

University of Southern California
ENST 344: Environmental Ethics
Class Day/Time: MWF 11-11.50 am Location: WPH 207
Instructor: Dr. Monalisa Chatterjee
monalisc@usc.edu
Office: CAS 110, Office Hours (over Zoom)
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9:00-12:00 or by appointment
(make office hours appointments via calendly.com/monalisa-chatterjee)

Overview

Environmental problems are complex. Part of the complexity comes from fundamental ideologies that define society's relationship with the environment and, as a result, determine the purpose and approach to environmental problem-solving. The underlying goal of environmental policy solutions is often protecting the environment and better-managing resources required for human welfare. If successful, these efforts frequently produce a skewed outcome saving only economically useful components of the environment. Moreover, these results are unevenly distributed, with marginalized communities suffering disproportionately large shares of the negative consequences. Protecting the environment requires looking beyond the economic values of the environment to ensure complete ecosystems. The natural world in its entirety, is protected. Decisions about the environment must consider inequities and issues of environmental injustice to ensure actions taken do not exacerbate but address the social imbalances and discrepancies in outcomes. The class will review a wide spectrum of ethical positions on questions, such as, what is the value of the environment? Where do these values come from? How do we make ethical decisions about the environment when perceived values conflict? How are experiences with the natural world distributed in society? How do issues of social justice transcend complex environmental problems and vice versa? Are there parallels between the exploitation of nature and marginalized groups? What is the relationship between science, technology, and ethics in environmental actions?

Learning Objectives

The class will prepare students to

- identify and understand different philosophical framings toward the environment
- learn to be the linking member in a multidisciplinary team with different and often competing approaches to environmental problem solving
- critically evaluate real-world challenges relating to energy, water, and forests that are often nested in sustainable development processes and connect them to philosophical and moral challenges in society
- have a strong foundation in environmental justice issues
- deliberate and communicate about complex environmental problems

- use local and global cases and develop an experience-based knowledge of ethics and environmental problems
- have a sophisticated conceptual and philosophical vocabulary and knowledge of fundamental concepts and ideologies relevant to environmental issues
- connect abstract theories with lived practice and learn about the grassroots work and local leaders who are making efforts to improve social justice and environmental conservation simultaneously

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

Required readings and other material

Readings and other materials are provided via the Blackboard webpage <https://blackboard.usc.edu>.

Optional textbooks for additional reading –

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

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

Ground rules for classroom -

- Share responsibility for including all voices in the conversation.
- Listen respectfully.
- Be open to changing your perspectives based on what you learn from others.
- Understand that we are bound to make mistakes in this space.
- Understand that your words have effects on others.
- Take pair work or small group work seriously.
- Understand that others will come to these discussions with different experiences from yours.
- Make an effort to get to know other students. Introduce yourself to students sitting near or in breakout groups with you.
- Understand that there are different approaches to solving problems.

Tentative Lecture Schedule

Date	Topic	Activities and assignments
WEEK 1 (AUGUST 21)	Introduction to environmental ethics Science, politics, and Ethics	Environmental stewardship exercise
WEEK 2 (AUGUST 28)	Ethical Theories and the Environment One environmental ethic or moral pluralism	Assignment 1: Bring your favorite cartoon/meme to class!

WEEK 3 (SEPT 4 TH) Sept 4 th is a holiday	Instrumental and intrinsic values Traditional and alternative framings, deep ecology	Student presentation 1
WEEK 4 (SEPTEMBER 11)	Environment ethics, spirituality, and politics, indigenous approaches and historical roots	Student presentation 2 9th Annual Environmental Justice Conference, Building a Clean Air Future Together -September 13, 2023
WEEK 5 (SEPTEMBER 18)	Animal Rights –I Foundation and critiques, similarities and differences with environmental conservation movements	Student presentation 3 Home assignment: Documentary reflection Due September 22
WEEK 6 (SEPTEMBER 25)	Animal Rights –II Sentience, pain, justice, and honor among non-human species, what is a pet?	Student presentation 4
September 30th - Oct 1st	<i>Catalina field trip weekend</i>	
WEEK 7 (OCTOBER 2)	Ecofeminism Environment and Ecofeminism: parallels between nature and women	Catalina reflection assignment is due October 1
WEEK 8 (OCTOBER 9)	Intersectionality	Student Presentation 5 (October 11) Home Assignment: Introduce an ecofeminist due October 11
Fall Break Oct 12-13th		
WEEK 9 (OCTOBER 16)	Environment Justice - Pollution Environmental justice and the Risk Society, pollution, exposure, and health	Student Presentation 6
WEEK 10 (OCT 23 TH)	Environment Justice - Food ethics Green revolution and altering of the global agricultural landscape, ongoing land rush, and dispossession of traditional communities	Student Presentation 7 Let's Talk about George Floyd: Systemic Racism in the United States Today -October 24, 2023 Environmental Justice reflection assignment due October 27

WEEK 11 (OCTOBER 30)	Technology and environment ethics - Climate Change Historical accountability; climate migrants	Exam (October 30) Student presentation 8
WEEK 12 (NOVEMBER 6)	Technology and environment ethics – Geoengineering Ethical implications of enhanced weathering and designed climate	Student presentation 9
WEEK 13 (NOVEMBER 13)	Case study – Applying ethics and justice lens to environmental decisions	Role play exercise
Thanksgiving week Nov 20th-24th		
WEEK 14 (NOVEMBER 28)	Wrap up	Case study paper is due by December 1
No Final Exam		

Students will be evaluated in the following ways:

Exam (definitions, short and long essay questions)	25%
Discussion lead and presentation	10%
Participation/Class activities/discussion	10%
Homework assignments	7.50%
Catalina Trip/Environmental Justice conference & talk reflection assignment	7.50%
Roleplay	15%
Case study paper (8-10 pages)	25%

Exam: There is one exam in the course. It will have short answer definitions and essay questions. The exam will be held on October 30 same time/venue as the class.

Presentation and discussion lead: Students will take responsibility for presenting and leading a discussion based on the week's readings. These 'students-led' discussions will be held on Fridays and the students will give a short 10 minutes presentation summarizing the readings. Then they will continue facilitating a discussion on the topics covered in those readings. Each student should participate in the presentation and moderation of the discussion. A signup sheet will be circulated in the second week of class.

Participation/Class activities/Discussion: Students are expected to participate actively in class, which includes attending class, reading all assigned material, and participating professionally and productively. Discussion is crucial to this class; please feel free to raise any questions, objections, or

other thoughts about the discussed topic. For student-led discussion days, everyone will submit questions on the discussion board on Blackboard by Thursday midnight.

Homework Assignments: This class has three home assignments, and they are all on the schedule. Additional information will be shared on the Blackboard.

Catalina Trip/Environmental Justice conference & talk reflection assignment: An experiential component of the class requires students to do **one** of the following two assignments. A signup sheet will be circulated in the second week of the course. Additional details and prompts will be shared on the Blackboard. This assignment is worth 7.5% of your grade.

- An overnight trip to Wrigley Marine Science Center (WMSC)¹ on Catalina Island: September 30- October 1 (Saturday and Sunday). On this trip, you will engage in lectures, discussions, and reflections on Environmental Ethics and building ecological consciousness. There will be excursions and opportunities for exploration of terrestrial and marine biodiversity in a unique island ecosystem (e.g., guided hikes, snorkeling, and kayaking) and to reflect on how humans interact with non-human species and what it means to be a part of the ecological community. You will have a short assignment to complete while on Catalina Island (based on the weekend's lectures, activities, and discussions); you will submit this assignment before we leave the island on Sunday. Students from ENST 405 (Public Engagement for Nature Conservation) will join us in these activities.

OR

- Students will register and attend either in person or over Zoom the following two events (both) on racism and environmental injustice.
9th Annual Environmental Justice Conference, Building a Clean Air Future Together
September 13, 2023, 10 am -1.30 pm, register by September 1, Free event
https://whova.com/portal/registration/envir1_202309/
Let's Talk about George Floyd: Systemic Racism in the United States Today
Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 6 pm. Free event. RSVP by September 1
https://visionsandvoices.usc.edu/eventdetails/?event_id=43415119438464&s_type=&s_ge_nre=
Reflecting on the two experiences' content, you must submit a reflection assignment by October 27.

Roleplay: Details about a real-world case will be shared, and a roleplay exercise will be conducted in class. Students will be divided into groups of stakeholders and assigned positions to debate in class

¹ While on Catalina Island, you will have a shared room in USC's WMSC dormitories and meals in the cafeteria. You will only be billed for meals (example - \$6 Breakfast/\$7 Lunch¹/\$10 Dinner) directly through your student account, your accommodations and the boat ride to/from the island will be covered by the ENST program. Students must wear either sturdy athletic shoes or hiking boots while hiking on Catalina Island, and on the boat ride to and from the island. For planning purposes, I will be asking you to register for the trip (including dietary requirements) so that the Wrigley Staff can prepare housing, meals, and plan for the excursions. Further details about the trip and the assignment will be provided as we get closer to the date of the trip. Transportation to/from SCMI (where we catch the boat to Catalina) will be provided. We will depart campus at 6:30 am on Saturday September 30th and return back on campus on Sunday October 1st by about 4:30 pm.

to resolve the ethically challenging environmental problem. More information and guidance will be provided separately.

Final Paper: We will continue to use the real-world case study used for the roleplay exercise for the final paper. In the final paper, each student will summarize the ethical challenges identified in the case study and the solutions explored during the roleplay exercise. Based on the readings provided, individual research on the topic, and discussion/debate during the roleplay exercise, students will present their arguments to emphasize the different types of moral/ethical/justice related concerns in the case and the best way to address them. The final paper will be 8-10 pages long and written as an academic paper. The paper will be assessed based on its clarity, quality of research and content, strength of its arguments, and clear conclusions. More guidance will be provided.

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 based on 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, and lectures, including 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	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76

Zoom, Policy on Missed Lecture, Assignments, or Exams

This is an in-person synchronous class so you are expected to be present for each lecture section. This is an interaction heavy class, I will not be allowing students to "Zoom In." There will be no Zoom recordings available for students who miss a class. You will be expected to get the notes from your fellow students and you can of course meet with me to go over any questions you may have. While it is understandable that you may have to miss a class occasionally, you are strongly recommended to avoid missing classes as much as possible. If you cannot commit to regular attendance, please let me know and we will work with your advisor to find you a suitable alternative.

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, including: 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. Suppose you miss the final examination and have provided a valid medical excuse within 72 hours of the examination time. In that case, 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 emailed to the Instructor at least 2 weeks before the absence. If the absence is approved, 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 am to 5:00 pm, 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/academicsupport/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.

Research Support: Need to do research but don't know where to start? Not sure how to cite a source in your bibliography? Ask a librarian! <http://libguides.usc.edu/> General Academic Support: The Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity provides customized support services to help students transition into college and achieve their academic goals. <https://kortschakcenter.usc.edu/> Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call suicidepreventionlifeline.org Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298 equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298 usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776 dsp.usc.edu Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710 campussupport.usc.edu Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101 diversity.usc.edu Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC) ombuds.usc.edu A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds.