

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 the *domination* of the environment. Second, environmental domination is itself linked to the way that men dominate 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

Drop-in Hours: Monday 4:30-5:20PM in JHB429. 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 Mondays from 6:10-9PM in AB114. After each lecture, I will post an audio recording of the lecture. I will also post a short summary of our discussion.

This is very much a discussion-based course. Many of our readings are not explicitly about ecofeminism, and a lot of our work together in lecture will be to tie them back to ecofeminism. It will be somewhat difficult to succeed in the course without regularly coming to class.

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	20%, 25%	February 18, March 17
Final Assignment	40%	April 5
Short in-class writing assignments	4 x 2% each = 8%	January 22, February 12, March 4, March 18
Individual Participation	5%	Throughout the course
Groupwork Participation	2%	Throughout the course

Note that the essays and final assignment 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 1000 words in length. The second essay (25%) will be worth slightly more than the first (20%).

Final Assignment: You will complete a final assignment (approximately 2000 words) that asks you to evaluate the success of ecofeminism as a critique of conventional environmental ethics.

Short in-class writing assignments: Four 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 through Quercus.

Groupwork participation: You will earn 2% for your participation in groupwork when in class. As long as you come to a few classes and are always participating in groupwork when you do come to class, you will receive full credit.

Individual Participation: You are required to make verbal discussion contributions to at least five of our individual classes, worth 1% each (up to a maximum of 5%). Your contribution should show some engagement with the material we are 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. Please observe the usual norms of class etiquette. Be civil, make sure you raise your hand before making a contribution, and wait for me to acknowledge you and give you the floor.

I will be keeping track of your contributions. Note that you can only receive credit for a maximum of one contribution per class, and you will only receive credit for that contribution if you are present for the whole lecture in question (so don't make your point and then leave right after, please). There will be no opportunity for alternative participation credit apart from very rare cases – e.g. verified multi-week absences and verified accessibility considerations that prevent participation. You are responsible for making sure that you contribute throughout the semester (e.g. if you don't participate at all in classes 1-4, contribute in classes 5-7, and then are absent from classes 8-10 you will not receive an opportunity for more credit). That said, I strongly encourage you to participate more frequently than this!

I will do my best to hear from a variety of voices during tutorial. Occasionally you might have a point that we do not have time to discuss, or someone else gets to your point before you do – we 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!

Bonus Participation Marks: 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. The last day to submit late assignments will be April 19.

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 verification of illness form or 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 within one week of having the assignment returned to you. 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://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>).

Course Conduct and Academic Integrity

I encourage you to work together in this course. You will profit more from the course if you study together, discuss your ideas for your essays with one another, and critique one another’s essays once you have written them. However, as a matter of academic integrity, you must follow these rules (as well as any others in our university’s academic integrity policy, available at <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>):

- 1) You are expected to be the author of your own work.
- 2) The use of translation software (apart from individual words or short phrases) or the use of large-scale language models (e.g. ChatGPT) is not permitted.
- 3) Any word-for-word use of another person’s phrasing (including my own) should be put in quotation marks or set out as a distinct quotation paragraph with a page number or lecture citation (e.g. “(Coyne, Lecture 5)”).
- 4) Any use of another person’s phrasing or ideas, even if you do not use their exact words, should be given a page number citation. (e.g. “Friedman argues that the social responsibility of a firm is to increase its profits. (Friedman, 23)”). You should be particularly vigilant about this if you choose to use external sources apart from the course readings or lectures. If you use any external sources, you must provide a bibliography with enough information for the reader to find it.

If you have any questions about these rules, or other elements of the university academic integrity policy, please contact me by e-mail *before* you submit your assignment (steven.coyne@mail.utoronto.ca). I am more than happy to answer them.

Out of respect for your intellectual work and fairness to the class, I take academic integrity very seriously and make strenuous efforts to verify that my students are respecting it. I forward all suspected violations of academic integrity to administration, who may impose a serious penalty on you.

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, that is fine, but 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.

Monday, January 8 <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”
Monday, January 15 <i>Review of standard EE: Extending moral standing to animals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal” • Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”
Monday, January 22 <i>Liberal Ecofeminism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class writing assignment 1 (start of class) • Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen, “Ecofeminism: Towards global justice and planetary health” • Martha Nussbaum, “Women and Cultural Universals”
Monday, January 29 <i>Domination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Domination” (excerpt) • Sharon R. Krause, “Environmental Domination”
Monday, February 5 <i>Core Ecofeminism (part 1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Warren, “The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism” • Jason Wyckoff, “Linking Sexism and Speciesism”
Monday, February 12 <i>Core Ecofeminism (part 2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class writing assignment 2 (start of class) • Valerie Plumwood, <i>Feminism and the Mastery of Nature</i> (excerpts)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Adams, <i>The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory</i> (excerpts) • Essay 1 due Sunday, February 18
Monday, February 26 <i>Standpoint Epistemology (part 1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy Hartsock, “Feminist Standpoint Epistemology” • 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”
Monday, March 4 <i>Standpoint Epistemology (part 2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class writing assignment 3 (start of class) • Revisit: Karen Warren, “The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism” • Alison M. Jaggar, “Love and knowledge: Emotion in feminist epistemology” • TBD
Monday, March 11 <i>The Ethics of Care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Gilligan, “Moral Orientation and Moral Development” • Deane Curtin, “Toward an Ecologic Ethic of Care” • Essay 2 due Sunday, March 17
Monday, March 18 <i>Criticisms of Ecofeminism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class writing assignment 4 (start of class) • Alison Jaggar, <i>Feminist Politics and Human Nature</i>, page 105-118 • TBD
Monday, March 25 <i>Deep Ecology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arne Neiss, “The Deep Ecology Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects” • Christian Diehm, “Identification with Nature: What it is and why it matters” (excerpt) • Andy Clark and David Chalmers, “The Extended Mind”
Monday, April 1 <i>Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of final assignment. • Final assignment due April 5