

## **PHIL 2140: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Spring 2013

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Office Hours: MWF 5:00-6:00, or by appointment, Hellems 15

*"The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the co-operation or consent of his deliberate reason." – Bertrand Russell*

### **Texts**

- Justice: A Reader. Sandel, Michael J., ed.
- Environmental Justice and Environmentalism: The Social Justice Challenge to the Environmental Movement. Sandler, Ronald and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, eds.
- Food Ethics. Pojman, Paul and Louis P. Pojman, eds.

### **Course Description**

The EPA defines 'Environmental Justice' in the following way:

*"Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EPA has this goal for all communities and persons across this Nation. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work."*

While fair treatment and meaningful involvement are admirable goals, in order to achieve them we first have to have an understanding of what fair treatment and meaningful involvement is in the first place. This is no easy task. It is undeniable that our treatment of the environment harms some individuals and benefits others. So one of the major questions we will be exploring is whether the distribution of those harms and benefits is just. In order to do that, we will first have to have a theory of justice in general. That is why the first unit of this course is not about the environment at all, but simply about justice.

This course will be divided into three units. The first unit, again, will simply be on justice and we will explore and evaluate various theories of justice. In the second unit, we will begin to look at environmental justice specifically. We will spend time exploring various issues within environmental justice and we will focus specifically on some of the tensions that can arise between the environmental justice movement and environmentalism. It is easy to assume that these two movements would be natural allies, but their aims are

different and conflicts arise. Finally, we will spend some time on food ethics. Although this is not strictly speaking about environmental justice, there is a good deal of overlap and studying the ethics of what we eat will serve as an opportunity to apply what we have learned about environmental justice to practical ethical questions about food.

One can approach environmental issues from several different disciplines. There are, of course, many scientific areas and empirical questions to explore when it comes to the environment. While we will of course have to take empirical considerations into account, this is a philosophy class. As such, we will be asking primarily philosophical questions about justice and the environment. This is not merely an academic exercise where we will only study what others have thought. Instead, in this course you will be joining an active and ongoing effort to better understand the world and your place in it. Along the way we will come to better understand what philosophers do, how they do it, and why. That will entail using and refining your ability to effectively think, argue, read, and write. In other words, we will be *doing philosophy*. This is hard and can even be scary because it involves questioning some of your deepest and most firmly held beliefs. Philosophical answers are not merely opinion and are not easily found. If you are not interested in having your beliefs challenged and having to work hard to justify your views, this class is not for you. Otherwise, welcome aboard! I'm excited about this course and you should be, too! It's going to be lively and fun and you will come out of it a better thinker, and hopefully a better a person, too

### **Course Format**

The format for this course involves a combination of lecture and class discussion. You should be prepared to engage in discussion every day. That means you'll have to do the readings and come to class.

### **Online**

We will be using Desire2Learn. This can be found at [learn.colorado.edu](http://learn.colorado.edu). The main function of D2L for this course will be the gradebook. You can also find an electronic copy of the syllabus and other documents and readings that may be relevant to the course.

### **Requirements**

1. 3 Exams (20% each)
2. *Paper(s)* (20%): You are required write either two short papers (roughly 3-4 pages each) or one long paper (6-8 pages). The purpose of this paper is to defend a philosophical thesis by means of rational argument. Your papers should contain original arguments thought of by *you*. They should not be summary or exposition of something else. I will provide additional information on the papers later in the term. But you should be thinking about them all semester and if a topic strikes you as especially interesting, you

should make a note of it. You don't want paper time to roll around and find you have nothing to write about.

3. *Reading Notecards* (10%). Over the course of the semester, you will turn in 10 reading notecards. These will be handwritten on standard, white 3x5 notecards. I won't accept anything else. Each notecard should have both: (1) a critical comment about the reading. It can be an objection, an implication of the author's thesis, a connection to a previous reading, or any other comment that demonstrates critical engagement with the reading. (2) a question about the reading. It should be a substantive question that shows you have engaged with the reading. Notecards will be accepted only at the beginning of the class. You may only turn in one notecard per week. This means you will have to plan carefully so as not to run out of weeks. They will be evaluated on a credit/no-credit basis. Each card is worth 1% of your grade. If you submit a card that does not meet the requirements or is otherwise lame or unacceptable, you will receive no credit for that card. If you receive a 0 on a card, you will be allowed to submit another card, provided you never turn in more than one card per week. It should be obvious that it is in your interest to get an early start on the reading notecards. A safe approach would be to simply think of them as weekly notecards, though you can miss a few and/or you won't have to do them the last few weeks of class. There is a chance I will read your card anonymously at some point during class.
4. *Participation* (10%) Since class discussion is an essential element in this course, your participation in class discussions is required. Your treatment of your classmates and the respect you afford them may also impact your grade.

### **Schedule**

The reading listed for each day is the reading you should have completed by *that* day. For example, on 1.28, you should have Mill already read by the time you come to class. Also, remember that notecards for a given reading cannot be submitted once we have begun discussing that reading in class. For example, if you want to do a notecard on Mill, you should turn it in by the beginning of class on 1.28. I won't accept it after that. Readings not found in the textbook can be found on Desire2Learn.

Monday 1.14

Syllabus and introduction [no new reading]

Wednesday 1.16

What is philosophy? What is environmental justice? [No new reading]

Friday 1.18

Arguments, methodology, logic [no new reading]

### **Unit I: Justice**

Wednesday 1.23

The Queen v. Dudley and Stephens

Friday 1.25  
Jeremy Bentham, "Principles of Morals and Legislation"

Monday 1.28  
John Stuart Mill, "Utilitarianism"

Wednesday 1.30  
Mill continued [no new reading]

Friday 2.1  
Milton and Rose Friedman, "Free to Choose"

Monday 2.4  
Robert Nozick, "Anarchy, State, and Utopia"

Wednesday 2.6  
John Locke, "Second Treatise of Government"

Friday 2.8  
Locke continued [no new reading]

Monday 2.11  
Fred Feldman "Kantian Ethics" (PDF)

Wednesday 2.13  
Feldman continued [no new reading]

Friday 2.15  
John Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (203-221)

Monday 2.18  
Rawls [no new reading]

Wednesday 2.20  
John Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (223-226)  
Robert Nozick, "Anarchy, State, and Utopia" (226-235)

Friday 2.22

**Exam I**

## **Unit 2: The Environment**

Monday 2.25  
*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ["Environmental Ethics"](#)

Wednesday 2.27

*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, [“The American Environmental Justice Movement”](#)

Friday 3.1

Pezzullo and Sandler, “Introduction: Revisiting the Environmental Justice Challenge to Environmentalism” (1-14)

Monday 3.4

Kevin DeLuca, “A Wilderness Environmentalism Manifest: Contesting the Infinite Self-Absorption of Humans”

Wednesday 3.6

DeLuca continued [no new reading]

Friday 2.8

Peter Wenz, “Does Environmentalism Promote Injustice for the Poor?”

Monday 2.11

Wenz continued [no new reading]

Wednesday 2.13

Dale Jamieson, “Justice: The Heart of Environmentalism”

Friday 2.15

Jamieson continued [no new reading]

Monday 2.18

Allen et al., “Becoming an Environmental Justice Activist”

Wednesday 2.20

Allen continued [no new reading]

**-Spring Break: 2.25-2.29-**

Monday 4.1

John Stuart Mill, “On Nature” (PDF)

Wednesday 4.3

**Exam 2**

### **Unit 3: Food**

Friday 4.5

Immanuel Kant, "Rational Beings Alone Have Moral Worth"

Holly L. Wilson, "The Green Kant: Kant's Treatment of Animals"

Monday 4.8

Wilson continued [no new reading]

Wednesday 4.10

Peter Singer, "A Utilitarian Defense of Animal Liberation"

Friday 4.12

Singer continued [no new reading]

Monday 4.15

Tom Regan, "A Radical Egalitarian Case for Animal Rights"

Wednesday 4.17

Regan continued [no new reading]

Friday 4.19

Mary Anne Warren, "A Critique of Regan's Animal Rights Theory"

Monday 4.22

Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons"

Wednesday 4.24

Jacqueline Kasun, "The Unjust War Against Population"

Friday 4.26

Mylan Engel Jr., "Hunger, Duty, and Ecology: On What We Owe Starving Humans"

Monday 4.29

Engle continued [no new reading]

Wednesday 5.1

Jonathan Rauch, "Can Frankenfood Save the Planet?"

Friday 5.3

**Final Exam**

**Policies, tips, and other stuff:**

*Late work:* I typically have a late policy when it comes to papers but since there is only one paper, I don't really see it being issue. The paper will likely be due the last week of class but I'm willing to provide some leeway provided students speak to me in advance. But it is important to note that computer crash or theft is not a legitimate excuse for not having a paper in a timely manner. You should be using Dropbox or something like it. It's free. Talk to me if you have questions about setting up an account.

*Technology in the classroom:* Texting during class is prohibited. If you don't feel like paying attention in class, I can't force you to, but it's extremely distracting to me. First-time offenders will be asked to stop. Additional offenses will result in dismissal from class and a loss of participation points. If you use a laptop in class, you may use it only for taking notes. No web-surfing, emailing, IMing, Facebooking, etc. If you use a laptop, disable the wifi. I'm really hoping students will just be respectful and this won't be an issue.

*Extra credit:* Extra credit will not be offered. Stay on top of things.

*Readings:* Read everything that is assigned. I have intentionally refrained from assigning too much reading in hopes that you will read everything that is assigned. Doing the reading will almost certainly improve your exam and paper scores. Writing philosophy can be difficult and it calls for a certain style. Having read a fair bit of philosophy before writing your own can prove very beneficial. It will also make the class more interesting since you will be prepared and you will know what we're talking about. And you will find the reading to be rewarding. Philosophy is unlike any other discipline and you will likely not encounter this kind of material outside of the philosophy classroom. It is exciting, engaging, and challenging. You will be glad you read.

*Attendance:* I do not take attendance. You can decide whether it is worth it to come to class. However, you should know that students who come to class and participate regularly do much better on their papers and exams. In some cases, there may be content on the exam that is not in the book but only discussed in class. Also, noticeably infrequent attendance will damage your participation grade.

*Email:* From time to time, I will be sending you emails with important information about the class, including changes to the readings. You will be responsible for the information I send via email. You should already be checking your CU mail everyday. If you cannot be bothered to check more the one email account on a daily basis, set up auto-forwarding. I have done this myself and it has made my life much easier.

*Participate a lot:* Philosophy is a great deal of fun. Be willing to come to class and participate in the discussion. You will get much more out of the class if you do.

*Office Hours:* Come to office hours. I like getting to know students and it's a good chance for you to get clarification on anything you are struggling with.

*Other grading notes:* Grades are not a personal evaluation of you, and they do not report how hard you tried. They report only how well you completed the assignments. Do not

worry too much about your grade, since for most of you, minor differences between grades will have little to no effect on your future lives.

*Plagiarism:* The honor code is mentioned in general below under “Fine Print” but I want to highlight plagiarism here. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for you to understand what constitutes plagiarism. In EVERY SINGLE case of plagiarism I have ever encountered, the student claimed that he or she did not intend to plagiarize. This does not count as a legitimate excuse. **The minimum penalty for plagiarism is an F for the course**, though even more severe penalties are possible.

## **Schedule: TBA**

### **Fine Print:**

1. honor code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

2. classroom environment: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code)

3. disabilities: if you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and see <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>

4. religious holidays: campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you anticipate any such conflicts this semester, please contact me in a timely manner so that we can make arrangements that will be acceptable to you. For further information see: [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)

5. discrimination, harassment, amorous relationships:: The University of Colorado at

Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student in this class who believes he or she has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>