

Environmental Destruction – So what? (7,5 ECTS credits)

Level: 1st cycle
Course code: 0299

Admission requirements

General admission requirements for university studies. The course is a freestanding course.

Educational goals

After having completed the course, students are expected to:

- Be able to give an account of the content and aims of ethics in general and environmental ethics in particular.
- To see how and why ethics is relevant for both understanding and solving environmental problems.
- Understand the basics of some different ethical/moral theories, and how they can be distinguished from one another.
- Show a basic understanding of how the ethical/moral theories can be applied to real world environmental problems in order to find solutions to them.
- Demonstrate the ability to use the ethical tools in order to deal with environmental decision-making under uncertainty.

Course content

We currently face several environmental problems such as deforestation, climate change, pollution, mass extinction, ocean acidification and desertification. However, we tend to disagree about what we should do about them. Some people think that the environmental problems deserve all of our attention. Others think that we should not even care about them, but instead spend our time and money on other things. So, who is right on these matters? In order to answer this question, and the question of what exactly we should do about the environmental problems, several ethical questions must first be answered: (i) *What* is valuable in itself; only wellbeing or other things such as freedom or life as such? (ii) For *whom* should these values be revered; only for humans or also for non-human animals or maybe entire ecosystems? And, (iii) *how* is this to be done; through

maximization or mere respect? These are some of the questions that we will deal with in this course. We will look at different ethical theories that tries to answer them. We will also learn how to apply these ethical theories to real world environmental problems in order to get action-guidance. We will moreover discuss how the tools that environmental ethics provides can be used in order to remove ideological obstacles in climate politics. Also, we will look at how they can be used to deal with decision-making in cases of uncertainty.

Teaching and examination

Instruction will be in the form of lectures and discussion seminars, in Uppsala. If there is interest among the students, we will also visit Stockholm for some relevant event.

The examination consists in a written essay at the end of the course. The final paper is preferably to be written in English, but it is also permissible to write it in Swedish.

Bibliography

Hourdequin, Marion (2015), *Environmental Ethics: From Theory to Practice*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. (ISBN: 978-1-47250-783-9)

Keller, David (ed.) (2010), *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*, Wiley-Blackwell. (ISBN: 978-1-4051-7638-5)

Roser, Dominic, and Seidel, Christian (2017), *Climate Justice: An Introduction*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. (This book is also used in the course "Climate Change Negotiations".)

Torpman, Olle (2016) *Libertarianism and Climate Change*, PhD dissertation. (This one will be provided electronically by the teacher/author.)

Coe, Neil M., Kelly, Philip F., and Yeung, Henry W.C. (2007), "ENVIRONMENT /ECONOMY: Can nature be a commodity?", pp. 153-184 in *Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing. (This text will be provided electronically by the teacher.)

See also "Kursplaner: allmänna bestämmelser" (Course plans: General rules)

Finalised 2018-07-04

Valid as 2018-07-15