



**CAMOSUN COLLEGE**  
*School of Arts & Science*  
*Humanities*

*Phil 204, Environmental Ethics*  
*Fall, 2002*

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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⚡ *Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for your records.*

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**1. Instructor Information**

- (a) Instructor: Karen Shirley
- (b) Office hours: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 11:30 – 12:20; Friday: 11:30 – 1:20
- (c) Location: Ewing 240
- (d) Phone: 370 3132                      Home: 3838164

**2. Intended Learning Outcomes**

- a) Students will be able to identify common errors in arguments, such as the careless use of certain terms and fallacious arguments. For example, students will be alert to arguments that depend on indefensible definitions of 'alive' and narrow definitions of 'ecosystem' and they will be on the lookout for the very common equivocal use of 'natural' in arguments on environmental issues.
- b) Students will be able to comprehend, describe and critically assess classical and new ethical theories such as biocentric ethics and ecocentric ethics.
- c) Students will have developed positions on and be able to discuss issues in applied ethics, such as reproductive rights related to human population growth, moral obligations in relation to atmospheric conditions and duties to future generations.

**3. Required Materials**

Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, edited by Louis P. Pojman

If your grammar needs work, you may wish to purchase a small style guide with a section on common errors in grammar and usage.

#### 4. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

Midterm ( enter date here - closed book).....	25%
Final (Final exam period - closed book.....)	25%
Debate.....	20%
Paper.....	20%
Verbal participation (during the question period after the debate).....	10%

(Note: Keep *all* marked assignments in case there is a discrepancy between your record of your marks and my record of your marks.)

#### 5. Grading System

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

A+ = 95 - 100%	B = 75 - 79%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 90 - 94%	B- = 70 - 74%	F = 0.0 - 49%
A- = 85 - 89%	C+ = 65 - 69%	
B+ = 80 - 84%	C = 60 - 64%	

#### 6. Course Content and Schedule

##### Formatting Assignments and Exams

- Put the following information on each assignment:
  - your student number;
  - your section number (1 or 2) and your seminar letter (“A” or “B”);
- Write on both sides of the page, where more than one page is required, and double-space.

##### Exams

*You should always bring a dictionary and, if you need one, a style guide.* You should also familiarize yourself with the last page of this course outline for guidance on some errors in English usage that may cost you marks. If you make basic errors in English usage, I will deduct marks. In cases where I judge that something will be gained from doing so, I may allow you to get those marks back. The way you get the marks back is by learning the rule related to your mistake and then coming to my office during office hours and successfully completing a sheet of exercises on that rule. However, should you repeat the mistake on later assignments, I will deduct double the number of marks I deducted in the first place.

Double space. Illegible or *hard-to read* exams will have marks deducted. Capitalise traditionally or lose marks.

**Mid-term and Final Exams:** These are both two hours long and closed book. However, you may bring this course outline, a dictionary and a style guide. You will be asked to do two things on each exam:

- 70% - Answer short-answer questions on the material covered in the textbook and lectures
- 30% - Make an argument defending a pro or con position on one of the topics covered in a debate. (I will chose the issue at random at the beginning of the exam.)

**Paper:** Argue for an answer to this question: What distinguishes moral patients from other things? Your answer must take account of the views presented in the text. Ensure that you cite your sources.

Papers must be typed. You may print out your paper on the blank side of used paper. No title pages. The paper should be between 1000 and 1250 words long. It may be shorter but you risk being too general; it may not be longer. Grammar and spelling count and 5% per day will be deducted from late papers.

You may rewrite your paper if you do not like the grade you get on it. In order to get a rewrite marked, you must correct the errors that I note on your original paper and submit both the original paper and the rewrite within a week of getting the mark for the original. If you radically change your paper in the process of rewriting it, some of my comments on the original paper may become redundant. Nevertheless, you must hand in the original paper with the rewrite.

If I deducted marks for basic errors in English usage, you may get those marks back by doing the following: learn the rule related to your mistake and then come to my office during office hours and successfully complete a sheet of exercises on that rule. You must do this in order to get those marks back even if you do a rewrite. However, should I

notice that you have repeated the mistake on any future assignments, including the rewrite, I will deduct double the number of marks I deducted in the first place and I will not give them back.

**Participation after Debates:** Each instance of participation is worth up to 2.5%. Only four instances count and you must let me know *before* making the comment that you want it to count.) You may provide constructive criticism or detailed praise, suggest alternative arguments, comment on the quality of the contributions and so on. Questions will not usually be sufficient for a participation mark, as they do not usually require much thought.

**Debates:** You are required to participate in a debate (during the seminar) which is worth 20% of your final grade.

During the first class, students will be divided into groups of two to four people. One or two people in each group will take either the pro or con position on a chosen topic. Each group will be given a topic and a date. Upon that date, the group will debate the topic during the seminar period.

You and your interlocutor may wish to get together to debate the topic ahead of time so that you have an opportunity to refine your objections and responses.

You will be graded on the strength of your arguments, the knowledge you show on the topic and your ability to present your arguments in a way that helps other students understand the relevant issues.

**Do not read out your presentation or any other part of the debate. If you do read, you will automatically lose 5 of the 20 marks.** You may *occasionally* refer to notes.

Handouts are forbidden.

If you are at a loss as to what arguments have been made on the topic, see the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (a reference book in the library) for a start. See me, if you need to do so, well in advance, for additional advice. Some of the topics require knowledge of factual information. Ensure that you know this information. Once you have an idea of what issues are at stake and of some of the arguments that have been presented on the topic, you should spend time *thinking for yourself* on the topic. What do *you* think the truth of the matter is? Why?

### **Structure of Debates**

Be concise: You don't have time to verbally meander around.

#### **First,**

- a) Pro side: *one strong* argument in favour of the claim. (Speak for up to two minutes.)
- b) Con side: objection to the above argument. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
- c) Pro side: response to the above objection. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
- d) Con side: objection to above response or a second objection to the pro side's original argument. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)
- e) Pro side: response to the second objection. (Speak for up to thirty seconds.)

#### **Second,**

Repeat steps one through five above, beginning with the con side this time.

#### **Third,**

Pro and con sides now address points put to them by the class.

### **Lecture Schedule**

**Sept. 3** Administration and introduction

**Sept. 5** Making strong arguments

### **Traditional Ethics**

**Sept. 10**

**Reading:** What is Ethics?. p. 3

**Sept. 12**

**Reading:** What is Ethics?, continued

### **Animal Rights**

**Sept. 17**

**Reading:** Rational Beings Alone Have Moral Worth, p. 31

**Sept. 19**

**Reading:** The Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal rights, p. 40

**Sept. 24**

**Reading:** A Utilitarian Defense of Animal Liberation, p. 33

**Sept. 26**

**Reading:** Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair, p. 51

### **Does Nature Have Intrinsic Value?**

**Oct. 1**

**Reading:** Naturalizing Values: Organisms and Species, p. 76

**Oct. 3**

**Reading:** Naturalizing Values: Organisms and Species, continued

**Oct. 8**

**Reading:** Nature, p. 89

### **Biocentric and Ecocentric Ethics and Deep Ecology**

**Oct. 10**

**Reading:** Biocentric Egalitarianism, p. 100

**Oct. 15**

**Reading:** The Land Ethic, p. 119

**Oct. 17**

**Reading:** Refocusing Ecocentrism: De-emphasizing Stability and Defending Wildness, p. 136

**Oct. 22**

**Reading:** Deep Ecology, p. 157

**Oct. 24 - MIDTERM**

### **Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology**

**Oct 29**

**Reading:** The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism, p. 189

**Oct.31**

**Reading:** A Critique of Ecofeminism, p. 199

### **Preservation of Species, Nature and Natural Objects**

**Nov.5**

**Reading:** Why do Species Matter?, p. 208

**Nov.7**

**Reading:** Faking Nature, p. 229

### **Non-Western Perspectives on Environmental Ethics**

**Nov. 12**

**Reading:** Radical Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique, p.271

#### **Obligations to Future Generations**

**Nov.14**

**Reading:** Energy Policy and the Further Future: The Identity Problem, p. 289

### **Practice**

**Nov.19**

**Reading:** Population: General Considerations, p. 299 and  
A Special Moment in History: The Challenge of Overpopulation and Overconsumption,  
p. 302

**Nov.21**

**Reading:** The Tragedy of the Commons, p.

**Nov.26**

**Reading:** Lifeboat Ethics, p. 356

**Nov. 28**

**Reading:** Famine, Affluence and Morality, p. 367

**Dec.3**

**Reading:** Environmental Hysteria: The Alar Scare, p. 417

**Dec. 5**

**Reading:** Consumption: The Economics of Value Added and the Ethics of Value Distributed, p.461

**SEE EXAM SCHEDULE (ON THE WALL OUTSIDE THE BOOKSTORE)**

## Seminar Schedule

1. Sept. 10/12: Making strong arguments
2. Sept. 17/19: Applying ethical theories
3. Sept. 24/26: **Debate:** It is immoral to keep whales in captivity.
4. Oct.1/3: **Debate:** Only people who can demonstrate that they have a business-related need for a car or a relevant disability should be allowed to own cars.
5. Oct.8/10: **Debate:** Human activity is causing a devastating greenhouse effect.
6. Oct. 15/17: **Debate:** The advantages of genetically modified foods outweigh the disadvantages.
7. Oct.22/24: Bring any problems or questions. (No marks)
8. Oct.29/31: **Debate:** Canada should reduce the number of immigrants it allows into the country each year as part of its efforts to protect Canadian wilderness areas.
9. Nov.5/7: **Debate:** (This is not a debate) The group should teach the class to play prisoners' dilemma and lead them in a paired playing of the game to see what moves people make. Promise and supply prizes.
10. Nov.12/14: **Debate:** (This is not a debate) Each side should develop a world population policy and defend it.
11. Nov.19/21: **Debate:** Poor communities should be free to accept a disproportionate burden of waste for compensation.
12. Nov 26/28: **Debate:** Monkeywrenching is morally acceptable in the defense of old-growth forests on Vancouver Island.
13. Dec. 3/5: Bring any problems or questions. (No marks)

**You will lose 1% of the assignment mark every time you break the following rules.**

1. Do not use the first or second person in written assignments. Here are two examples of the first person: “**We** cannot pass students who cannot use the English language adequately,” and “**I** cannot pass students who cannot use the English language adequately.” Here is an example of the second person: “**You** don’t realise that it is not our fault that we were not taught how to write in high school.” The following are examples of sentences written in the third person. “**People** cannot pass the buck forever.” “**One** will find that a style guide is essential in university.”
2. Do not ask rhetorical questions.
3. Do not use a pronoun which disagrees with the noun it refers to. You are advised that in many cases, pronoun disagreement can be avoided through the use of plural nouns. Here is an example of a sentence in which the pronoun disagrees with the noun: “**A philosopher** should not be so picky about English; **they** are not English teachers.” Here is the corrected version: “**Philosophers** should not be so picky about English; **they** are not English teachers.”
4. Do not confuse “its” with “it’s.” Since you are not allowed to use contractions, you should never use “it’s.”
5. Do not confuse “their” with “there.”
6. Do not add “ly” to “first,” “second” and so on.
7. Do not forget possessive apostrophes and do not put them in the wrong place.
8. Do not use abbreviations or a contractions.
9. Do not use “e. g.”; use “for example.”
10. Do not use “etc.”; use “and so on.”
11. Do not use “i.e.”; use “that is.” Better yet, say it clearly the first time.
12. Do not use the upper-case where the lower case is standard. 5% will be deducted from a student’s exam if he or she makes this mistake.
13. Do not misspell the following words:
  - despite
  - argument (*one* “e”)
  - philosophy

## **LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS**

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College Calendar, Registrar's Office or the College web site at <http://www.camosun.bc.ca>

## **ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY**

There is an Academic Conduct Policy. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, Registration, and on the College web site in the Policy Section.

[www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/2-5.html](http://www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/2-5.html)