

PHL373: Ecofeminism

Course Description

Ecofeminists argue for two claims. First, we cannot properly understand why environmental degradation is wrong without framing it in terms of *oppression or domination* of the environment. Second, environmental domination or oppression are themselves linked to the way that men dominate or oppress women. In this course, we will distinguish several versions of these claims, evaluate them, and attempt to bolster them in light of contemporary work on power, standpoint epistemology, and critical theory. We will also consider how ecofeminism relates to another radical criticism of standard environmental ethics, deep ecology.

Teaching Team

Instructor: Steve Coyne (steven.coyne@mail.utoronto.ca) – he/him

Zoom Drop-in Hours: Tuesday 3:30-4:30PM. See the Quercus website for the link. Most days, I'm also happy to hang out for a few minutes after class. If neither of these times work, send me an e-mail and we can arrange to meet at some other time.

E-mail: For written communication, please contact me via e-mail (and not Quercus, which I don't regularly check.) Make sure to identify the course (PHL373) in the title of your e-mail. I make every attempt to respond to administrative questions (e.g. about course registration, etc) within 24 hours, as well as quick questions about course content. I'm also happy to answer quick, specific questions about course content by e-mail though it may take me a little longer to get back to you.

Course Flow

This is an in-person course. We meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:10-7:30PM in UC256. After each lecture, I will post an audio recording of the lecture. At the end of each week, I will post a brief written summary of the week's discussion.

Readings

All readings will be accessible through Quercus or online library access.

Student Success

Like most third-year philosophy courses, our course material is challenging and the standards on assignments and tests are high. But I want you to profit from the course and to succeed in it. You are very welcome to come and chat with me after class or during my office hours. I'm happy to answer questions or repeat points made in lecture, and more generally talk with you about how your semester is going (or how the Raptors are doing).

Evaluation

Course Component	Percentage of Grade	Date(s) due
Short essays	2 x 20% each = 40%	October 16, November 13
Final Assignment	40%	December 7
Short in-class writing assignments	4 x 2% each = 8% (first 4 out of 5)	September 27, October 13, October 25, November 3, November 29

Participation	12%	Throughout the course
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Note that all assignments should be submitted through Quercus through the corresponding links under 'Assignments'. Please submit all assignments in .doc, .docx, or .pdf – not pages or any other format.

Essays: You will complete two short essays on assigned topics, each about 750 words in length.

Final Assignment: You will complete a final assignment (approximately 1800 words) that asks you to evaluate the success of ecofeminism as a critique of conventional environmental ethics.

Short in-class writing assignments: Five times throughout the semester we will do short (30 minute) closed-book writing assignments in-class. I will provide the topic a few days in advance.

Participation: Your contributions to class discussion are worth 12% of your final grade. You may contribute in one of three ways:

- 1) *For 1%:* Complete the introductory survey by September 24 (but preferably in the first week of class!).
- 2) *For 1%:* Starting week 2, you can make a post on the message board making some critical point about **one** of the readings for the week. To receive credit, this post should be a significant paragraph and reflect a reasonable attempt to work through the reading. (In other words, I should get a sense that you've made some significant process towards understanding the reading on your own.) The message board thread for each week closes at 3PM on Tuesday. (I'm aware that this deadline is somewhat inconvenient for students who prefer to do the reading immediately before class, but it is necessary because I'm hoping to integrate some of your critical points into my lectures, and I will need time to review your posts before lecture.)
- 3) *For 0.5%:* Starting week 2, you can make a verbal contribution to class discussion. This should show some engagement with the material we're discussing or (better yet) one of your classmates' prior points. This might take the form of a developed question, an objection, or so on. Requests to repeat material, repetitions of points by other students, or questions about class mechanics don't count for points.

Some other notes about participation:

- A maximum of two verbal contributions per class and one post per week will count towards your grade - so you can earn up to 3% per week (in weeks with two classes). This means that if you intend to get full marks for participation, you can't cram all your participation into the last few weeks of class!
- There are no make-up opportunities for participation. You are responsible for making sure that you participate evenly throughout the semester so that you have some cushion at the end of the semester. Aim to have at least 50% of your participation completed by the end of week 6.
- I will make interim participation point totals available once during the middle of the semester.
- Please observe the usual norms of class etiquette: Make sure you raise your hand before making a contribution, and wait for me to acknowledge you and give you the floor.
- I do my best to hear from a variety of voices during lecture. Especially later in the semester, I will move away from "first hand up goes first" to a more equitable policy, favouring students who have spoken less earlier in the semester (and who have fewer participation points). Occasionally you might have a point that we do not have time to discuss, or someone else gets to your point before you do – I know this can be frustrating, but unfortunately these are unavoidable limitations on discussions in a medium size class. Try to get in early and have back-up points planned!

- Up to three times during the semester, if we do not have class time for you to make a point that you intended to make, you can write it down on a sheet of paper and hand it in to me at the end of class for 0.5%. (Note that this counts towards the cap of two verbal contributions per class.)
- ***One or two bonus points to final grades may be awarded to students who contribute to class discussion in an exceptionally active, highly thoughtful manner.***

Assignment Policies

Late Penalties: Without an extension or an accommodation, late assignments will incur a 1% penalty for every day that they are late, up to a maximum of 15%. Very late assignments may not receive comments.

Extensions: For an extension on an assignment, get in touch with me before the deadline. I am aware that students often run into unexpected difficulties, and as such, as long as you can provide a plausible reason for why you need an extension, the extension is of reasonable length, and you ask for it reasonably in far advance of the deadline, I will likely grant it. (Note, however, that I do not grant extensions *after* the deadline. At that point, it is a matter of accommodation, which has much stricter requirements. See below.)

Accommodations: If you require an accommodation for a test or written assignment that you have missed because of an illness, severe personal crisis, etc, please get in touch with me as soon as possible after the deadline. I may refer you to the department undergraduate advisor to assess your case for accommodation. I will generally expect you to have completed a declaration of absence on ACORN in order to be eligible for an accommodation.

Regrade Policy: If you do not understand why your test or assignment received the grade that it did, you can ask me about it at office hours. Occasionally I do make mistakes in grading, and I am glad to correct them when I do.

Note: The ‘total’ column in the grades section on Quercus does not reflect your current or total grade in the course.

Accessibility

If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodation, please get in touch with me and Accessibility Services (<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessibility/welcome-accessibility-services>)

Plagiarism and Course Conduct

Remember that any use of an external source (whether directly quoting it, paraphrasing it, or using an idea taken from it) must be appropriately credited, otherwise it is plagiarism. Let me make a personal plea: *please do not plagiarize*. It is quite easy to catch when a student commits plagiarism by closely reading their work, and I am required by the code of conduct to report all suspected instances of plagiarism to administration, who may impose a serious penalty on you.

The assignments are designed so that there is no need to use external resources like websites or articles (apart from course materials) to successfully complete them. Unlike most other disciplines, philosophy at the undergraduate level is not primarily about research: it is about working through the texts and arguments and figuring out what you think about them, not what other people think about them. I would

discourage you from using any external resources in completing the essays. If you do use any external resources, you must provide both page number citations *and* a full bibliographical entry.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>). If you do not wish to submit your work to the tool, you will be required to meet with me to discuss and answer questions about your work.

Anonymous Feedback

I’ve set up a google poll for you to send me anonymous feedback during the course. Please make use of it if there’s anything I can do to better facilitate your learning in the course.

Course Schedule

Some of the readings may change, subject to course flow and class interest.

Thursday, September 8 <i>Course Introduction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Readings (Course Introduction)
Unit 1: Review of standard environmental ethics	
Tuesday, September 13 <i>Review of standard EE: Obligations towards humans</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immanuel Kant, “Rational Beings Alone Have Value” Baxter, “People or Penguins: The Case for Optimal Pollution”
Thursday, September 15 <i>Review of standard EE: Extending moral standing to animals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal”
Tuesday, September 20 <i>Review of standard EE: Extending moral standing to animals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”
Thursday, September 22 <i>Review of standard EE: extending moral standing to the environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No readings
Tuesday, September 27 <i>Disparate impact on environmental degradation on women</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class writing assignment 1 Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen, “Ecofeminism: Towards global justice and planetary health”
Unit 2: The domination of the environment	
Thursday, September 29 <i>Environmental Domination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Murray Bookchin, “What is social ecology?”
Tuesday, October 4 <i>Understanding Oppression and Domination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Domination” (excerpt)
Thursday, October 6 <i>Environmental Domination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharon R. Krause, “Environmental Domination”
Unit 3: Ecofeminism	
Tuesday, October 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karen Warren, “The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism”

<i>Ecofeminism: environmental damage as domination</i>	
Thursday, October 13 <i>Ecofeminism and dualism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valerie Plumwood, <i>Feminism and the Mastery of Nature</i> (excerpts) In-class writing assignment 2
Sunday, October 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay 1 due
Tuesday, October 18 <i>Ecofeminism (continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carol Adams, <i>The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory</i> (excerpts)
Thursday, October 20 <i>Critiques of Ecofeminism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beth Dixon, “The Feminist Connection between Women and Animals”
Tuesday, October 25 <i>Standpoint Epistemology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nancy Hartsock, “Feminist Standpoint Epistemology” In-class writing assignment 3
Thursday, October 27 <i>Standpoint Epistemology and Ecofeminism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sally K. Fairfax and Louise Fortmann, “American Forestry Professionalism in the Third World: Some Preliminary Observations on Effects” Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, “The Subsistence Perspective”
Tuesday, November 1 <i>The Ethics of Care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carol Gilligan, “Moral Orientation and Moral Development” Class ends early (6:55PM)
Thursday, November 3 <i>The Ethics of Care and Ecofeminism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deane Curtin, “Toward an Ecologic Ethic of Care” In-class writing assignment 4
Tuesday, November 8	Reading Week
Thursday, November 10	Reading Week
Sunday, November 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay 2 due
Tuesday, November 15 <i>Critiques of Ecofeminism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alison Jaggar, <i>Feminist Politics and Human Nature</i>, page 105-118 Class ends early (6:55PM)
Unit 4: Deep Ecology	
Thursday, November 17 <i>Deep Ecology Lite</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul W. Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature”
Tuesday, November 22 <i>Deep Ecology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arne Neiss, “The Deep Ecology Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects”
Thursday, November 24 <i>Understanding Identification with Nature in Deep Ecology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian Diehm, “Identification with Nature: What it is and why it matters” Andy Clark and David Chalmers, “The Extended Mind”
Tuesday, November 29 <i>Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ariel Salleh, “The Deep Ecology/Ecofeminism Debate” In-class writing assignment 5
Unit 5: Course Wrap-up	
Thursday, December 1 <i>Evaluating ecofeminism and deep ecology: climate change, critical theory, pragmatism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
Tuesday, December 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop-in office hours for discussion of final assignment.

Wednesday, December 7

- ***Final assignment due***