

SJS 199, Ethics and the environment
Department of Languages, Literature, and Cultures, Fall 2018



I. COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr Kate Roy

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Office Hours: MON/THU, 11:30-12:30/ 14:30-15:30, and by appointment

Class location: LAC Classroom 6

Class meeting times: MON/THU 10:00-11:15

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This First Year Seminar course explores ethical reasoning through our complex and problematic relationship with the environment. The course examines introductory philosophical concepts in ethics and applies them to major environmental concerns of our time, among others: water use, sustainable consumerism, vegetarianism, animal rights, social justice, climate change, environmental refugees, and population growth. Students will explore these issues through a variety of media, from texts to films, blogs to actual policy. The course includes traditional seminar meetings as well as a learning experience off campus. The main goal of the course is to help students create an “ethical toolbox” that they can use to consider environmental issues from an informed, engaged, and analytical point of view. Students will also learn to think about the Franklin campus itself through the environmental ethics lens. As with all First Year Seminars, this course will also cultivate some of the critical and academic skills necessary for succeeding in college.

III. RATIONALE

This course is part of First Year Experience and counts towards a student’s fulfilment of core requirements in any major.

IV. COURSE GOALS

As part of First Year Experience, this course aims to help students transition into college by familiarizing them with the Franklin community and its resources. It also aims to introduce students to some of the main ethical concepts used to explore humans’ relationship with the environment and what that relationship ought to be.

V. SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete all parts of this course will be able to demonstrate that they have:

- Understood through course readings some of the major philosophical approaches to environmental issues;
- Contributed to elaborating and questioning these approaches through class discussions;
- Applied these approaches in their own written work to reach logical conclusions about the environmental issues in question;
- Learned how to work effectively in an academic team by completing a project for the FYS showcase;
- Improved their understanding of college expectations through regular class attendance and active participation in course activities;
- Made themselves familiar with the Franklin community and its resources through in-class and out-of-class events.
- Considered their ethical “environmental place” in the world and their behavior towards the environment

VI. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

You should buy your own copy of the following texts, which will be studied in depth:
 Farrell, James J. *The Nature of College*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Press, 2010.
 Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. London: Harper Perennial, 2004.

All other articles and short texts for analysis will be made available on Moodle – please check both Moodle and the course schedule below for details of what you should be preparing for each session.

VII. ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Contribution to the course	15%
Student-led discussion and report	15%
Three short papers @ 10%, 15% and 20%	45%
Showcase project	15%
Final written reflection on the course	10%

VIII. ASSESSMENT DETAILS

- 15 %: Contribution to the course. In a seminar course such as this, your participation in class discussions is key. Simply coming to class is not participating. Your engagement with other course activities, both in and out of the classroom will count towards your contribution to the course, including doing the readings on time so as to participate in class discussions.
- 15%: Student-led discussion and report. For this assignment, students prepare and lead the discussion for part of one seminar (in pairs or in a group of 3). The discussion will be based on a video of your group’s choice that ties in with the theme of the week. Leading the discussion does not mean giving a presentation. On the contrary, it means that you identify objectives for the

discussion, think of questions you want to discuss with the seminar group, and design methods that are appropriate for achieving those objectives and questions. After the discussion, each student will write a short reflective report which is due a week after the discussion. The grade will be based both on your preparation for and performance during the discussion and on the reflective report.

- 10 %: Paper 1: Argument Paper. In this short paper of +/- 3 pages or 750 words, you will tackle an environmental issue of your choice and discuss arguments put forward by at least two authors on the topic, one of which will require library research. In your introduction, you will provide a summary of the environmental issue you choose and introduce the authors you will refer to. In the body of the paper, you will discuss the different approaches that your authors take. You should include quotes and provide a bibliography in Chicago style.
- 15 %: Paper 2: Critical Review: For this short paper of +/- 3 pages or 750 words, you will be given a choice of secondary literature on environmental ethics. You will be asked to choose ONE of these texts, and to review it, both summarizing the theorist/critic's argument and the ideas s/he puts forward, and engaging critically with this argument and these ideas. In addition to consolidating skills learned in the first paper (summarizing and paraphrasing), this essay will give you practice in evaluating secondary literature in our field. You should include quotes and provide a bibliography in Chicago style.
- 20 %: Paper 3: Empirical Paper. In this team paper, you will use the IMRAD paper structure to collect data and analyze Franklin students' approach to a selected environmental issue based on the book *The Nature of College*. You will formulate a hypothesis, provide a brief literature review of the issue and how it is discussed among scholarly communities, describe your methods, summarize the results, and discuss the consequences in a 5-6 page paper, or 1,250-1,500 words. You will carry out research, with correct citation and documentation.
- 15 %: Showcase Project: our showcase project will involve creating a museum exhibition of our FYS course. We will need to create smaller groups, each in charge of a certain aspect of the exhibition: video, poster, performance, etc. Your participation in our showcase project will be assessed according to the quality of the final product and your teamwork capacities with other students working with you on the same part of the exhibition.
- 10 %: Final written reflection on the course. The final assignment for this course will be a short reflection on what you have learned over the course of the semester based on your paragraph(s) on our two questions from Orientation Week (How do you define ethics? How do you think ethics applies to the environment?) which I will return to you at the end of the semester. You will consider how your views may (or may not) have changed, and will support your reflections with reference to theoretical and secondary texts we have explored over the course of the semester.

- Note: all formally graded assignments will use a Grade Point Average (GPA) system to arrive at a grade, based on a rubric that will assess the following items: 1) following the assignment, 2) content and depth of the paper, 3) structure, 4) mechanics, 5) citation and use of evidence, and 6) drafting and polish. In-class activities and course excursions will not be formally graded but contribute to your contribution grade at the end of the course. The grade point system is discussed below.

IX. GRADING POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- 3.7-4 points = A range or excellent achievement: your work exhibits outstanding quality and exceptional follow through on the assignment. “A” range work shows originality and depth of thought, excellent evidence, argumentation, organization and flow, mechanics and citation/documentation. For longer papers, you present an original, comprehensive, and critical analysis that shows a thorough understanding of the subject material and makes significant use of sources. This grade honors an exceptional job and recognizes significant effort on your part.
- 2.7 - 3.69 points = B range or good achievement: your work is above-average quality and shows a thorough understanding of the assignment. “B” range work shows some of the same good qualities as “A” range work, but not as consistently, or to the same extent. There may be one weak area in an otherwise exceptional paper, or the paper may simply lack the “polish” of an A paper. “B” level work shows some originality, good use of sources, logical argumentation, coherent organization and flow, good mechanics and citation. For a longer paper, you show a good critical understanding of the subject material and use sources well. B means that you are doing an above average, all around good job.
- 1.7 - 2.69 points = “C” range or adequate achievement: your work is acceptable at the college level. It follows the assignment and meets the basic standards of college-level work in terms of relevance, factual accuracy, and logic. You reveal a sufficient understanding of the material, exhibit a satisfactory argument, have suitable organization and use standard English in terms of mechanics and punctuation as well as proper citation and documentation. For a longer paper, the sources are used adequately, but originality of thought may not be always visible. This grade also covers work that is excellent or good in some respects but significantly weaker in others.
- 0.6-1.69 points = “D” range or inadequate achievement: you do not meet the standards for acceptable college level work, but the text does exhibit some positive qualities, indicating that it deserves credit for having been done. Content and/or mechanics do not adequately meet basic expectations. Citation/documentation exists, but is not entirely in order. For longer papers, no originality of thought is visible, and the paper may appear to be nothing more than a summary of other sources. A grade of “D” is as a warning sign that something is wrong with your study habits and that you should seek advice on how to improve.

- - 0.59 points = “F” range work or unacceptable achievement: for whatever reason, your work does not earn college-level credit. You may have not followed the assignment or the essay may reveal little or no understanding of the material. You may also exhibit a lack of basic academic skills and/or incomprehensible writing with many mechanical errors and little understanding of the citation/documentation process. In short, your work is unacceptable. A grade of F is also given if the work is not completed at all or if any parts of the paper are plagiarized. You should immediately see me to discuss a course of action.

X. HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE (POLICIES / REQUIREMENTS)

- Devote at least 6 hours studying time on your own every week. As a 3-credit course, the syllabus has been designed using the basic calculation of 2 hours of work on your own for every hour in class. Since we meet 3 hours per week in class, this means 6 hours per week on your own, for a total of 9 hours per week for this class.
- Strive for perfect and timely attendance. We will be learning something every day in class and your active presence in class will help you learn the material.
- Do the readings before coming to class. Most of our class time will be spent discussing readings and applying those readings to difference environmental case studies. In order to fully participate, you will need to do the readings beforehand.
- Start your papers early and use available resources. The syllabus provides due dates for all papers; it does not tell you when to start. The best way to do well on each paper is to start early and use resources available such as your academic mentor, the WLC and me during office hours.
- Pay attention to final details. One thing professors look at when assessing a paper is “polish.” They may not have this as part of an explicit rubric, but they will notice whether the paper is polished or not. This means properly citing material, including a bibliography or list of references when necessary, adding page numbers, and most importantly your name.
- Follow the assignment. Before you start a paper, make sure that you know what you are supposed to do. Read the prompt thoroughly and see the professor if you do not understand the prompt.
- Attendance Policy: A total of two absences will be tolerated during the course of the term as long as efforts are made by the student to make up all homework and missed in-class work. A third absence will automatically result in a grade reduction from the final grade (i.e. a B+ would drop to a B). Five unexcused absences will result in a report to the dean and the registrar.
- Late Work, Make up Work and Extra Credit: Assignments are due on the date given in the schedule. Late papers/written assignments will be penalized 10 percentage points per academic day without documented evidence of a major

disruption to your work. No papers will be accepted more than 5 days after the deadline. Students must retain a final draft until the work is returned. Extensions will only be considered under dire circumstances, if you are seriously ill or have an emergency and you inform me immediately. Make up work will only be considered in the case of serious, sustained illness. There is no extra credit in this course but papers submitted by the due date listed in the schedule may be revised for a better grade.

XI. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: STATEMENT ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

A student whose actions are deemed by the University to be out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives or the spirit of good conduct as fostered by the University and Swiss community, may be placed on Disciplinary Probation or become subject to dismissal from the University. Cheating is a dishonest action out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives and spirit of the University. Furthermore, cheating reflects negatively on one's personal integrity and is unjust to those students who have studied.

See the Academic Catalog for full statement (page 199):

https://www.fus.edu/images/pdf/FUS_ACADEMIC_CATALOG_2018_2020_web.pdf

XII. RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- My office hours: I am available during office hours to discuss your own work, any issues you have with the course, or concerns about Franklin. As your advisor, I am also available to discuss your major and courses. My office is in the Main Villa on Kaletsch Campus (Office 4). My regular office hours are Monday and Thursday, 11:30-12:30 and 14:30-15:30. I am also available on an appointment basis. If you would like to meet me outside my office hours please do just email me to make a time.
- Your Academic Mentor: Claire Shiparski has been especially chosen for this course to help you in all aspects of your studies. Get to know Claire.
- Writing and Learning Center: Fowler Learning Commons, 1st floor. The Writing and Learning Center can help you with papers, citing questions, and other writing issues in this class. It also offers tutoring for other subjects, particularly languages and math. To make an appointment, stop by or go to WLCSetmore.com
- Accessibility Services: if you have a documented learning disability, please contact Accessibility Services at: accessibility.services@fus.edu
- We do not have exams in this course, but we can set up study skills appointments that may help you in this and in other classes.
- Grace Library and Fowler Learning Commons: the Grace Library has a number of resources available on ethics and the environment including reference works, books on the shelf, and appropriate databases. Fowler Learning Commons houses the science books. You will need to use the library to research material for your final paper. Our information literacy specialist, Clélie Riat (criat@fus.edu) can help you find appropriate material.

XIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule should be complete, including exam dates and assignment due dates. There are several ways visualize course schedule. See the sample syllabi.

Orientation Week	Topic, Readings, and Work Due
Thursday August 23	Welcome to Franklin! / Introductions / Advising Information and broad class overview / Paragraph(s) on <i>your</i> reading of “Ethics and the Environment”
Week 1	What is Environmental Ethics?
Monday August 27	In class: Syllabus overview (read the syllabus carefully after class and email me with any questions) / Logistics of video of the week (student- led discussion) presentations / Reading Strategies After class: take this survey: https://www.footprintcalculator.org/#!/signup to find out how many planets it takes to support the lifestyle you knew at home. Reflect on these results and be prepared to discuss your results at the beginning of next week’s Monday class
Tuesday August 28	Convocation, 19:00, Auditorium (attendance mandatory)
Thursday August 30	Alcohol Awareness Seminar, 10:00, Auditorium (attendance mandatory)
Week 2	What is Environmental Ethics II?
Monday September 3	Prepare for Class: Moodle, Gudolf and Huchingon, “Introduction to Environmental Ethics” – first half + question sheet 1 In Class: Footprint calculator discussion / Review of key terms you’ve noted so far from Gudolf and Huchingon/ Applying ethical terms
Thursday September 6	Prepare for Class: Moodle, Gudolf and Huchingon, “Introduction to Environmental Ethics” – second half + question sheet 2 In Class: Gudolf and Huchingon discussion / What kind of environmental ethicist are you?
Week 3	Animal Rights
Monday September 10	Prepare for Class: Moodle, Rolston, “Duties to Endangered Species” + question sheet In Class: Video of the week student-led discussion 1 / Guidelines to paper 1
Monday September 10	Tutte le Strade event: Sustainability Program with Professor Hale 17:30 @ the Falcon’s Nest (attendance mandatory)

Thursday September 13	Prepare for Class: Choose issue for paper 1 and be ready to report in class. Write up a short proposal and bring it along for the library workshop In Class: Library workshop TBC
Week 4	Animal Rights II / Climate Change
Monday September 17	Prepare for Class: Moodle, Kant, "Duties to Animals" + question sheet / Draft notes and ideas for the paper In Class: Discussion of Kant / Plagiarism Workshop
Thursday September 20	Prepare for Class: Moodle, Singer, "A Utilitarian Defense of Animal Liberation" + question sheet / Draft notes and ideas for the paper In Class: Discussion of Kant and Singer: how do they differ? /
Saturday September 22	Climate Change: Swiss Glacier Field Trip (attendance mandatory)
Week 5	Ethical Consumption
Monday September 24	Prepare for Class: Moodle, Fox, Vegetarianism and Treading Lightly on the Earth" + question sheet / meet your mentor this week to review your final paper 1 draft In class: Video of the week student-led discussion 2 /
Thursday September 27	Prepare for Class: The Nature of College, chapter 1, "Waking up to Nature" + question sheet In class: Discussion of chapter
Week 6	Ethical Consumption II
Monday October 1	Prepare for Class: The Nature of College: Chapter 2, "The Nature of Stuff" + question sheet / Do an inventory of your room, as illustrated in the chapter / Start drafting paper 2: meet your mentor this week to review your first draft
Tuesday October 2	Screening of film The True Cost, dir. Andrew Morgan
Wednesday October 3	Tutte le Strade event: Human Rights film festival Time and details TBC (attendance mandatory)

Thursday October 4	Prepare for Class: The Nature of College, chapter 3, “The Nature of Clothes” + question sheet / Check out where your clothes come from In class: Discussion of chapter
Week 7	The Secret Life of Clothes
Monday October 8	Prepare for Class: Revisit your notes from your viewing of The True Cost + question sheet / Paper 2 full draft In class: Discussion of The True Cost / Paper 2 peer review
Thursday October 11	Prepare for Class: Moodle, article and short videos on genetically modified cotton crops in the Punjab (details tbc) + question sheet In class: Discussion – how do the “needs” and ideas of the
Week 8	Land Degradation and World Views
Monday October 15	Prepare for Class: Moodle, Leopold, “The Land Ethic” / Polishing Paper 2 In Class: Video of the week student-led discussion 4
Thursday October 18	Prepare for Class: The Nature of College: Chapter 9, “The Nature of Religion” + own ideas In class: Discussion – environment and culture
Weeks 9 and 10	Academic Travel
Week 11	Postcolonial Environmental Ethics
Monday November 5	Prepare for class: Collate your first ideas from your reading of The God of Small Things + question sheet In class: Discussion – entomology and gardens
Thursday November 8	Prepare for class: Moodle, Vadde, “The Backwaters Sphere” + question sheet In class: Discussion of “ecological collectivity” in The God of Small Things

Week 12	Postcolonial Environmental Ethics II
Monday November 12	Prepare for class: The God of Small Things and the impact of tourism + question sheet In class: Video of the week student-led discussion 5
Thursday November 15	Prepare for class: Gather your ideas for paper 3 – think about what you need to find! Paper 3 Library Workshop TBC
Week 13	Ecofeminism
Monday November 19	Prepare for Class: Reader, Shiva: “Development, Ecology, and Women” + question sheet In Class: In class: Video of the week student-led discussion 6 / Class debate on the article
Thursday November 22	Paper 3 polishing session / Showcase preparation Due on Moodle: Paper 3 by midnight
Week 14	The New Green Capitalist Order?
Monday November 26	Prepare for Class: The Nature of College: Chapter 10, “The Nature of Politics” + question sheet In Class: Environmentalism under Trump / Showcase preparation
Thursday November 29	Prepare for Class: Moodle, Sylvan, “Is There a Need for a New, Environmental Ethic?” + question sheet In Class: Discussion and debate / Showcase preparation
Week 15	Showcase Preparation
Monday December 3	Showcase Workshop
Thursday December 6	Showcase Workshop

Friday December 7	Showcase, 16:00 on Main Campus Setup at 15:00 (TBC)
Week 16	Wrapping it all up
Thursday December 13 08:30- 10:30	Prepare for Class: The Nature of College: Chapter 11, "Making Environmental History" In class: Discussion of FYS Showcase / Course wrap up / Next Steps Due on Moodle: 2-3 page reflection paper by midnight based on your paragraph(s) from Orientation Week

XIV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

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