

PHIL/ENEC368 Environmental Ethics

Fall 2019 | MWF 9:05-9:55am in Peabody 306

Instructor: Minji Jang (*she/they*: I personally use *she/her* pronouns, but feel free to use *they/them* to address me!)

Email: jangmj@live.unc.edu

Office: Caldwell 206A

Office Hour: MW 10:00-11:00am, and by appointment

Content Warning

Some of the topics and materials discussed in this course might be difficult for students from a variety of backgrounds. (These topics include: depiction and discussion of violence, torturing, and killing; discussion of body shaming; examples of strong abusive language, and more.) Detailed content flagging and warning will be given prior to relevant units/readings. If you have any concerns about any elements of the course, or if there is any way that we can together make things easier to bear, please contact me by email or in person.

Textbook

The required textbook for this class is *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works*, Third Edition (ISBN: 9780190259228). All other readings and videos will be available on Sakai. If you, for any reason, have difficulty obtaining the required textbook, please let me know.

1. Course Description

In this course, we will explore some of the central questions in environmental ethics. There are seven units.

Unit 1: Introduction to Moral Theories. We will start by learning (and for some of you, recapping) key theories and concepts in metaethics and normative ethics.

Unit 2: Broadening the Circle of Concern: What We Owe to Non-human Animals. We will discuss topics in animal ethics. What do we owe to non-human animals, and what grounds our obligations? What is the moral status of animals? What, if anything, is wrong about eating meat?

Unit 3: The Value of Nature. Does nature or the environment have value beyond being a useful resource to human beings? Do we have obligations to preserve/restore such value? How can anthropocentrism, bio/ecocentrism, and virtue ethics help us answer this question?

Unit 4: What We Owe to Fellow Human Beings. This unit raises the following questions. What do we owe to fellow human beings? How should we weigh our concerns about human beings against our concerns about nature? How can we address the issues of environmental justice?

Unit 5: Global Climate Change and Moral Responsibility. We will examine the problem of global climate change and the scope/ground of individual moral obligations.

Unit 6: Making Connections: Political Environmental Ethics. We will explore how the topics in environmental ethics are connected with other political movements, such as eco-feminism, disability liberation, and queer politics.

Unit 7: Comparative Environmental Ethics. In our final unit, we will discuss how Asian traditions of thought provide insights and resources for addressing challenges in environmental ethics.

2. Learning Objectives

This course has three learning objectives.

- You will be introduced to key topics, concepts, and theories in contemporary environmental ethics. You will approach these topics from different traditions of thought and examine their connections to issues of social justice.
- You will practice key philosophical skills, including: identifying and critically evaluating different perspectives on a complicated issue, forming your own views based on such evaluation, and clearly communicating your views in writing and in speech with interlocutors who may have different or opposing opinions while engaging in respectful dialogue.
- You will reflect on how the topics that we've discussed in class relate to issues outside of the classroom and form your own views on those issues.

3. Commitment to Respect and Diversity

Together as a class, we are fully committed to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for everyone involved, irrespective of their ability, age, economic status, ethnicity, first language, gender expression and identity, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexuality. Personal offenses or discriminatory remarks toward others on any of these bases will not be tolerated in class under any circumstances.

Climate Surveys. During the semester, we will have *anonymous climate surveys* to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and respected during class discussions and lectures. If you have any concerns about the learning environment at any time during the semester, please let me know immediately.

4. Course Requirements and Expectations

The requirements for this course are as follows.

Due Date	Requirement	Percentage
Throughout semester	Attendance/Participation	10%
Daily	Reading Reactions	20%
Oct 6 (Sun)	Abstract for Paper I	5%
Oct 18 (Fri)	Paper I (5-6 pages)	20%
November 17 (Sun)	Abstract for Paper II	5%
Nov 25 (Mon)	Paper II (5-6 pages)	20%
Dec 7 (Sat)	Final Exam	20%

I am required to assign you at least 10 pages of written work, not including in-class examinations. Your papers assignments will suffice to meet this requirement.

Attendance & Participation (10%)

You will meet this requirement in part by attending class regularly. But you will also need to regularly participate in discussions and in-class activities to get full points. There will be *alternative* ways of earning participation points; we will discuss a specific guideline for these alternative assignments in class.

Cold-calling. In class, I will occasionally “cold-call” you to share your thoughts. You can always feel free to “skip” a particular question or “opt-out” of being cold-called at any point during the semester for a particular class, a unit, or the entire semester.

Mid-semester estimate. In the mid-semester, I will release an *estimate* of your participation grade—this does not count toward your overall grade and only serves to give you a sense of how you’ve been doing so far. If what you see is not the grade you expected or wanted, come talk to me and we will discuss the ways to boost your grade!

Reading Reactions (20%)

Prior to each class meeting where there’s a new required reading, you’ll write a brief reaction (1-2 paragraphs) to the reading. On some days, I’ll give you a question about the reading for you to answer in your reaction. On other days, I’ll ask you to submit your own reaction that (1) briefly summarizes one of the main ideas, claims, or arguments in the reading, and (2) presents a question or a comment about this idea, claim, or argument.

How to submit: Include your reaction in the body of an email, not as an attachment, and send it to envethics19@gmail.com, with the subject line Last Name Date (e.g. Jang 8/23), by **8:00am** on the day of class.

There will be 24 reading reactions in total, which I’ll grade *pass/fail*. I’ll drop your lowest 4, and the remaining 20 will count toward your grade. You’ll pass the reading reaction, if it clearly shows that

you've carefully done the reading and made a serious attempt to engage with it. You'll fail the reading reaction, if it doesn't clearly show this attempt.

Note. You'll be permitted to make up for the missed reading reactions, only in the case of a genuinely unforeseen medical or personal emergency, and only when the emergency can be verified by the Dean of Students Office (<https://odos.unc.edu/>).

Paper I and II (25% each)

You'll write two 5-6 page papers. For the first paper, you'll have to choose from a list of prompts. For the second paper, I'll give you a list of prompts, but you may also choose your own prompt subject to my approval. A detailed guideline will be posted on Sakai.

For each of these papers, you will complete the following three steps:

- **Step 1: Initial meeting to discuss ideas.** I will meet with you individually to discuss your ideas for a potential topic for your paper. Please come to the meeting having carefully thought about what you want to write about. This initial meeting is a required step, but you are of course welcome to meet with me again later in the process.
- **Step 2: Abstract submission (5%).** You will write an abstract of your paper (200-250 words), explaining the issue(s) you plan to discuss and what you (tentatively) plan to argue. This abstract will be worth 5% of your overall grade. 10 points will be deducted from your abstract if you did not have an initial meeting with me to discuss ideas.
- **Step 3: Draft submission (20%).** You will submit a final draft of your paper. This final draft will be worth 20% of your overall grade.

Final Exam (20%)

The exam will require you to answer both short-answer and essay questions from Unit 1 through 7. All short answer questions will come from a study guide released before the exam; all essay questions will be released on the review session scheduled on the last day of classes. A detailed guideline on how to prepare for and take this exam will be posted on Sakai.

5. Grading and Other Class Policies

Each assignment will be marked out of the number of percentage points that it contributes to your overall grade. This will give you a total score of 100, which I'll convert to your final letter grade as follows:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
94	90	87	84	80	77	74	70	67	60	0-59

As well as giving you points, I'll give you a corresponding letter grade for the papers. We'll look at grading criteria closer to the due dates, but here's a rough description of what these letter grades signify¹:

A: “*Mastery* of course content at the *highest level* of attainment that can reasonably be expected of students at a given stage of development.”

B: “*Strong* performance demonstrating a *high level* of attainment for a student at a given stage of development.”

C: “A *totally acceptable* performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development.”

D: “A *marginal* performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment [at a given stage of development].”

F: “For whatever reason, an *unacceptable* performance [at a given stage of development].”

Pluses and minuses will be given to papers that fall in between these descriptions.

Anonymous Grading

I will grade the papers and the final exam *anonymously*. This means that you shouldn't put any identifying information on them, other than your PID number. Make sure to include your PID number *both* in the body of your paper *and* in the file name.

Page Limit Policy

Paper I and Paper II (but not abstracts!) are subject to strict page limits. To standardize length, all submissions should be: 12pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. If you have a nonstandard formatting, I will convert it to standard formatting to check for length. *I will dock a third of a letter grade for each half of a page you are over or under the required page range:* 5-6 pages for both Paper I and Paper II (excluding the reference list).

Due Dates and Late Policy

Each paper is due at **11:59pm** sharp on the dates indicated below.

Late Days. You are given “three late days” that you can freely use on any of the paper assignments (not applicable to reading responses or the final exam). You can use all three days on a single assignment, or spread them out on several assignments. (For instance, you may turn in Paper I three days late, or turn in Paper I an hour late and Paper II two days late without getting a late penalty. Turning in an assignment an hour late will use up a whole late day.)

You don't have to tell me in advance, and I won't ask any questions! If you submit the paper late, I will simply deduct the day(s) from the remaining late days you have. *Once you have used up the late days,*

¹ These descriptions are from UNC's official “Explanation of Grading System” (<https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system/>).

late papers will be docked a full letter grade (10%) for each calendar day (or part of a day) that they are late. (For instance, a paper due on a Friday that is turned in on Saturday by 11:59pm will be docked a full letter grade.) So, use the late days wisely!

You may earn an additional extension beyond the three late days given, if you make a reasonable request for an extension *at least 72 hours in advance* of the paper due date.

Electronics

Electronics—laptops and tablets, but no phones—are allowed in class for accessing the electronic copies of the readings and note-taking. Please note that I reserve the right to rescind this permission if they become of a distraction. Whether you bring a laptop to class or not, you should bring paper and something to write with in order to complete in-class exercises and activities.

Recording. No recording devices are permitted for the classroom use. Exceptions can be made with a request from the Accessibility Resources & Services Office.

Plagiarism and the Honor Code

You are expected to abide by UNC’s Honor Code, and refrain from any kind of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism. At UNC, plagiarism is defined as “deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” This includes *unintentionally* stealing another person’s work or failing to give credit to someone else’s idea *by accident*.

Just as you are bound by the Honor Code not to plagiarize, I am bound by it to report suspected cases of academic dishonesty of any kind to the Honor Court. If you are ever in any doubt as to whether something constitutes plagiarism, check with me first!

6. Resources

Accommodations

If you need special accommodations for class assignments, please register with the Accessibility Resources & Service Office (<https://ars.unc.edu/>). Once I receive an official request from the ARS Office, I’d be happy to make the arrangements!

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS (<https://caps.unc.edu/>) is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, both for short-term and long-term needs.

Writing Center

To ensure the anonymous grading, I will not read the paper drafts. But you can always set up an appointment with one of the coaches at the UNC Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/>) to improve your paper at any stages of writing—from brainstorming to polishing a full draft.

7. Reading Schedule (subject to change)

*indicates a reading posted on Sakai

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Aug 23 (Fri) Week 1	Course Overview	<i>None</i>
Unit 1: Introduction to Moral Theories		
Aug 26 (Mon) Week 2	Metaethics	*Dale Jamieson, “Metaethics” in <i>Ethics and Environment</i>
Aug 28 (Wed) Week 2	Normative ethics	*Dale Jamieson, “Normative Ethics” in <i>Ethics and Environment</i>
Aug 30 (Fri) Week 2	Discussion	<i>None</i>
Sep 2 (Mon) Week 3	<i>Labor Day – no class!</i>	<i>None</i>
Unit 2: Broadening the Circle of Concern: What We Owe to Non-human Animals		
Sep 4 (Wed) Week 3	The Equal Consideration of Interests	Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal” (<i>EE</i> , p.118-128) *(Optional) Julia Driver, “Classic Utilitarianism” and “Contemporary Consequentialism” in <i>Ethics: The Fundamentals</i>
Sep 6 (Fri) Week 3	The Rights of Animals	Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights” (<i>EE</i> , p.128-134) *(Optional) Julia Driver, “Kantian Ethics” in <i>Ethics: The Fundamentals</i>
Sep 9 (Mon) Week 4	Discussion	<i>None</i>
Sep 11 (Wed) Week 4	The Ethics of Eating Animals	Cora Diamond, “Eating Meat and Eating People” (<i>EE</i> , p.450-456)
Sep 13 (Fri) Week 4	The Ethics of Eating Animals, cont’d	*Alastair Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, And People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases”
Sep 16 (Mon) Week 5	Discussion	<i>None</i>
Unit 3: The Value of Nature		
Sep 18 (Wed) Week 5	Anthropocentrism	John Muir, “The Hetch Hetchy Valley” (<i>EE</i> , p.30-32) David Pitcher and Jennifer Welchman, “Can an Environmental Paradise be Regained?” (<i>EE</i> , p.221-228)

		Gifford Pinchot, "Principles of Conservation" (<i>EE</i> , p.28-30)
Sep 20 (Fri) Week 5	Biocentrism/Ecocentrism	*Kenneth Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable"
Sep 23 (Mon) Week 6	Land Ethic	Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic" (<i>EE</i> , p.33-38)
Sep 25 (Wed) Week 6	Discussion	<i>None</i>
Sep 27 (Fri) Week 6	Deep Ecology	Bill Devall and George Sessions, "Deep Ecology" (<i>EE</i> , p.249-253)
Sep 30 (Mon) Week 7	Nature and Human Virtue	Thomas E. Hill, Jr. "Ideals of Human Excellence..." (<i>EE</i> , p.91-101) Thomas E. Hill, Jr. "Finding Value in Nature" (<i>EE</i> , p.108-113)
Oct 2 (Wed) Week 7	Discussion	<i>None</i>
Oct 4 (Fri) Week 7	<i>Paper Writing Workshop I</i>	<i>None</i> Abstract for Paper I due at 11:59pm (Sunday)
Unit 4: What We Owe to Fellow Human Beings		
Oct 7 (Mon) Week 8	Globalization and Moral Obligation	Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" (<i>EE</i> , p.67-74)
Oct 9 (Wed) Week 8	Conflicting Priorities	Garrett Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat" (<i>EE</i> , p.74-81) Holmes Rolston III, "Feeding People versus Saving Nature" (<i>EE</i> , p.87-90)
Oct 11 (Fri) Week 8	Discussion	<i>None</i>
Oct 14 (Mon) Week 9	Environmental Justice	Kristin Shrader-Frechette, "Environmental Justice" (<i>EE</i> , p.420-432)
Oct 16 (Wed) Week 9	Environmental Justice, cont'd	*Tom Goldtooth, "Stolen Resources: Continuing Threats to Indigenous People's Sovereignty and Survival"
Oct 18 (Fri) Week 9	<i>Fall break – no class!</i>	<i>Paper I due at 11:59pm</i>
Unit 5: Global Climate Change and Moral Responsibility		
Oct 21 (Mon) Week 10	Global Climate Change	Dale Jamieson, "Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming" (<i>EE</i> , p.542-551) John Broome, "The Most Important Thing About Climate Change" (<i>EE</i> , p.559-560)
Oct 23 (Wed) Week 10	Intergenerational Justice	*Richard Howarth, "Intergenerational Justice"
Oct 25 (Fri) Week 10	Discussion	<i>None</i>

Oct 28 (Mon) Week 11	Personal Responsibility	*Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, "It's Not <i>My</i> Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations"
Oct 30 (Wed) Week 11	Environmental Activism	Kate Rawles, "The Missing Shade of Green" (<i>EE</i> , p.626-636)
Nov 1 (Fri) Week 11	Discussion	<i>None</i>
Unit 6: Making Connections: Political Environmental Ethics		
Nov 4 (Mon) Week 12	Disability and Animal Justice	*Sunaura Taylor, "All Animals Are Equal (But Some Are More Equal Than Others)" in <i>Beasts of Burden: Animals and Disability Liberation</i>
Nov 6 (Wed) Week 12	Ecofeminism	Kristen Hessler and Elizabeth Willot, "Feminism and Ecofeminism" (<i>EE</i> , p.344-346) Karen Warren, "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism" (<i>EE</i> , p.346-359)
Nov 8 (Fri) Week 12	<i>Paper Writing Workshop II</i>	<i>None</i>
Nov 11 (Mon) Week 13	Feminism and Vegetarianism	*Carol Adams, excerpts from <i>The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory</i>
Nov 13 (Wed) Week 13	Queer Animacy	*Mel Chen, "Queer Animality" in <i>Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Effect</i>
Nov 15 (Fri) Week 13	Discussion	<i>None</i> <i>Abstract for Paper II due at 11:59pm (Sunday)</i>
Unit 7: Comparative Environmental Ethics		
Nov 18 (Mon) Week 14	Indian Traditions	*Bart Gruzalski, "Gandhi's Contributions to Environmental Thought and Action"
Nov 20 (Wed) Week 14	Chinese Traditions	*Karyn Lai, "Conceptual Foundations for Environmental Ethics: A Daoist Perspective"
Nov 22 (Fri) Week 14	Japanese Traditions	*Deane Curtin, "Dōgen, Deep Ecology, and the Ecological Self"
Nov 25 (Mon) Week 15	Discussion	<i>None</i> <i>Paper II due at 11:59pm</i>
Nov 27 - 29 Week 15	<i>Thanksgiving break – no class!</i>	<i>None</i>
Exam Preparation		
Dec 2 (Mon) Week 16	Wrap-up Session	<i>None</i>
Dec 4 (Wed) Week 16	<i>Final Exam Review Session</i>	<i>None</i>
Dec 7 (Sat) Week 16	<i>Final Exam – 8:00-11:00 am in Peabody 306</i>	