

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2016-2017

Philosophy 2033B: Introduction to Environmental Philosophy
Previously Philosophy110

Winter Term 2018
M 11:30 1:30; W 12:30 1:30
AHB-1B08

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Office Hours: MW 2:30 3:30, or by
appointment

DESCRIPTION

We live in a time in which environmental issues are very much in the news; climate change is one prominent issue.

This course is about how to think about such things. How are we to react to sometimes contradictory information in the media? Once we believe we know what is happening, what are the causes and solutions? Is environmental degradation an inevitable by-product of the presence of more than 7 billion human beings, or is it rooted in some fact about our culture? Is it the Western attitude towards the natural world? Is it something about our economic system? If we want to protect our environment, what is it that is worth saving, and why? Do we have a duty to protect Nature which is independent of its benefits to human beings? Is governmental regulation the answer, or should we let markets take care of things? This course is an invitation to think about and discuss these philosophical questions and others, and to investigate what others have said about them.

TEXTS

Assigned readings available on the course OWL site.

OBJECTIVES

This course has three main objectives. The first is to give a broad overview of the sorts of environmental issues that are facing us today. The second is for students to become familiar with the main schools of thought in approaching such issues. The third, and most important, is for students to develop a set of skills that will help them make up their own minds about environmental issues in a changing political and social context.

