

University of Southern California  
ENST 344: Environmental Ethics

Class Day/Time: TTH 12.30-1.50 Location: WPH 205

Instructor: Dr. Monalisa Chatterjee

Office: CAS 110, Office Hours: TTH- 2-4 pm or by appointment

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Environmental problems are complex. Part of the complexity comes from different ideologies that define society's relationship with the environment and consequently determine the purpose and approach to environmental problem solving. Protecting the environment to safeguard resources required for human welfare is often the underlying objective for environmental problem solving. If successful, these efforts frequently produce a skewed outcome saving only economically useful components of the environment. Protecting the environment requires looking beyond the economic values of the environment to ensure complete ecosystems, the natural world in its entirety is protected.

### **Learning Objectives**

The class will prepare students to

- identify and understand multiple perspectives towards environment and learn to be the linking member in a multidisciplinary team with different and competing approaches to environmental problem solving
- critically evaluate real world challenges relating energy, water, forests that are often nested in sustainable development processes
- have strong foundation in environmental justice issues
- deliberate and communicate about complex environmental problems
- use local and global cases and develop an experience based knowledge on ethics and environment problems

**Please refer to <https://dornsife.usc.edu/environmental-studies/learning-objectives/> for more information.**

### **Required readings and other material**

*Readings and other materials* will be provided via blackboard webpage

<https://blackboard.usc.edu>.

### **Suggested readings –**

Desjardins J.R. 2013. Environmental ethics (fifth edition) Wadsworth learning

Light and Rolston. 2011. Environmental Ethics. An anthology. Blackwell Publishing

## Tentative Course Schedule

| Date             | Topic   | Readings (these are tentative, I may change some as we get closer to the week. All readings will be posted on blackboard, regularly check class page of blackboard)   |
|------------------|---|---|
| WEEK 1 (AUG 26)  | <b>Introduction to environmental ethics</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desjardins - Chapter 1 and 2 “Science Politics and Ethics”, “Ethical theories and the Environment”</li> </ul>  |
| WEEK 2 (SEPT 2)  | <b>One environmental ethic? moral pluralism</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stone “ Moral Pluralism and the course of environmental ethics”</li> </ul>   |
| WEEK 3 (SEPT 9)  | <b>Traditional and alternative framings</b><br><br><b>Sept 5<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker: Mike Wallich</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fox “Deep Ecology – a new philosophy of our time?”</li> <li>• Weston “Beyond intrinsic value: pragmatism in environmental ethics”</li> </ul>   |
| WEEK 4 (SEPT 16) | <b>Animal rights –I</b><br><br><b>September 19<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker: Jesse Tandler</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”</li> <li>• Warren, “ Critique of Regan’s theory;”</li> <li>• Case of Tuna and Wolves</li> </ul>  |
| WEEK 5 (SEPT 23) | <b>Animal rights –II</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kuczaj and Walker. “How Do Dolphins Solve Problems?”</li> <li>• “Justice – Honor and fair play among beasts”</li> <li>• Allen, Colin. "Animal Pain."</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/10/us/orca-whale-still-carrying-dead-baby-trnd/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/10/us/orca-whale-still-carrying-dead-baby-trnd/index.html</a></li> </ul> |

|                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| WEEK 6 (SEPT 30)               | <b>Ecofeminism – I</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A World for Sale? An Ecofeminist Reading of Sustainable Development Discourse</li> <li>• Bradley, Candice “Keeping the Soil in Good Heart: Women Weeders, the Environment, and Ecofeminism”</li> <li>• Karen Warren, “The Power and Promise of Ecofeminism”</li> </ul>   |
| WEEK 7 (OCT 7)                 | <b>Ecofeminism - II</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “LOOKING BOTH WAYS: Women’s Lives at the Crossroads of Reproductive Justice and Climate Justice”</li> <li>• “Situating the wildlife spectacle: ecofeminism, representation, and polar bear tourism”</li> </ul>   |
| WEEK 8 (OCT 14)                | (Midterm – Tuesday October 15 <sup>th</sup> ) | <b>Research paper topic finalized by October 15<sup>th</sup></b>  |
| <b>Fall Recess – Oct 17-18</b> |   |   |
| WEEK 9 (OCT 21)                | <b>Environment Justice - Pollution</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Which came first, people or pollution? A review of theory and evidence from longitudinal environmental justice studies”</li> <li>• “Sociological Theories on Air Pollution: Between Environmental Justice and the Risk Society Approach”</li> <li>• We all live in Bhopal - <a href="http://www.eco-action.org/dt/bhopal.html">http://www.eco-action.org/dt/bhopal.html</a></li> </ul>  |
| WEEK 10 (OCT 28)               | <b>Environment Justice - Food ethics</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easterbrook, “The Forgotten Benefactor of Humanity – Norman Borlaug”</li> <li>• “The End of Plenty”<br/><a href="https://www.npr.org/2015/06/08/412236817/as-global-population-Trip-grows-is-the-earth-reaching-the-end-of-plenty">https://www.npr.org/2015/06/08/412236817/as-global-population-Trip-grows-is-the-earth-reaching-the-end-of-plenty</a></li> <li>• “The Tragedy of the Grabbed Commons: Coercion and Dispossession in the Global Land Rush”</li> </ul> |

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|---|--|---|
| WEEK 11 (NOV 4)                                   | <b>Technology and environment ethics - Climate Change mitigation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Climate Sins of Our Fathers? Historical Accountability in Distributing Emissions Rights Martin Golding “Obligations to Future Generations”</li> <li>• “Climate migrants and new identities? The geopolitics of embracing or rejecting mobility”</li> </ul>  |
| WEEK 12 (NOV 11)                                  | <b>Technology and Environment Ethics – Geoengineering</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Accelerating the carbon cycle: the ethics of enhanced weathering”</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.wired.com/story/so-you-want-to-geoengineer-the-planet-beware-the-hurricanes/">https://www.wired.com/story/so-you-want-to-geoengineer-the-planet-beware-the-hurricanes/</a></li> </ul>   |
| WEEK 13 (NOV 18)                                  | <b>Environment ethics, spirituality and politics</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Defending Rivers: Vilcabamba in the South of Ecuador.” In: “Can Nature Have Rights? Legal and Political Insights,”</li> <li>• <a href="https://e360.yale.edu/features/should-rivers-have-rights-a-growing-movement-says-its-about-time">https://e360.yale.edu/features/should-rivers-have-rights-a-growing-movement-says-its-about-time</a></li> <li>• The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis</li> </ul> |
| WEEK 14 (NOV 25)                                  | <b>What on earth do we want? Sustainability and nature</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBA</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Thanksgiving break November 27th – Dec 1st</b> |  |   |
| WEEK 15 (DEC 2)                                   | Role Play – Case study   |   |
| <b>Final Exam</b>                                 | <b>December 5<sup>th</sup> in class</b>                              | Research paper Due by December 11 <sup>th</sup>   |

**Students will be evaluated in the following ways**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Midterm and Final (definitions and short essay questions) | 40% (20% each) |
| Discussion lead and presentation                          | 15%            |
| Participation/Class activities/homework                   | 10%            |
| Role play   | 10%            |
| Final paper (10 pages)                                    | 25%            |

**Presentation and discussion lead:** Students will take responsibility of presenting and leading a discussion based on readings of the week. These ‘student led’ discussions will be held on

Thursdays and the student will give a short 10 minutes presentation summarizing the readings and then will continue with facilitating a discussion on the topics covered in those readings. A signup sheet will be circulated in the second week of class.

**Participation:** Students are expected to participate actively in class, which includes attending class, reading all assigned material, and participating professionally and productively in the class. Discussion is crucial to this class, please feel free to raise any question, objection, or other thoughts about the topic being discussed.

**Class activities/homework:** Participation in group activities and contributing to the outcome of these assignments is part of class assessment. Class assignments will not be announced ahead of time. There is no make up for these assignments.

**Midterm and Final:** Exams will have short answer definitions and essay questions.

**Role Play:** A role play exercise will be conducted in class. Students will be divided in groups of stakeholders and assigned positions to debate in class to resolve the ethically challenging environmental problem. More information and guidance will be provided separately.

**Final Paper:** A carefully written paper that succinctly presents the ethical issues in a real case using outside research. The topic will be of the student's choice, refined in collaboration with the instructor and reflecting the student's research interests. The final paper will be 10 pages in length and written in the style of an academic paper. The paper will be assessed on the basis of its clarity, quality of research and content, strength of its arguments and clear conclusions.

### **Course Policies**

You are expected to have read the course materials by the date it is discussed in class. Roll will be taken periodically in the form of thought exercises, and in-class questions. You are responsible for all information, announcements, date changes, and any other course material presented, regardless of your participation in the classroom.

You will be graded on the basis of your performance on exams, written assignments, critiques, and class participation (e.g., Blackboard assignments, oral presentations, etc.). Exam questions will be drawn from course readings, assignments, lectures, and will include both short answer and essay questions. No make-up midterms or final exams will be allowed without explicit permission from the instructor. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of total points per day.

### **Grading Scale**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

|    |        |
|----|--------|
| A  | 95-100 |
| A- | 90-94  |
| B+ | 87-89  |
| B  | 83-86  |
| B- | 80-82  |
| C+ | 77-79  |
| C  | 73-76  |

## **Policy on Missed Lecture, Assignments, or Exams**

**UNPLANNED ABSENCES:** You may be excused from an exam only in the event of a documented illness or emergency as outlined by university policy. No other excuses for missing exams will be accepted. If you miss a class, quiz or graded activity due to medical illness you must present a valid medical excuse to the Instructor within 48h of the missed examination or quiz. The excuse cannot be to attend a dental appointment, a conference, or other similar reasons. The reason for missing an examination or quiz must be of a medical nature or totally unavoidable (e.g., a verified automobile collision on the day and time of the examination). Notify the Instructor in writing that you were seen by a physician, making sure that you include: 1) the physician's name and telephone number, and 2) a statement authorizing us to discuss with the doctor whether you were too ill to take the examination. Note that neither you nor the physician need tell us the nature of your illness. If the excuse is verified, we will accommodate needs. An invalid excuse, or the excuse turned in late, will result in a score of zero for the activity missed. If you miss the final examination and have provided a valid medical excuse within 72 hours of the examination time, a final course grade of incomplete (IN) will be recorded and you will be permitted to take a make-up final examination during the following semester.

**PLANNED ABSENCES:** Students who wish to miss an examination for observance of a religious holiday should be aware of the University's policy on such absences, published at: <http://orl.usc.edu/religiouslife/holydays/absences.html>. Requests for such absences should be made by email to the Instructor at least 2 weeks in advance of the absence. If the absence is approved, a reasonable accommodation will be provided.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with the Office of Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Be sure that the letter is delivered as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The telephone number of DSP is 213-740-0776. If a student's approved accommodation is limited to extra time on examinations, accommodation will be provided. For any other accommodation, such as a private room, translator, etc., students must make prior arrangements with the DSP office 2 weeks before the exam date. For more information please visit the following website: [http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html).

## **Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself

with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office* <http://equity.usc.edu> and/or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://dps.usc.edu>. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp> provides 24/7 confidential support.

### **Support Systems**

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://ali.usc.edu>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* <http://dsp.usc.edu> provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.