

Date prepared: 5/30/14

Syllabus  
The University of New Orleans  
Dept. of Philosophy

## PHIL 4205: Environmental Ethics (3 credits)

SECTION 476: Online

### Contact Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Surprenant  
**Office:** UNO: LA 387  
**Office Hours:** M: 11-3 (on campus), T/Th: 10-11 (via Skype), & by appointment  
**Office Phone:** (504) 280-6818  
**Email:** csurpren@uno.edu  
**Skype:** cwsurprenant  
**Course Webpages:** Accessed via Moodle.

### Required Text

[1] Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (available as a pdf on Moodle)

Other required readings are available via Moodle.

### Course Description

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** *A philosophical study of theories and problems concerning the moral relationship between human beings and the non-human world, including animals and ecosystems.*

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** This course is an upper-level course in applied moral philosophy, with a particular emphasis on issues related to the environment. The first part of the course focuses on three core ethical theories: virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and consequentialist ethics. The remainder of the course focuses on a careful reading of Peter Singer's *Practical Ethics*.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- understand the major ethical theories include utilitarianism, consequentialism, and deontological ethics
- understand how these major ethical theories can be applied to issues related to humans and the environment
- identify and understand the relevant philosophical issues related to ethics and the environment
- develop and display an ability and readiness to defend their own point of view while listening openly but carefully to others to diagram the structure of arguments
- construct sound arguments demonstrating an appropriate level of mastery of the material

Grades will be based on a 100 point scale distributed as follows:

Requirement			Final grade	
<b>Short Paper</b>	(25%)	25 points	<b>A</b>	100.0 – 89.5 points
<b>Long Paper</b>	(50%)	50 points	<b>B</b>	89.4 – 79.5 points
<b>Participation</b>	(25%)	25 points	<b>C</b>	79.4 – 69.5 points
			<b>D</b>	69.4 – 59.5 points
			<b>F</b>	59.4 – 0 points

Course Requirements

**ONLINE PARTICIPATION:** This course is an upper-level seminar in philosophy. A significant portion of a student's grade comes from class participation. For online courses, class participation takes place via the discussion boards. All students are expected to be active participants in course discussions, where "active" is measured not just in terms of quantity of posts, but the quality of the content of those posts. You should treat your responses as (very) short papers--provide thoughtful comments, ask thoughtful questions, etc.

**SHORT PAPER:** A paper of no longer than 1000 words is due by Sunday, June 29 at 11:59pm. Your paper should be submitted via the assignment upload feature on Moodle. Paper topics will be distributed in advance, and students are strongly encouraged to discuss their papers with me in advance.

**LONG PAPER:** A paper of no longer than 5000 words is due by Sunday, July 27 at 11:59pm. Your paper should be uploaded to the assignment section on Moodle. Your final paper will develop a complex, interpretive account of a topic relevant to the works and/or topics studied. You may choose to provide an explicative account of some historical issue particular to moral philosophy and the environment, or examine one of these topics in the context of contemporary philosophical discussions. At a minimum, you should incorporate (and reference in the paper) five scholarly articles or books from outside of the course reading list (from peer-refereed journals or published by academic presses; be wary articles from the popular press and do not cite things like newspapers or Wikipedia).

Course Policies

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.

**DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS:** It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

**INCOMPLETES:** Incompletes are STRONGLY discouraged. Should you need to take an incomplete, arrangements must be made with me well before the last class meeting.

**LATE PAPERS:** For each day an assignment is late, you will be penalized 1/2 of a letter grade.

**LATE-STARTS:** There are no special dispensations for late-start students.

**PROCTERING:** To ensure academic integrity, all students enrolled in distance learning courses at the University of New Orleans may be required to participate in additional student identification procedures. At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, these measures may include on-campus proctored examinations, off-site or online proctored examinations, or other reasonable measures to ensure student identity. Authentication measures for this course may include Proctor U and any fees associated are the responsibility of the student. UNO partners with Proctor U, a live, online proctoring service that allows students to complete exams from any location using a computer and webcam.

**STUDENT CONDUCT:** Feel free to say anything to me or to your peers, but tailor your remarks so as not to be uncivil, abusive, or inappropriate. I will not tolerate ANY abusive behavior, so do not engage in any personal attacks or name calling.

**WITHDRAWALS:** You may withdraw from this course for any reason. Withdrawal is strictly up to you and none of my business. The withdraw deadline is provided in the university calander.



**Week 6      Community Membership**

**7/7 – 7/13**

Reading:     Singer, Chapter 8, “Rich and Poor”  
                 Singer, Chapter 9, “Insiders and Outsiders”

Lectures:    “Lecture 12 – Rich and Poor”  
                 “Lecture 13 – Insiders and Outsiders”

**Week 7      The Environment**

**7/14 – 7/20**

Reading:     Singer, Chapter 10, “The Environment”

Lecture:     “Lecture 14 – The Environment”

**Week 8      Why Act Morally?**

**7/21 – 7/27**

Reading:     Singer, Chapter 11, “Ends and Means”  
                 Singer, Chapter 12, “Why Act Morally?”

Lecture:     “Lecture 15 – Why Act Morally?”

**Assignment: Long Paper Due by 11:59pm CST on Sunday, July 27**