PHILO 295 – Introduction to Environmental Ethics

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Office: 204 Dickens Hall
Office Hours: W 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Fall 2026
MWF 1:30 pm – 2:20 pm
306 Calvin Hall

Course Description
Introduces and compares ethical theories applying issues arising from the use and exploitation of the environment, such as the value of biodiversity, obligations to future generations, obligations to non-humans, and the ethics of environmental risk management.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes
1. Students will develop reading comprehension of texts with complex argumentative structure
2. Students will analyze and formulate arguments with complex argumentative structure
3. Students will discuss and debate various ethical problems with others through dialogue
4. Students will analyze different conceptions of ethical concepts such as rights and duties, the good, and justice
5. Students will apply methods in philosophy for assessing alternative claims about different conceptions of ethical concepts
6. Students will apply ethical concepts to reach principled moral judgments about what ought to be done in novel or real-world cases

Required Materials
All required course materials are available on Canvas.

Grading
Your grade in the course will be composed of the following:

Warm-ups	15%
Discussion	25%
Quizzes	25%
Final Exam	35%

Assignment and final grades will be according to the following scale:

A	90	Excellent work
B	80	Good work
C	70	Fair work
D	60	Poor work
F	0	Failure

Assignments
Warm-ups
Each class not allocated for discussion will begin with a short thought experiment, puzzle, paradox or similar for students to consider and respond to. Students will submit short written responses. Student responses will be graded for completion. An earnest attempt at responding to the warm-up earns full credit. The lowest two grades will not be included in the final grade calculation.

Discussion
At the beginning of class on days allocated for discussion, students will submit a claims card. On either side of an index card, students will submit one substantive philosophical or ethical claim from that week's reading which they agree with and would be willing to defend in class and one substantive philosophical or ethical claim which they disagree with and would be willing to critique in class. One of the two claims can be substituted for a substantive question about the assigned reading. Both claims (or both claim and question) should include a citation to the text. Discussion grades will be based on a combination of submitting a claims card which meets the above requirements as well as participating in the class discussion of the assigned reading. Students who do not participate in three or more consecutive class discussions will lose credit on their discussion grade. Students who do not submit a satisfactory claims card will not receive any credit for that week's discussion.

Quizzes
At the end of each unit, there will be a short quiz to assess comprehension of the reading assignments. Quizzes will consist of five multiple choice questions. Quizzes are open book and open note. The lowest quiz grade will not be included in the final grade calculation.

Final Exam
The final exam will consist of essay questions. Students will respond to four essay prompts from among a larger selection. Two of these responses will be expository in nature with students explaining some argument or position from the assigned reading. Two of these responses will be argumentative in nature with students making a philosophical argument of their own. The final exam is open book and open note. Sample exam responses are available on Canvas.

Due Dates
Work will not be accepted after the due date. If for some reason you find yourself unable to complete your work by the due date, talk to me and we can discuss the possibility of an extension. Once the due date has passed, however, no late work will be accepted.

Electronics
The use of personal electronics (laptops, cell phones, etc.) is not permitted during class meetings except when such use is required as part of an approved accommodation.

AI Use
In this course, the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT and similar) is not permitted unless an assignment explicitly states otherwise. When AI use is permitted for a specific task, the assignment instructions will define what is allowed and what disclosure is required. Submitting AI-generated or AI-assisted work when it is not permitted, or failing to follow an assignment's disclosure rules, may be treated as a violation of course policies and applicable academic integrity standards. Students remain responsible for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all submitted work.

Academic Honesty
Kansas State University has an Honor and Integrity System based on personal integrity, which is presumed to be sufficient assurance that, in academic matters, one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor and Integrity System. The policies and procedures of the Honor and Integrity System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. A component vital to the Honor and Integrity System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work." A grade of XF can result from a

breach of academic honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge violation.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend class meetings as scheduled. When a student provides reasonable advance written documentation of the need for a University excused absence, they shall be provided the opportunity to make up any missed assignments or activities.

Student Resources
K-State has many resources to help contribute to student success. These resources include accommodations for academics, paying for college, student life, health and safety, and others. Check out the Wildcat One Stop for Help and Resources for more information.

Your mental health and good relationships are vital to your overall well-being. Symptoms of mental health issues may include excessive sadness or worry, thoughts of death or self-harm, inability to concentrate, lack of motivation, or substance abuse. Although problems can occur anytime for anyone, you should pay extra attention to your mental health if you are feeling academic or financial stress, discrimination, or have experienced a traumatic event, such as loss of a friend or family member, sexual assault or other physical or emotional abuse.

If you are struggling with these issues, do not wait to seek assistance.

Kansas State University Counseling and Psychological Services offers free and confidential services to assist you to meet these challenges.

Lafene Health Center has specialized nurse practitioners to assist with mental health.

The Division of Academic Success and Student Affairs can direct you to additional resources.

K-State Family Center offers individual, couple, and family counseling services on a sliding fee scale.

Center for Advocacy, Response, and Education (CARE) provides free and confidential assistance for those in our K-State community who have been victimized by violence.

Resources for Students with Disabilities
At K-State it is important that every student has access to course content and the means to demonstrate course mastery. Students with disabilities may benefit from services including accommodations provided by the Student Access Center. Disabilities can include physical, learning, executive functions, and mental health. You may register at the Student Access Center or to learn more contact:

Student Access Center
accesscenter@k-state.edu
785-532-6441

Students already registered with the Student Access Center please request your Letters of Accommodation early in the semester to provide adequate time to arrange your approved academic accommodations. Once SAC approves your Letter of Accommodation it will be e-mailed to you, and your instructor(s) for this course. Please follow up with your instructor to discuss how best to implement the approved accommodations.

University Expectations for Classroom Conduct
All student activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the Student Judicial Conduct Code as outlined in the Student Governing Association By Laws, Article V, Section 3, number 2. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave the class.

Mutual Respect and Inclusion in K-State Teaching and Learning Spaces
At K-State, faculty and staff are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive and supportive learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. K-State courses, labs, and other virtual and physical learning spaces promote equitable opportunity to learn, participate, contribute, and succeed, regardless of age, race, color, ethnicity, nationality, genetic information, ancestry, disability, socioeconomic status, military or veteran status, immigration status, Indigenous identity, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, religion, culture, as well as other social identities.

Faculty and staff are committed to promoting equity and believe the success of an inclusive learning environment relies on the participation, support, and understanding of all students. Students are encouraged to share their views and lived experiences as they relate to the course or their course experience, while recognizing they are doing so in a learning environment in which all are expected to engage with respect to honor the rights, safety, and dignity of others in keeping with the K-State Principles of Community.

If you feel uncomfortable because of comments or behavior encountered in this class, you may bring it to the attention of your instructor, advisors, and/or mentors. If you have questions about how to proceed with a confidential process to resolve concerns, please contact the Student Ombudsperson Office. Violations of the student code of conduct can be reported using the Code of Conduct Reporting Form. You can also report discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment, if needed.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment
Kansas State University is committed to maintaining academic, housing, and work environments that are free of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment. Instructors support the University's commitment by creating a safe learning environment during this course, free of conduct that would interfere with your academic opportunities. Instructors also have a duty to report any behavior they become aware of that potentially violates the University's policy prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment, as outlined by PPM 3010.

If a student is subjected to discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment, they are encouraged to make a non-confidential report to the University's Civil Rights and Title IX (CR & TIX) using the online reporting form. Incident disclosure is not required to receive resources at K-State. Reports that include domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, should be considered for reporting by the complainant to the Kansas State University Police Department or the Riley County Police Department. Reports made to law enforcement are separate from reports made to CR & TIX. A complainant can choose to report to one or both entities. Confidential support and advocacy can be found with the K-State Center for Advocacy, Response, and Education (CARE). Confidential mental health services can be found with Lafene Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Academic support can be found with the Student Support and Accountability (SSA). SSA is a non-confidential resource. CR & TIX also provides a comprehensive list of resources on their website. If you have questions about non-confidential and confidential resources, please contact CR & TIX at civilrights@k-state.edu or (785) 532-6220.

Campus Safety
Kansas State University is committed to providing a safe teaching and learning environment for student and faculty members. In order to enhance your safety in the unlikely case of a campus emergency make

sure that you know where and how to quickly exit your classroom and how to follow any emergency directives.

Locate the Severe Weather Protection Area or tornado shelter signs in your building or ask your department head.

Download the K-State Safe App Today! K-State Safe is the official mobile safety app for Kansas State University. It provides a direct connection to K-State Police, tools to help you stay safe on campus, notifications and alerts, emergency response guides, maps, as well as various health, safety and wellness resources.

Winter weather is part of living in Kansas. It is rare that the university cancels classes and modifies operations for weather. When K-State makes inclement weather-related decisions, we first consider public safety and then the effect those decisions will have on classes and our operations.

Current Campus Emergency Information is available at the University's Advisory webpage.

Weapons Policy
Kansas State University prohibits the possession of firearms, explosives, and other weapons on any University campus, with certain limited exceptions, including the lawful concealed carrying of handguns, as provided in the University Weapons Policy. You are encouraged to take the online weapons policy education module to ensure you understand the requirements of the policy, including the requirements related to concealed carrying of handguns on campus. Students possessing a concealed handgun on campus must be lawfully eligible to carry and either at least 21 years of age or a licensed individual who is 18-21 years of age. All carrying requirements of the policy must be observed in this class, including but not limited to the requirement that a concealed handgun be completely hidden from view, securely held in a holster that meets the specifications of the policy, carried without a chambered round of ammunition, and that any external safety be in the "on" position.

If an individual carries a concealed handgun in a personal carrier such as a backpack, purse, or handbag, the carrier must remain within the individual's exclusive and uninterrupted control. This includes wearing the carrier with a strap, carrying or holding the carrier, or setting the carrier next to or within the immediate reach of the individual.

Each individual who lawfully possesses a handgun on campus shall be wholly and solely responsible for carrying, storing and using that handgun in a safe manner and in accordance with the law, Board policy and University policy. All reports of suspected violation of the weapons policy are made to the University Police Department by picking up any Emergency Campus Phone or by calling 785-532-6412.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading
Week 1	Introduction	Syllabus
Week 2	Introduction	Sarkar, "What is the Environment?" and Vogel, "Why 'Nature' Has No Place in Environmental Philosophy"
Week 3	Aesthetics	Carlson, "Nature, Aesthetic Judgments, and Objectivity"
Week 4	Aesthetics	Brady, "Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature"
Week 5	Anthropocentrism	Leopold, "The Land Ethic"
Week 6	Anthropocentrism	O'Neill, "Environmental Values, Anthropocentrism, and Speciesism"
Week 7	Animal Ethics	Norcross, "Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases"
Week 8	Animal Ethics	Fischer, "Animal Research"
Week 9	Climate Change	Sinnott-Armstrong, "It's Not *My* Fault: Global Warming and Individual Moral Obligations"
Week 10	Climate Change	Hiller, "Climate Change and Individual Responsibility"
Week 11	Future Generations	Parfit, "The Non-Identity Problem"
Week 12	Future Generations	Parfit, "The Repugnant Conclusion"
Week 13	De-Extinction	Turner, "The Restorationist Argument for Extinction Reversal"
Week 14	Thanksgiving	No class
Week 15	Justice	Shue, "Global Environment and International Inequality"
Week 16	Dead Week	Review

The final exam will be held on Friday, December 18 from 11:50 am to 1:40 pm in 306 Calvin Hall.