

## THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

### Course Outline

#### Part I

<b>Programme Title</b>	: All Undergraduate Programmes
<b>Programme QF Level</b>	: 5
<b>Course Title</b>	: Environmental Ethics and Philosophy Education
<b>Course Code</b>	: SSC4186
<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>	: EMI
<b>Course Level</b>	: 4

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#### 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 familiarize you with some fundamental features of environmental ethics and philosophy, particularly as they relate to environmentally sustainable development. Extreme environmental problems that are being experienced around the world can be better understood, and likely addressed more effectively, when viewed from a range of ethical and philosophical perspectives. A fundamental question in environmental philosophy involves asking which things ought to be the subjects of moral concern, and specifically whether that concern ought to extend to the non-human world. You will be glad to know that you will not have to become a philosopher in this course. That is because we will focus most of our attention on environmental ethics and, to be even more specific, we will be primarily concerned with practical environmental ethics – questions of how ethical thinking can help us to better protect the environment, or at least to better understand the complex relationship between humanity and the environment. Insofar as you go on after graduation to educate other people about environmental sustainability, this practical aspect of environmental ethics is what may be most useful to you.

In this course you will be exposed to some of the lexicon of environmental ethics. During the course you will be asked to assess a range of perspectives and to evaluate different ethical rules and norms related to the environment. We will examine arguments that the natural environment and other species have moral status that ought to be taken into consideration when judging human behavior, including that of individuals, corporations and governments. We will scrutinize a variety of values, such as those that consider equality among different parts of the biosphere and those that emphasize the inherent ethical value of non-humans, indeed promoting such value as the best guide for human actions and policies.

The course is intended to give you a grounding in the basics of environmental ethics while considering the contribution that this scholarly discipline can make to resolving worsening problems of environmental sustainability and ongoing widespread violations of the rights of other species. This will be especially important in the context of global climate change. The course should also help to develop your knowledge of environmental ethics so that you have a better ability to contribute to holistic education for environmental sustainability in different contexts. Toward this end, the later weeks of the course will be devoted to practicing environmental ethics education through in-class group presentations.

## 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

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

- CILO<sub>1</sub> Understand the historical development of thinking around environmental ethics and philosophy.
- CILO<sub>2</sub> Assess the importance of environmental ethics and philosophy for international, domestic and individual responses to ecological challenges.
- CILO<sub>3</sub> Critically analyze, from major ethical perspectives, arguments to extend or restrict the realm of moral concern beyond the human subject.
- CILO<sub>4</sub> Identify and appraise the challenge posed by ecologism and other forms of environmental philosophy to dominant contemporary ideologies.
- CILO<sub>5</sub> Critically reflect on one's individual beliefs and behaviors in terms of ideas concerning environmental citizenship and environmental democracy.

CILO<sub>6</sub> Appreciate the implications of the ethical and philosophical underpinnings of sustainability problems for promoting environmental citizenship, and the contributions of these perspectives to the promotion of sustainability education.

### 3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
a. Environmental philosophy and classical and modern eastern and western religious and philosophical thought.	<i>CILO<sub>1,2</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brief lectures</li> <li>• classroom discussions</li> <li>• group discussions of assigned readings</li> <li>• writing summaries and analyses of readings in course journal</li> </ul>
b. Potential subjects of moral concern: animals, species, landscapes, ecological systems.	<i>CILO<sub>3</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brief lectures (possibly including guest lectures)</li> <li>• provocative questions followed by classroom discussions</li> <li>• group discussions of assigned readings</li> <li>• group sharing of ideas from course journals</li> <li>• writing summaries and analyses of readings in course journal</li> </ul>
c. 'Ecologism' as an ideology and its relationship with conservatism, liberalism, socialism and feminism.	<i>CILO<sub>3,4</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brief lectures (possibly including guest lectures)</li> <li>• provocative questions followed by classroom discussions</li> <li>• group sharing of ideas from course journals and assigned readings</li> <li>• writing summaries and analyses of readings in course journal</li> <li>• Oral Presentations</li> </ul>
d. Environmental citizenship as a response to environmental problems.	<i>CILO<sub>2,4,5</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brief lectures (possibly including guest lectures)</li> <li>• provocative questions followed by classroom discussions</li> <li>• group sharing of ideas from course journals and assigned readings</li> <li>• writing summaries and analyses of readings in course journal</li> <li>• Oral Presentations</li> </ul>
e. Environmental philosophy and democracy.	<i>CILO<sub>2,4,5</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brief lectures (possibly including guest lectures)</li> <li>• provocative questions followed by classroom discussions</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• group sharing of ideas from course journals and assigned readings</li> <li>• writing summaries and analyses of readings in course journal</li> <li>• Oral Presentations</li> </ul>
f. Implications of philosophical and moral/ethical considerations for the promotion of environmental citizenship in different settings	<i>CILO<sub>6</sub></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• brief lectures followed by classroom discussions</li> <li>• group sharing of ideas</li> <li>• role-plays,</li> <li>• activity designs , mini-projects, debates,</li> <li>• oral and poster presentations</li> </ul>

#### 4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILOs
a. Three essays: two essays written outside class and one essay written during the last class	30%	<i>CILO<sub>1,2,3,4</sub></i>
b. Participation in classroom discussions, including individual responses and group discussions, with emphasis on willingness and ability to ask questions and to demonstrate a command of reading material and the ability to apply concepts derived from literature and classroom work, to include: evidence through comments and/or questions of (1) having done the reading, (2) having thought about that reading and made connections to other readings and previous classroom discussions, and (3) showing ability to apply ideas from readings and classroom sessions to real-world events.	30%	<i>CILO<sub>1,2,3,4</sub></i>
c. Group presentations. Students will scrutinize a question of environmental philosophy or ethics covered in the course materials, relate this issue to aspects of contemporary life and educational contexts, with discussion on the implications of these perspectives for environmental education . The presentation can take a variety of forms, such as lecturing, student-produced video, role playing, active seminar, poetry, drama, etc., or combinations thereof, designed to effectively convey messages and stimulate thinking among the audience.	40%	<i>CILO<sub>2,3,4,5,6</sub></i>

#### 5. Required Text(s) (indicative)

Nil

#### 6. Recommended Readings (indicative)

- Attfield, R. (2003). *Environmental Ethics*. London: Polity.
- Attfield, R. (2014). *Environmental Ethics: An Overview for the Twenty-First Century* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Polity.
- Benson, J. (2000). *Environmental Ethics: An introduction with readings*. London: Routledge.
- DesJardins, J. (2005). *Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy*. Belmont, California: Cengage Learning.
- Dobson, A. (2007). *Green political thought*. London : Routledge.
- Dobson, A., & Bell, D. (Eds.) (2006). *Environmental citizenship*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Jamieson, D. (Ed.). (2003). *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*. Oxford : Blackwell.
- Jamieson, D. (2008). *Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pojman, L. P. (2005). *Environmental Ethics: readings in theory and application*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Mason, M. (2005). *The New Accountability: Environmental Responsibility across Borders*. London/Stirling, VA: Earthscan.
- Lautensach, A. K. (2010). *Environmental Ethics for the Future: Rethinking Education to Achieve Sustainability*. Saarbruecken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishers.
- Newton, D. E. (2009). *Environmental justice: a reference handbook*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO.

## 7. Related Web Resources

- Association for the Study of Literature and Environment  
<http://www.asle.org/>
- The International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE)  
<http://www.cep.unt.edu/ISEE.html>
- International Association for Environmental Philosophy (IAEP)  
<http://www.environmentalphilosophy.org/>
- Center for Environmental Philosophy  
<http://www.cep.unt.edu/>
- Centre for Applied Ethics  
<http://www.ethics.ubc.ca/resources/environmental/>
- Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/>

## 8. Related Journals

- Between the Species: A Journal of Ethics*
- Earth Ethics*
- Environmental Ethics*
- Environmental Politics*
- Environmental Values*
- Ethics and the Environment*
- Ethics, Place & Environment*
- Etica & Animalia*
- International Journal of Environmental Studies*
- Journal of Environmental Philosophy*
- Journal of Medical Humanities*
- Journal of Natural History*

## **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**

Newspaper articles and other media reports, including contemporaneous reporting, related to the course; recent related reports from scientific organizations and nongovernmental organizations; new video media and websites.

*August 2019*