PHILOSOPHY 148

Coyote, Torrey Pines Lagoon

Philosophy & the Environment

Professor Craig Callender

Syllabus

PHILOSOPHY 148

Frank, Assistant Professor, and subject of an article by Norcross

Contact

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Coordinates

CENTR 212, TuTh 11-1220

Final exam: 12/11/2024, W, 1130a-229p

Topic and Goals

This course explores the philosophical issues that arise in contemporary environmental issues, primarily those connected to the twin crises of our time, climate change and biodiversity loss. We'll primarily draw on applied ethics, political philosophy, and philosophy of science, covering topics in the following areas:

- Animal Welfare
- Climate Ethics
- Wilderness, Naturalness, and the Land Ethic
- Conservation in the Anthropocene

Rakitu Island, NZ: Should it have invasive rats removed?

In each section, we'll mix theoretical problems in philosophy with practical problems facing us today. The main goal of the course is that students come to 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 personal ones (e.g., what car should I buy? what should I eat?) to your views on major public policy choices (e.g., just energy transition). 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, students will also improve their ability to critically read and appraise academic essays, write such an essays, create and complete an independent project, and more.

Course Materials

All reading will be available free via Canvas or direct link from this syllabus.

Assessment

Three 500-word projects (30%):

— Scripps Knoll Project *or* Zoo Ethics Project
— Carbon Offset Project
— Environmental Change Project

Attendance & Participation (5%)
Reading Discussion Questions (15%)
Midterm Exam (25%)
Final Exam (25%)

Green sea turtle, Encinitas

You are expected to attend all the lectures. Attendance will be taken. You are also expected to have done the reading and be ready to discuss it. If you miss more than two classes without an excuse, points will start to be deducted from your attendance grade. If taking the class P/NP, please recall that your grade must be a C- or better to earn a P.

Plagiarism

In your assignments, all sources, including discussions with classmates, must be appropriately acknowledged. All answers 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, or ChatGPT) 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.

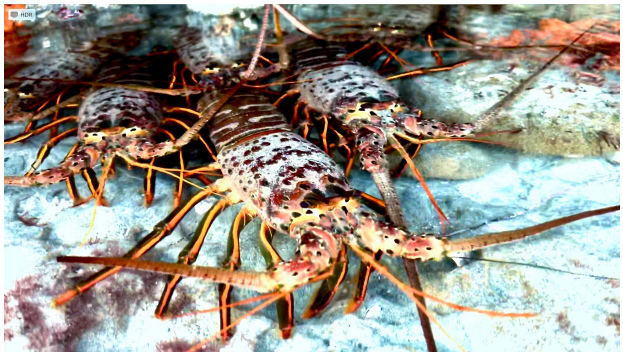
Accommodation for Disability

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 at osd@ucsd.edu (email).

Tentative Schedule

The reading should be done *before* class so you can discuss it. "Optional" denotes supplemental reading that is either helpful background or a step further on a topic. Often optional material makes it into lecture; lecture always contains material over and above the reading.

Animal Welfare: Lobsters, Octopuses, Puppies, and Steer. What should you eat? Is it morally acceptable to use animals the way we do? In this module you will be introduced to some basic ethical concepts and the main rival theories, e.g., utilitarian and deontological theories. We'll apply these theories to questions about what we should eat and how we should treat non-human animals. We'll concentrate on two exciting new developments, work on the ethics of zoos and philosophical-empirical research on subjective animal welfare.



lobsters, Encinitas

1. 9/26. Foster-Wallace, Consider the Lobster

2. 10/1. *Animal "Rights"*. Norcross, Puppies, Pigs and People; Pollan, Power Steer (Optional: Gruen, Ethics and Animals, chapters 1-3)

3. 10/3. *Animal Welfare and Sentience*. Godfrey-Smith, The Mind of an Octopus; Browning, What is Good for an Octopus?; Support US Octopus Act to Keep Octopuses Wild; Birch, Crabs and Lobsters Deserve Protection from Being Cooked Alive (Birch and Browning, Animal Sentience)

4. 10/8. *The Ethics of Zoos*. Jamieson, Against Zoos; Emma Marris, Modern Zoos Are Not Worth the Moral Cost (Optional: Marcy, Why Zoos and Aquariums Are Beneficial; Browning, The Natural Behavior Debate; watch Blackfish)

Climate Ethics. The climate crisis raises dozens of important ethical issues. How much harm does each of us do? What do we owe to future generations? Are carbon offsets okay? How should the social cost of carbon be calculated? What would a just energy transition look like? Is geoengineering a solution?

Petito Moreno, Argentina

5. 10/10. *Climate Change Introduction*. Steel, Mintz-Woo, & DesRoches, Collapse, Social Tipping Dynamics, and Framing Climate Change (Canvas)

6. 10/15. *Climate Change, Social Cost of Carbon, and Cost-Benefit Analysis* TBD. Broome, Utilitarianism and Climate Change. (Fleurbaey et al, The Social Cost of Carbon; Wagner, G. et al. Eight Priorities for Calculating the Social Cost of Carbon. Nelson, Climate Change and Economic Self-interest)

What's left of the Palisades Glacier, Eastern Sierra

7. 10/17. *Carbon Offsets and Responsibility*. Baras, Carbon Offsetting; Brownstein, Kelly, and Madva. Individualism, Structuralism, and Climate

Change. (Optional: Broome, How Much Harm Does Each of Us Do?; Wenar, The Oil Curse; Grasso, Climate Justice from Theory to Practice: The Responsibility and Duties of the Oil Industry; Report of the Senate Task Force on the Climate Crisis

8. 10/22. *Climate Change and Justice*. Deniz, Climate Science Needs to Talk More About 'Justice' — Here's How Philosophy Can Help; Resnick, Environmental Justice and Climate Change Policies. (Zimm et al, Justice Considerations in Climate Research)

9. 10/24. *Geoengineering*? Callies, Ethics of Geoengineering (via Files in Canvas)

10. 10/29. MIDTERM!

Wilderness and the Natural. The Wilderness Act of 1964 enshrines our nation's desire to preserve wilderness areas. What is a wilderness? Where did the idea come from? Here we'll take a peek at John Muir's and Aldo Leopold's work that helped launch modern American environmentalism and then a set of challenges to the idea.

11. 10/31. *The Classics*. Muir, Hetch Hetchy Valley; Leopold, The Land Ethic (Nicholls, *Paradise Found*, selection)

11/1 Day at the Zoo!

12. 11/5. Go Vote! *Challenges to the Classics*. Martin, Uncle Sam's Reservations (Optional: Isaac Kantor, Ethnic Cleansing and America's Creation of National Parks; Mark Woods, *Rethinking Wilderness*; Jennifer Price, *Flight Maps*, and the film, The Creation of Yosemite National Park.)

13. 11/12. Guest lecture! Dr Derek Halm. Sober, Philosophical Problems for Environmentalism

11/14 Class cancelled. This is replaced with Zoo and/or Scripps Knoll trip.

Conservation in the Anthropocene: Zebras, Wolves, Rhinos, and Mammoths. Recent reports about biodiversity loss are alarming. But what is biodiversity and why is it valuable? Is it a normative or descriptive concept (or both)? Once we acknowledge that human beings have affected more or less everything on the planet, that ecosystems have always been in flux, and that many problems are non-point-sourced (e.g., climate change), how "hands on" should conservation be? Can we go too far?

14. 11/19. *The Biodiversity Crisis & What is Biodiversity?* Lilly Marlene-Russow, Why Do Species Matter? (Optional: Santana, Save the Planet: Eliminate Biodiversity; Odenbaugh, Conservation Biology) (If interested, watch Marris' UCSD talk: "The Future of Nature".)

15. 11/21. Elliott, Faking Nature; Preston, excerpt from *Tenacious Beasts*

16. 11/26. *Conservation in the Anthropocene*. Marris. Between Dog and Wolf, chapter 4, Wild Souls. Owls, TBD. Odenbaugh.

Victoria, SD Zoo, Escondido, and subject of an article we'll read

17. 12/3. *Technology*. Callender, On the Horns of a Dilemma: Let the Northern White Rhino Vanish or Intervene?; Odenbaugh, Philosophy and Ethics of De-Extinction. (Optional: Heather Browning on mammoths. Rohwer and Marris, Is There a Prima Facie Duty to Preserve Genetic Integrity in Conservation Biology?)

18. 12/5. *Pollution*. Beth Gardiner, *Choked*, excerpt. Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, excerpt (page 1-13), Anita Desikan,