assessment

1. 300-word Reactions — 25%
2. Environmental Challenge Project — 15%
3. The Knoll Project — 15%
4. Midterm Examination — 20%
5. Final Exam — 20%
6. Class Participation — 5%



Late Work

Assignments handed in after the due date and without permission will be docked five percent the first day of the missed deadline. The penalty will then grow at a rate of five percent per day. After ten days no assignment will be accepted except in exceptional circumstances and in consultation with your instructor. Assignments that are handed in late and without extension will be returned after those completed on time and will not receive comments.

Plagiarism

In your assignments, all sources, including discussions with classmates, must be appropriately acknowledged. All answers given must be in your own wording. Closely paraphrasing or simply copying the work of others (such as authors of books or articles, or classmates, or Wikipedia) is not allowed. Plagiarism, the stealing of an idea or actual text, and other forms of academic dishonesty will be immediately reported to the Academic Integrity Office. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers, quizzes and homework may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to

Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site. Students who wish to take a make- up exam or hand in material late must inform me (by phone or email) well ahead of time. In order to qualify for a make-up exam, appropriate evidence of the most severe circumstances must be produced by the student. I will determine, in consultation with the student, what qualifies.

Accommodation for Disability

Students requesting accommodations must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to me and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged. The OSD can be contacted via 858.534.4382 (phone), osd@ucsd.edu (email), disabilities.ucsd.edu (web).

Electronics

Except when explicitly allowed, use of electronics (laptops, phones, tablets, etc) in the classroom is *prohibited*.

Tentative Schedule

The reading should be done before the relevant class. The official reading schedule is determined in class. “Extra” denotes supplemental reading that is either helpful backup or a step further on a topic. Often some of this material makes it into lecture.

Ethics, Food and Animals. What should you eat? Is it moral to produce and eat the way we do? You will be introduced to some basic ethical concepts and the main rival theories, e.g., utilitarian and deontological theories. To spice things up, we’ll apply these theories to questions about what we should eat and the moral status of non-human animals. April 3, 5, 10

- Wallace, “Consider the Lobster” (4-3)
 - Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs and People” (4-5)
 - Pollan, “Power Steer and When a Crop Becomes King” (4-10)
 - Jacquet, “Silent Water” (4-10)
 - Extra: Gruen, chapters 1-3
 - Extra: Greenberg, Why Are We Importing Our Own Fish? and TED talk
-

Wilderness and the Land Ethic. Aldo Leopold wrote what many consider to be the finest work in environmental ethics and conservation, *Sand County Almanac*. His thoughts on conservation, ethics, ecology and evolution, expressed in an understated yet beautiful prose, motivate many conservation biologists today. We'll find out why and examine his thought. We'll also examine the idea of wilderness. The Wilderness Act of 1964 enshrines our nation's desire to preserve wilderness areas. What is a wilderness? How did this idea arise? Does it make sense? Should we seek to preserve or conserve wilderness, and why? April 12, 17

- McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid*, selection (4-12)
- Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*, selection (4-17)
- Desjardins, "The Land Ethic" chapter (4-17)
- Extra: Price, "Hats Off to Audubon"
- Extra: Nichols, *Paradise Found*, selection

April 19 Pre-Earth Day Special Events

- Special Event: "Can We, Should We, and Will We Bring Back Mammoths?" Dr Beth Shapiro, 5-7pm, April 19, Atkinson Pavilion, Faculty Club. Free registration at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/addressing-the-practical-ethics-of-todays-innovation-tickets-42914275754>
- Special Class Trip. Meet at Scripps Knoll. Discussion led by Dr Heather Henter, Ecologist and Academic Coordinator of UCSD's Natural Reserve System
- Free food at both events

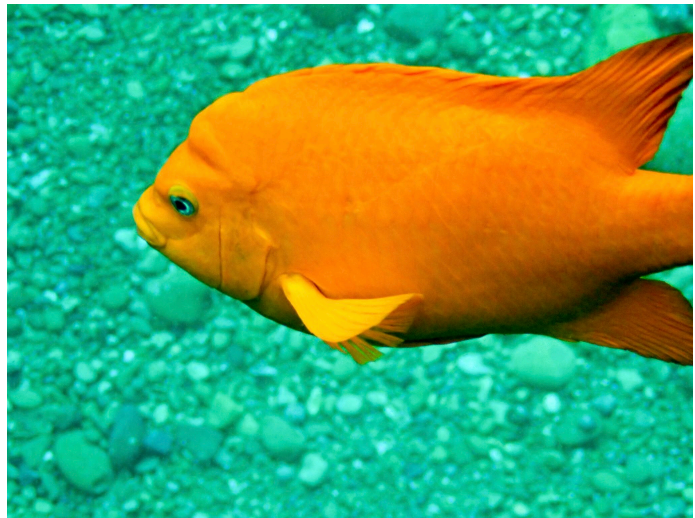


Biodiversity. Conservation sciences have biodiversity as their goal. What is it and why is it valuable? Is it a normative or descriptive concept (or both)? April 24, 26, May 1

- April 24: Special Guest: Dr Douglass Krausse (NOAA Fisheries) on conservation and the vaquita
 - Sober, "Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism" 4-26
 - Newman, Varner and Linquist, "The Precautionary Principle" (5-1)
 - Extra: Odenbaugh, "Conservation Biology"
-

Conservation and the Anthropocene. Once we acknowledge that human beings have affected more or less everything on the planet, how “hands on” should conservation be? Using the latest techniques in genetic engineering, it may soon be possible to create close cousins of extinct animals. Projects are already underway aiming for the return of the passenger pigeon, steppe bison and woolly mammoth. Should we “rewild” the world, assist migration, resurrect extinct species, introduce exotics, and build novel ecosystems? Or does this turn the world into a “zoo” —and if so, what’s wrong with that? May 3, May 8, 10

- May 3: *Cane Toads: An Unnatural History* (the greatest film of all time —CC)
- Moriarty & Woods, “Strangers in Strange Lands”, selection (5-3)
- Donlan, “Restoring America’s Big, Wild Animals”
- Sandler, “The Ethics of Reviving Long Extinct Species”
- Soule, “The ‘New Conservationists’”
- Marris and Aplet, “How to Mend the Conservation Divide”
- Krichner, “Nothing Endures But Change”
- Extra: Dowie, *Conservation Refugees*
- Extra: Eisenberg, *The Wolf’s Tooth*
- Extra: Marris, *The Rambunctious Garden*
- Extra: Watch: Jackson, [*Brave New Ocean*](#)



Midterm! May 15. Please bring a blue book.

Climate, Ethics and the Future. Do we have duties to future generations? If so, what are they? What would intergenerational justice look like? Should we “discount” future interests in our evaluations of costs and benefits? Is environmental economics value-laden? How does justice demand we pay for climate change amelioration? We’ll ask all of these questions and more in the context of climate change. May 17, 22, 24

- Hausman and McPherson, “Beware of Economists Bearing Advice”
 - Cowen and Parfit, “Against the Social Discount Rate”
 - Chaney, “Cosmopolitan Justice, Responsibility, and Global Climate Change
 - Singer, “One Atmosphere”
 - Extra: Matthews et al, National Contributions to Observed warming
 - Extra: The Non-Identity Problem
-

-
- Extra: NYT, "A Battle Over the Costs of Global Warming"
 - Chaney, "Climate Change and the Future: Discounting for Time, Wealth and Risk"

Property, Pollution and Justice. Rachel Carson's Silent Spring awakened the country to the dangers of chemical pollution. Pollution raises interesting questions for our understanding of property rights, and (some? most?) environmental battles become clashes between property rights and environmental public goods. What are property rights? What do they allow you to do? Can you morally pollute your own property? When is compensation owed? Are pollution risks distributed fairly? May 29, 31, June 5

- Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons"
- Sagoff, "Takings, Just Compensation, and the Environment"
- Railton, "Locke, Stock, and Peril: Natural Property Rights, Pollution, and Risk"
- TBD on justice
- Extra: Ross and Amter, "The Sorcerer's Apprentices" The Polluters
- Extra: Pauly, Beyond Duplicity and Ignorance in Global Fisheries.
- Extra: Levy, "Catch Shares Management"

June 7 — Project Wrap-up, Final Review

