



ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

PHIL 2330/ENR 2330

MWF 2:10 – 3:00

Prof. Susanna Goodin

Environmental Ethics is a study of both the ethical theories involved in conflicted situations regarding the environment and the underlying assumptions about how the world is constructed that inform those theories and their suggested solutions to critical real world problems.

Divided into three parts, the course begins by examining the basic ethical theories that drive virtually all discussions surrounding what the right thing to do is. These theories are utilitarianism, a rights-based theory, and a theory of distributive justice.

The second part of the class applies these issues to actual problem cases within the field of environmental issues, such as climate change, resource depletion, pollution, animal rights, and future generations. One of the most pressing issues that arises is how traditional assumptions in ethical theory and economic theory fail to capture many of the most crucial aspects of environmental issues.

The failure of traditional theories to address environmental problems gives rise to the third part of the course, where innovative solutions are suggested. These solutions demand the critical examination of both ethical and economic theory as well as an exploration of fundamental philosophical questions of what counts as reality, what counts as an individual, what counts as a moral being, and what it means to live a good life.