

South Central College

PHIL 210 Environmental Ethics

Common Course Outline

Course Information

Description This class explores the place of human beings within the broader ecosystem,

Linked External Standards

9c - Analyze and reflect on the ethical dimensions of legal, social, and scientific issues.

10b - Discern patterns and interrelationships of bio-physical and socio-cultural systems.

10c - Describe the basic institutional arrangements (social, legal, political, economic, religious) that are evolving to deal with environmental and natural resource challenges.

10d - Evaluate critically environmental and natural resource issues in light of understandings about interrelationships, ecosystems, and institutions.

Learning Objectives

Identify ways in which science has contributed to our understanding of and the development of solutions to environmental problems.

Identify ways in which science and technology have contributed to environmental problems.

Demonstrate a basic understanding of the following environmental problems: air pollution, water pollution, toxic waste, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, climate change.

3. Explain the causes and potential consequences of climate change.

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Learning Objectives

Recognize the role of greenhouse gases in causing climate change.

Demonstrate an understanding of methods used to forecast the climate and uncertainties created by positive and negative feedback loops.

Explain the predicted consequences of climate change.

4. Evaluate efforts to deny and/or evade moral responsibility for climate change.

Linked External Standards

9a - Examine, articulate, and apply their own ethical views.

9b - Understand and apply core concepts (e.g. politics, rights and obligations, justice, liberty) to specific issues.

9c - Analyze and reflect on the ethical dimensions of legal, social, and scientific issues.

9d - Recognize the diversity of political motivations and interests of others.

9e - Identify ways to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

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Learning Objectives

Contrast the scientific consensus on climate change with claims made by denialists.

Identify the ideological perspectives and financial interests which underlie denialism.

Assess the historical and contemporary contributions of First-World consumers and the global poor to climate change.

5. Assess the range of political, economic and technological proposals to address climate change.

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10e - Propose and assess alternative solutions to environmental problems.

10f - Articulate and defend the actions they would take on various environmental issues.

Learning Objectives

Summarize the actual (enacted) and proposed responses to the climate crisis.

Evaluate the relative efficacy and feasibility of proposed solutions in light of the obstacles to their implementation.

6. Identify the different stages and dimensions of the environmental movement.

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Learning Objectives

Recall the historical development of the environmental movement.

Identify the differences between mainstream and radical environmentalists.

Assess radical and conservative criticisms of the mainstream movement.

7. Explore the political and economic aspects of environmental problems.

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Learning Objectives

Contrast the approaches of different political parties to environmental issues.

Evaluate the obstacles to change and the prospects for progress toward greater sustainability.

Contrast the "free market" approach to environmental problems with regulatory and market-based alternatives.

Explain the difference between internalized and externalized costs and the use of green fees to address the latter.

8. Examine the contribution of population growth and overconsumption to environmental problems.

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Learning Objectives

Explain the history and causes of human population growth.

Assess the efficacy, feasibility and moral acceptability of proposed solutions to excessive population growth.

Contrast consumption levels among First-World consumers with those of the global poor, including a self-assessment of one's individual impact.

Identify wasteful forms of consumption and the ways in which they contribute to environmental problems.

Recognize the definition and historical development of the ideology of consumerism.

Evaluate criticisms of consumerisms and efforts to combat overconsumption.

9. Analyze modern methods of food production and more sustainable alternatives.

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Learning Objectives

Contrast traditional forms of small-scale agriculture with industrial methods of food production.

Assess the moral permissibility of raising animals in CAFOs (factory farms).

Evaluate the feasibility and ethical implications of sustainable alternatives to industrial methods.

10. Explain the causes and consequences of the current and ongoing mass extinction.

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Learning Objectives

Identify the primary causes of contemporary extinction rates.

Assess the instrumental and intrinsic arguments for the preservation of biodiversity.

Evaluate the feasibility and moral acceptability of different proposals to slow the rate of extinction.

11. Identify and defend a plausible and promising solution to a specific environmental problem.

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- 10d - Evaluate critically environmental and natural resource issues in light of understandings about interrelationships, ecosystems, and institutions.
- 10e - Propose and assess alternative solutions to environmental problems.
- 10f - Articulate and defend the actions they would take on various environmental issues.

Learning Objectives

Describe the causes and dimensions of a specific environmental problem.
Identify the range of solutions which have been proposed in response to the problem.
Determine which solution is most promising and justify the choice.