

# THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## Course Outline

### Part I

<b>Programme Title</b>	:	Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Integrated Environmental Management
<b>Programme QF Level</b>	:	5
<b>Course Title</b>	:	Environmental Ethics
<b>Course Code</b>	:	SSC3316
<b>Department</b>	:	Social Sciences and Policy Studies
<b>Credit Points</b>	:	3
<b>Contact Hours</b>	:	39
<b>Pre-requisite(s)</b>	:	Nil
<b>Medium of Instruction</b>	:	English
<b>Course Level</b>	:	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 Sub-degree, Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate, Professional Doctorate 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:*

- CILO<sub>1</sub> Analyse the development of thinking around environmental ethics and its various perspectives.
- CILO<sub>2</sub> Assess the importance of ethical perspective to understanding obligations and responses of individuals, societies, the international community and the current generation to sustainability challenges.
- CILO<sub>3</sub> Identify and appraise the challenges posed by environmental ethical views to other prevailing ideological outlooks.
- CILO<sub>4</sub> 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 <sub>1,2</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lectures</li><li>• Classroom discussions</li><li>• Group-based discussion on assigned topics</li></ul>
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 <sub>1,2,3</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lectures</li><li>• Classroom discussions</li><li>• Group-based discussion on assigned topics</li></ul>
3. Social justice and environment: Relationship between ethical concerns and social-economic institutions and political values (e.g. social classes, gender, human	CILO <sub>2,3,4</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lectures</li><li>• Group-based discussion on assigned topics</li><li>• In-class case study</li></ul>

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> <sub>2,3,4</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures</li> <li>• Group-based discussion on assigned topics</li> <li>• In-class case study examination</li> </ul>
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> <sub>2,3,4</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures</li> <li>• Group-based discussion on assigned topics</li> <li>• Case study presentation</li> </ul>
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> <sub>2,3,4</sub>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lectures</li> <li>• Group-based discussion on assigned topics</li> <li>• Case study presentation</li> </ul>

#### 4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
<b>(a) Test:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short questions to test students' understanding of the main <b>concepts and theories</b> covered in lectures.</li> </ul>	30	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1,2,3</sub>
<b>(b) Participation in tutorial discussions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are required to participate in <b>TWO</b> tutorial sessions;</li> <li>• Students are expected to read the assigned readings and to express their views on the selected tutorial topics.</li> </ul>	30	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1,2,3</sub>
<b>(c) Written paper:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have to submit an individual essay with a length of about <b>1800 words</b>.</li> </ul>	40	<i>CILO</i> <sub>1,2,3,4</sub>

#### 5. Required Text(s)

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

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

#### 6. Recommended Readings

Bassham, Gregory (2020). *Environmental Ethics: the central issues*. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Bell, Derek (2012). Does anthropogenic climate change violate human rights? In Gideon Calder and Catriona McKinnon (eds.) *Climate Change and Liberal Priorities*. London:

- Routledge.
- Broome, John (2012). *Climate matters: ethics in a warming world*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- DesJardins, Joseph R. (2006). *Environmental Ethics: an introduction to environmental philosophy 4<sup>th</sup> ed.* United States: Wadsworth.
- Dower, N. (2007). *World Ethics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Gardiner, Stephen M. (2011). *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Garvey, J. (2008). *The Ethics of Climate Change: Right and Wrong in a Warming World*. London: Continuum Books.
- Gosseries, Axel (2012). Generations. In Catriona McKinnon (ed.) *Issues in Political Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gudorf, Christine E. & Huchingson, James E. (eds.) (2010) *Boundaries: A Casebook in Environmental Ethics 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Harris, P.G. (2010). *World Ethics and Climate Change*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Harris, P.G. (ed.) (2011). *Ethics and Global Environmental Policy: Cosmopolitan Conceptions of Climate Change*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Harris, P.G. (ed.) (2011). *China's Responsibility for Climate Change: Ethics, fairness and environmental policy*. Bristol: Polity Press.
- Hayward, Tim (2003). Ecologism and Environmentalism. In Alan Finlayson (ed.) *Contemporary Political Thought: A Reader and Guide*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Jamieson, Dale (2012). Environment. In Catriona McKinnon (ed.) *Issues in Political Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kagan, Shelly (2022). *How to count animals, more or less*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Keller, David R. (ed.) (2010). *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Korsgaard, Christine M. (2020). *Fellow creatures: our obligations to the other animals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will (2002). *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will and Donaldson, Sue (2011). *Zoopolis: a political theory of animal rights*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lafollette, Hugh (ed.) (2002). *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 'World Hunger and International Justice' (chapters 55-59) and 'Environment' (chapters 60-64).
- Light, Andrew and Rolston III, Holmes (eds.) (2003). *Environmental Ethics: an anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McKinnon, Catriona (ed.) (2012). *Issues in Political Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Minch, Michael and Weigel, Christine (eds.) (2009). *Living Ethics: An Introduction*. Boston: Wadsworth. Chapter 13: 'Extending Ethics'.
- Mok, Francis K. T. (2020). A Critical Assessment of Voluntary Siting Mechanism in Dealing with NIMBYism: From Canada to Hong Kong. In Betty Yung and Kam-por Yu (eds.) *Land and Housing Controversies in Hong Kong*. Singapore: Springer.
- Mok, Francis K. T. (2023). An Examination of the Multiple Ethical Approaches by Which the Worth of Urban Trees may be Defended: the case of stonewall trees in Hong Kong. In Betty Yung, Francis K. T. Mok, and Baldwin Wong (eds.) *Rights and Urban Controversies in Hong Kong*. Singapore: Springer.

- Okereke, C. (2008). *Global Justice and Neoliberal Environmental Governance*. London: Routledge.
- Overall, Christine (ed.) (2017). *Pets and People: the ethics of our relationships with companion animals*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Page, E. A. (2006). *Climate Change, Justice and Future Generations*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Penz, Peter et al. (2011). *Displacement by Development: ethics, rights and responsibilities*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pogge, Thomas and Moellendorf, Darrel (eds.) (2008). *Global Justice: seminal essays*. St. Paul: Paragon House.
- Pogge, Thomas and Horton, Keith (eds.) (2008). *Global Ethics: seminal essays*. St. Paul: Paragon House.
- Reus-Smit, Christian and Snidal, Duncan (eds.) (2008) *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rolston III, Holmes (2020). *A New Environmental Ethics. The next millennium for life on earth*. London: Routledge.
- Rosenthal, J., & Barry, C. (eds.) (2009). *Ethics and International Affairs: A Reader*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press/
- Sandel, Michael (2009). *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* London: Allen Lane.
- Sandler, Ronald (2018). *Environmental Ethics: theory in practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schlosberg, D. (2007). *Defining environmental justice: theories, movements, and nature*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stone, Christopher D. (2010). *Should Trees Have Standing? Law, Morality, and the Environment 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tammemagi, Hans (1999). *The Waste Crisis: landfills, incinerators, and the search for a sustainable future*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wenz, Peter S. (2001) *Environmental Ethics Today*. New York: Oxford 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 upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. Please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity* (<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/uploads/docs/000000000016336798924548BbN5>). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

**10. Others**

Nil.

*January 2023*