



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

*Phil 204, Ethics: Animals to Ecosystems*  
*Winter, 2016*

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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

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**Instructor Information**

- (a) Instructor: Karen Shirley
- (b) Office hours: Tues through Thurs: 12:20 – 1:20
- (c) Location: Young 232
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**Intended Learning Outcomes**

1. Describe and critically assess classical and new ethical theories such as ecofeminism, deep ecology, biocentric ethics, ecocentric ethics.
2. Discuss issues in applied ethics, such as vegetarianism, reproductive rights related to human population growth, moral obligations in relation to atmospheric conditions and duties to future generations.
3. 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.

**Texts**

Environmental Ethics for Canadians, ed.: Byron Williston

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

**Basis of Student Assessment**

Midterm (closed book) one or two questions.....	20%
Final (Final exam period - closed book) ) one or two questions.....	30%
Paper (Due two weeks after seminar in which it is discussed).....	20%
Seminar Presentation of Paper.....	20%
Verbal participation (during the seminars).....	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

Percentage	Grade	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+	9
85-89	A	8
80-84	A-	7
77-79	B+	6
73-76	B	5
70-72	B-	4
65-69	C+	3
60-64	C	2
50-59	D	1
0-49	F	0

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca) for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

### Course Content and Schedule

#### Formatting Paper and Exams

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

#### Exams

Exams will consist of one or more of the study questions below, which will be randomly chosen. *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.

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

**Mid-term and Final Exams:** The midterm is fifty minutes long and the final is two hours long. Both are closed book. However, you may bring this course outline, a dictionary and a style guide. You may rewrite the midterm, but you may not get the same study question as you got for the mid-term. The final is not cumulative.

#### Paper:

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.

**Seminars:** Students will describe the first draft of their papers during the seminars. Ideally, you will put it up on the overhead projector so we can follow along easily. In order for the presenter and the other students in the seminar to benefit from the experience, the draft should be as well-developed as possible.

**Participation:** Each instance of verbal participation is worth up to 2% of your course mark. You should participate in at least five seminars at least. Try to come to the seminars having done some quick and dirty research on the topic. Insightful and helpful comments get full marks.

## Schedule

**Jan. 12:** Administration and introduction

**Jan. 14:** Making strong arguments

**Seminar:** Bring any problems or questions. (No marks)

**Jan. 19:** p. 1 – 9

*Moral Theories*

**Jan. 21:** p. 9 - 20

**Jan. 26:** p. 20 – 24, 247 – 249, 257 – 260, 267 - 273

**Jan. 28:** p. 133 – 145

**Feb. 2:** p. 108 - 119

**Feb. 4:** p. 26 – 37

*Moral Standing*

**Feb. 9:** p. 37 - 48

**Feb. 11:** p. 52 - 60

**Feb. 16:** p. 60 – 74

**Feb. 23:** p. 78 – 92

**Feb. 25:** p. 92 - 102

**Mar. 1: MIDTERM**

**Mar. 3:** p. 330 – 347

*Biodiversity*

**Mar. 8:** p. 347 - 355

**Mar. 10:** p. 357 – 372

*Sustainability*

**Mar.15:**p. 372 – 385 p. 187 – 204

**Mar. 17:** p. 204 - 214

*Environmental Aesthetics*

**Mar. 22:** p. 215 – 230

**Mar. 24:** p. 230 - 243

*First Nations Perspectives*

**Mar. 29:** p. 159 – 171

**Mar. 31:** p. 171 - 186

*Ecofeminism*

**Ap. 5:** p. 276 – 292

**Ap. 7:** p. 292 - 305

*Climate Change*

**Ap. 12:** p. 306 – 314

**Ap. 14:** p. 314 – 329

*Population and Consumption*

**Seminar:** Questions about the final exam

## Study Questions

p. 1 - 9

1. What role should a person's internal states play in a moral assessment of his or her action?
2. What is the third objection Williston raises against ethical egoism, an objection concluding that the theory is counter intuitive?
3. Describe the objection to ethical relativism that "has to do with our alleged duty to be tolerant of other cultures."

p. 9 – 20

4. Does Williston's last objection to utilitarianism succeed?
5. Describe Kantianism.
6. What objection can be raised against Kantianism and contractarianism?

p. 20 – 24

7. What role do virtues play in morality?

p. 133 – 145

8. Contrast value coherentism with value foundationalism.

9. Does Weston establish that we shouldn't demand the same rigour in the arguments from environmental thinkers as we would demand in the arguments from thinkers in a more established field, such as anthropocentric ethics?  
p. 108 – 119
10. Can non-use value, for example, the aesthetic or spiritual value attaching to unspoiled environments, be measured?  
p. 26 – 102
11. What property or properties must something or someone possess in order to be morally considerable?  
p. 52 – 60
12. Should non-sentient objects have legal rights?  
p. 60 – 74
13. Does Taylor's conception of plants as teleological centres of life entail "psychomorphising" them?  
p. 78 – 92
14. Assess Leopold's famous dictum: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise...".  
p. 92 – 102
15. Explain the role of identification in Naess's view. Is his view of its role tenable?  
p. 330 – 347
16. Should we preserve species for the sake of individuals (not necessarily individual *people*) or are they morally considerable in their own right?  
p. 347 - 355
17. Assess the analogy between rivets and species.  
p. 357 – 385
18. On what grounds, if any, do people have obligations to future generations?  
p. 357 – 372
19. Present and defend a definition of sustainability, ensuring that you deal with its important implications.  
p. 372 – 385
20. Describe how our travel practices would have to change in order for them to be sustainable. For example, under what circumstances could one take a flight to Europe?  
p. 187 – 214
21. Describe the relationship between environmental moral obligations and aesthetic appreciation.  
p. 187 – 196
22. Does Carlson show that there are objective grounds for finding aesthetic value in nature or has he actually shown that there are objective grounds for finding other types of value?  
p. 197 – 204
23. Does Moore show that there are "differences in appropriate modes of aesthetic regard to [natural environments and the art world], implying moral duties toward the former and not (or not to the same degree) toward the latter"?  
p. 204 – 214
24. Does Parsons show that Loftis's argument from analogy doesn't succeed?  
p. 215 – 243
25. How does Morito conceive of the difference between balance and harmony?
26. How should one reply to the claim that not all First Nations people take the approach to nature that Sioui describes?  
p. 159 – 171
27. Apply Williston's objection (involving Nazism) to Warren's argument B.  
p. 171 – 186
28. What are the main differences between what Davion calls eco femininists and eco feminists?  
p. 276 – 292
29. Briefly describe how four features of American culture have caused Americans to resist the view that there is anthropomorphic climate change, according to Schonfeld.  
p. 292 – 305
30. How might "improved motivation for adaptation, provided by On the Cards...come into conflict with intergenerational concerns..."?  
p. 306 – 329
31. How can Simon's points be used to reply to Malthus's argument?

**You will lose marks every time you break the following rules in written work.**

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” or “etcetera.”
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