

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Course Outline

Part I

Programme Title	:	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Integrated Environmental Management
Programme QF Level	:	5
Course Title	:	Environmental Ethics
Course Code	:	SSC3316
Department	:	Social Sciences
Credit Points	:	3
Contact Hours	:	39
Pre-requisite(s)	:	Nil
Medium of Instruction	:	English
Course Level	:	3

Part II

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):

- **Professional Excellence;**
- **Ethical Responsibility; &**
- **Innovation.**

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:

1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills
- 4a. Oral Communication Skills
- 4b. Written Communication Skills
5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

1. Course Synopsis

This course will immerse students with important ethical issues related to environmental affairs. It examines the relevance and significance of normative concerns of rights and justice underlying real-world sustainability challenges. Specifically, it addresses questions such as: Whether and how individuals, firms and policymakers might ethically justify our preferences and actions that generate adverse environmental impacts? To what extent do the wealthy and powerful states have “green” and “moral” obligations to those living in less-developed economies? To what extent global environmental problems like climate change, marine pollution a matter of justice? Whose rights are being compromised by the impacts of global environmental changes, and what does this imply for the behavior of states, transnational actors, firms and individuals, as well as of the whole current generation? In discussing these questions, the course shed light on value dimensions important to promoting better sustainability practices and management.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CILO₁ Analyse the development of thinking around environmental ethics and its various perspectives.
- CILO₂ Assess the importance of ethical perspective to understanding obligations and responses of individuals, societies, the international community and the current generation to sustainability challenges.
- CILO₃ Identify and appraise the challenges posed by environmental ethical views to other prevailing ideological outlooks.
- CILO₄ Critically reflect on one’s individual beliefs and behaviors through the ethical prisms and green perspectives.

3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
1. What is environmental ethics? Introduction to core concepts, values, related worldviews such as anthropocentrism, biocentrism, eco-centrism, and philosophical perspectives (e.g. conservationism, deep ecology, environmental pragmatism).	CILO _{1,2}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Classroom discussions • Group-based discussion on assigned topics
2. Individual rights and ethical responsibility: What are the considerations to assess individual positions and rights in planet? To whom individuals shall care and actions be responsible to (one’s society, living beings, or the entire ecosystem)?	CILO _{1,2,3}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Classroom discussions • Group-based discussion on assigned topics
3. Social justice and environment: Relationship between ethical concerns and social-economic institutions and political values (e.g. social classes, gender, human	CILO _{2,3,4}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Group-based discussion on assigned topics • In-class case study

rights).		examination
4. Putting environmental ethics in practice: Changes in individual behavior, market incentives and policy, with real-world example illustrations e.g. the 4Rs, responsible consumption, responsible sourcing.	<i>CILO</i> _{2,3,4}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Group-based discussion on assigned topics • In-class case study examination
5. Applications of ethical perspective to social and territory-wide resource extraction, pollution and sustainability challenges, e.g. food waste, animal right protection, country park development, land use and re-use of Hong Kong and the larger GBA.	<i>CILO</i> _{2,3,4}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Group-based discussion on assigned topics • Case study presentation
6. Applications of ethical perspectives to transnational and global environmental problems, including: (in)justice concerns underlying global waste trading, and extractive resource exploitations; climate justice and other environmental justice debates.	<i>CILO</i> _{2,3,4}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Group-based discussion on assigned topics • Case study presentation

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
(a) Individual essay (individual work of about 1,400 words with connections to course themes/topics).	50	<i>CILO</i> _{1,2,3,4}
(b) Group project (of 3-4 students on topical issues related to ethical issues and controversies of the course).	50	<i>CILO</i> _{1,2,3,4}

5. Required Text(s)

Rolston, H., III. (2020). *A New environmental Ethics: The Next Millennium for Life on Earth* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Sandler, R. (2017). *Environmental Ethics: Theory in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

6. Recommended Readings

Bassham, G. (2021). *Environmental Ethics: The Central Issues*. Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing Company.

Benson, J. (2000). *Environmental Ethics: An Introduction with Readings*. London: Routledge.

Biermann, F., & Lövbrand, E. (Eds.). (2019). *Anthropocene Encounters: New Directions in Green Political Thinking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Callicott, J. B., & McRae, J. (Eds.). (2014). *Environmental Philosophy in Asian Traditions of Thought*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

- Gottlieb, R. S. (2019). *Morality and the Environmental Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jamieson, D. (2008). *Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Keller, D. R. (Ed.). (2010). *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions* (1st ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lautensach, A. K. (2010). *Environmental Ethics for the Future: Rethinking Education to Achieve Sustainability*. Saarbruecken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishers.
- Posner, E., & Weisbach, D. (2010). *Climate Change Justice*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford, United Kingdom: Princeton University Press.
- Schlosberg, D. (2013). Theorising environmental justice: the expanding sphere of a discourse. *Environmental Politics*, 22(1), 37-55.
- Thompson, A., & Gardiner, S. M. (Eds.). (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Traer, R. (2020). *Doing Environmental Ethics*. London: Routledge.
- Weston, B. H., & Bollier, D. (2014). *Green Governance: Ecological Survival, Human Rights, and the Law of the Commons*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

7. Related Web Resources

- Center for Environmental Ethics and Law
<https://www.environmentalethicsandlaw.org/>
- Center for Environmental Philosophy
<http://www.cep.unt.edu/>
- Climate Justice Alliance
<https://climatejusticealliance.org/about/>
- EJ Atlas— Global Atlas of Environmental Justice
<https://ejatlas.org/>
- International Association for Environmental Philosophy (IAEP)
<http://www.environmentalphilosophy.org/>
- The International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE)
<http://www.cep.unt.edu/ISEE.html>

8. Related Journals

- Annual Review of Environment and Resources*
- Cleaner and Responsible Consumption*
- Climate and Development*
- Corporate Environmental Strategy*
- Environmental Justice*
- Environmental Values*
- Ethics, Place & Environment*
- Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*
- Journal of Human Rights and the Environment*
- Society and Natural Resources*

9. Academic Honesty

The University adopts a zero tolerance policy to plagiarism. For the University's policy on plagiarism, please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity with Specific Reference to the Avoidance of Plagiarism by Students* (<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/modules/downloads/visit.php?cid=9&lid=89>). Students should

familiarize themselves with the Policy.

10. Others

Nil.