PHIL 323: ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
Fall 2013

Instructor: Rachel Schneebaum
Email: reschnee@email.arizona.edu
Office Hours: TBD

Course Overview

“One basic principle of ecology, informally stated, is that we are not in charge. Every action ripples out into an ecological community in somewhat unpredictable and unintended ways. An ecosystem is a moving target” (Schmidtz, & Willot, xi).

In this course, we will investigate and seriously consider how (and why) we can (and should) live as morally responsible members of such an ecological community. We will study some of the theory behind what it is we value in nature, nonhuman animals, etc. We will also focus on two environmentally important cases: climate change and human overconsumption of resources (especially of nonhuman animals). In both cases, we will work both to assess the moral issues involved and to consider what we ought to do—as members of an ecological community, what we are responsible for doing—about those moral issues.

Required Reading Materials:

(This textbook is available through the school bookstore. It is very important that you get the 2nd edition, as substantial changes have been made and some of the readings assigned aren’t in the 1st edition)

* McPhee, J. Encounters with the Archdruid
* McPhee, J. The Control of Nature
(These last two books aren’t yet available in the school bookstore, though they should arrive sometime in September. We will be reading sections from them on the third and fourth weeks of class, so it might be worth buying from alternative sources. Both are small and fairly cheap paperbacks; all editions are acceptable.)

All other assigned readings will be available on d2l.
Grading Policy:

Grades for the course are based on the following breakdown of assignments:

- **Reading Quizzes - 20%**. Each week, there will be a short, open-book quiz on d2l (5-10 multiple choice and true/false questions). The two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.

- **Discussion Responses - 20%**. Each week, students are expected to write a short (1-2 paragraph) response to one of the discussion questions raised about that week's readings/issues, and post the response on the d2l discussion forum for that week. Students are encouraged (though not required) to read and respond to others' posts and engage each other in discussion/debate.

- **Essay - 25%**. Students will write one longer critical essay (3-4pp) that engages with readings and issues covered in one of the course's three modules (see course schedule). There will be three different paper prompts, each with a different due date. Students must choose one (and only one!) of these topics.

- **Consumption Project - 25%**. Each student must choose one week of the semester during which to entirely give up one of the following:
  - all meat/meat-based products—including fish, soups based in chicken stock, etc. (If you're already vegetarian, try also giving up eggs and dairy products!)
  - all single-use/"disposable" items—e.g., paper plates, plastic cups, takeout boxes, soda bottles, paper towels, etc.

  After the week is up, write a 2-3pp essay about the experience—how you felt, things that were particularly difficult, times you messed up and why (did you forget to bring your own utensils to a restaurant that only has disposable options? did you eat beans before realizing they were cooked in chicken fat? were you just really drunk? It's ok to make mistakes; just be honest about it!), anything you learned, etc.

  *Note: for extra credit (worth up to 2 points added to your final grade), you may give up both options—either on the same week or two different weeks—or stick to one option and go an additional week. Then either write an extra 2-3pp essay, or turn in a 5-6pp essay about the entire experience instead of the original required 2-3pp one.*

- **Participation - 10%**. Based on engagement with and completion of all course assignments.
Late work policy:

The flexible and student-directed nature of this online course should allow for everyone to turn in work on time with advance planning. Thus, **late work will not be accepted.** In the event of emergency, the instructor will consider requests on a case-by-case basis.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Students are expected to read, understand, and abide by the University of Arizona code of academic integrity:

[http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity](http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity)

Any and all breaches of the code will be taken seriously and punished in accordance with university policies.

**Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities or special needs are encouraged to contact me early on in the course. Please register with the S.A.L.T. ([http://www.salt.arizona.edu](http://www.salt.arizona.edu)) and/or Disabilities Resource Centers ([http://drc.arizona.edu](http://drc.arizona.edu)) as necessary. Having done so, submit proper documentation. I will be more than happy to work with you in coming to an acceptable arrangement for both of us.

**Confidentiality of Student Records:**

[http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm](http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm)

*Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grading policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.*