PHIL 340 – Environmental Philosophy  
University of Oregon  
Spring, 2014

Instructor: Steven Brence  
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Office: 250 Susan Campbell Hall (SCH)  
Hours: 1:00-2:50, Wednesdays, or by appt.  
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Course Description:

As even more staid and conservative commentators increasingly warn of potential human-caused environmental catastrophe, perhaps more than ever we need to engage in serious and engaged reflection upon the place of humanity in the broader world. From climate change and the depletion of ‘resources,’ issues arising from our relation to the environment leave scarcely any broad human interest unqualified by the need for inquiry into that relation. This course will examine a range of recent efforts to inquire into the human in relation to the human and non-human environment, issuing from a variety of perspectives and theoretical traditions.

Required Texts: *All Texts are available for download on the Blackboard page for the course.* (https://blackboard.uoregon.edu/) (Check Course Schedule for specific readings.) These texts must be brought with you to both class and discussion on the days they are to be discussed.

Course Requirements and Grades:

- Three Essays, ~5 pages in length (75%)
- Attendance and Participation (25%) - this may include short take-home and in-class writing assignments

Learning Outcomes:

Upon full and competent completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify, compare, distinguish, and critically consider a variety of major theoretical traditions within environmental philosophy, with attention to both their respective theoretical and practical grounds, and their potential practical effectiveness.
- Reflect, through critical engagement with environmental philosophy, and with greater precision and subtlety, upon a range of issues pertinent to the relationship of humanity to non-human nature.
- Think through precise concepts and distinctions with greater dexterity and agility.
- Write argumentative essays with improved clarity and precision.
Assignments Guidelines:

All written work, unless otherwise specified, should be written independently. You are encouraged to discuss all aspects of this course with your fellow students, but the work you turn in must be entirely your own. Any academic dishonesty will result, at minimum, in course failure. All work is to be submitted in class, unless otherwise directed. No work may be submitted via email without prior arrangement.

University of Oregon Academic Misconduct Code:

http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx

Philosophy Department Grading Rubric:

A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Technology Guidelines:

No electronic devices may be used during class time. This includes all portable computers, tablets, phones, blackberries, mp3 players, etc. When emailing your esteemed instructor(s), please reference PHL 332 in the topic heading, address the email (Steven, Dr. Brence, Hey you, etc.), use complete sentences, proper punctuation and spelling, and sign your message. Please do email us if we can be of assistance, but do not contribute to the further deterioration of our capacity for language, or to basic standards of politeness and civility, in the process.

Classroom Guidelines:

Class attendance is required. You are expected to arrive before class begins, be respectful and polite to everyone in the room, and to stay until it ends. If you should need to leave before the end of class, please let your instructor know before class begins.

Accessibility:

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if aspects of the instruction or course design result in barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Accessible Education in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu
Schedule*:

Week 1 (March 31 - Apr. 4): Ecology and Phenomenology


No Lecture class Friday, April 4th. (Discussion classes will take place as scheduled.)

Week 2 (Apr. 7 - 11): Deep Ecology

Abram continued + excerpts from the film The Cruise (Bennett Miller, 1999)
Neil Evernden, “Nature in Industrial Society”

Week 3 (Apr. 14 - 18): Deeep Ecology

Arne Naess, “The Deep Ecology Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects”
George Sessions, “Ecocentrism, Wilderness, and Global Ecosystem Protection”

**W (4/16): Essay #1 assigned in class**

Ramachandra Guha, “Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation”

Week 4 (Apr. 21 - Apr. 25): Social Ecology

"Pandora's Box: Episode 4, Goodbye Mrs. Ant" (Adam Curtis, 1992):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERLtyaugzw4
Murray Bookchin, “What is Social Ecology?”

**F (4/25): Essay #1 due in class**

Week 5 (Apr. 28 - May 2): Social Ecology, Ecofeminism

Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen, "Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health"
Mary Mellor, “Ecofeminism and Environmental Ethics: A Materialist Perspective”

Week 6 (May 5 - 9): Bioregionalism

Kirkpatrick Sale, “Dwellers in the Land”
Jim Dodge, “Living by Life: Some Bioregional Theory and Practice”
William G. Robbins - "Bioregional and Cultural Meaning: The Problem of the Pacific Northwest"
Judith Plant, “Revaluing Home: Feminism and Bioregionalism”
Week 7 (May 12 - 16): Bioregionalism, Technology

Jason Corburn, “Street Science: Characterizing Local Knowledge”
Martin Heidegger, “Memorial Address”

**W (5/14): Essay #2 assigned in class**

Film: *Koyaanisqatsi* (Godfrey Reggio, 1982)
[screening; Thurs. May 15, 7 pm]

Week 8 (May 19 - 23): Technology

Langdon Winner, “Luddism as Epistemology”
Albert Borgmann, “Information and Reality at the Turn of the Century”
Edward Spence - "Consumption and Sustainability: A Neo-Epicurean Approach to a Sustainable Good Life in a Technological Age"

**F (5/23): Essay #2 due in class**

Week 9 (May 26 - May 30): Environmental Activism

M (5/27): Memorial Day

Paul Watson, “Tora! Tora! Tora!”, Excerpts from "Whale Wars"
Dave Foreman, “Putting the Earth First,” “Strategic Monkeywrenching”

Week 10 (Jun. 2 - Jun. 6): Environmental Activism

Julia "Butterfly" Hill, “The Legacy of Luna”

**M (6/2): Essay #3 assigned in class**

Kate Rawles, “The Missing Shade of Green”
J. Baird Callicott, “Environmental Philosophy is Environmental Activism”

Finals Week

**Tuesday, Jun. 10 (3:00 p.m.): Essay #3 due**

[Bring completed essays to 211 Susan Campbell Hall.]

* Changes may be made to this schedule at any time and announced in class, via email, or both. It is the responsibility of students to keep track of any such changes.