



GSE 800

Attitudes to the Environment

S1 Evening 2014

Dept of Environment & Geography

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MEnv or PGDipEnv or PGCertEnv or MEnvEd or PGDipEnvEd or PGCertEnvEd or MEngMgt or MEnvMgt or MEnvPlan or MEnvSc or MEnvStud or MIntRel or MSusDev or PGDipSusDev or PGCertSusDev or MClmCh or MSc in (Biodiversity Conservation or Remote Sensing and GIS or Environmental Health) or PGDipSc in (Biodiversity Conservation or Remote Sensing and GIS or Environmental Health) or PGCertSc in (Biodiversity Conservation or Remote Sensing and GIS or Environmental Health)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores the ways in which humans think about nature and environment and how these ideas are formed. Given the diversity of environmental challenges that have emerged from contemporary human-nature relations there is an urgent need to explore the role that human attitudes to nature have had in contributing to these crises, and how changes in attitudes may provide some solutions. To explore these issues this unit draws from social constructionism, environmental ethics and political ecology to explore how ideas about nature and environment are created and contested. The first section of the unit looks at contemporary approaches to nature, their history and complexity. The second section explores environmental ethics and the challenges they pose to these dominant understandings of humans and nature. The final section analyses environmental ethics in society – exploring their relevance to environmental politics and our everyday ways of life.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Understanding of social constructionist approaches to nature and the relevance of these ideas for addressing environmental challenges.

Ability to identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches

Ability to analyse contemporary environmental issues from a variety of eco-philosophical standpoints in order to identify ethical challenges and solutions.

Understanding of the major challenges and opportunities with regard to changing environmental attitudes.

Ability to reflect and develop personal environmental attitudes and identify their relevance to practice.

The ability to work as a team and present ethical solutions to contemporary environmental challenges.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Short essay</u>	10%	6:30pm Thursday 27 March
<u>Critical Reflection</u>	25%	6:30pm Wednesday 15 May
<u>Eco-philosophy essay</u>	40%	6:30pm Wednesday 12 June
<u>Group presentation</u>	25%	From week 8 onwards

Short essay

Due: **6:30pm Thursday 27 March**

Weighting: **10%**

Discuss how nature is socially constructed in contemporary society. Draw on examples from advertising, websites, media, novels, official documents, film, television etc to illustrate your answer.

This short essay is one page only (use 12 point font) (not including references). If you would like to attach images they can be included as an Appendix or can be integrated into your one page summary.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understanding of social constructionist approaches to nature and the relevance of these

ideas for addressing environmental challenges.

Critical Reflection

Due: **6:30pm Wednesday 15 May**

Weighting: **25%**

Why do you care about the environment?

Write an essay of up to 1500 words that critically reflects on your own attitudes to the environment. Discuss the eco-philosophies that most inform your attitudes and pro-environmental actions and practices. Draw from the eco-philosophical literature to inform your reflections.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to reflect and develop personal environmental attitudes and identify their relevance to practice.

Eco-philosophy essay

Due: **6:30pm Wednesday 12 June**

Weighting: **40%**

Write an essay of up to 2000 words which answers ONE of the following essay questions:

- a. Do attitudes to nature matter? Draw on examples to illustrate your argument.
- b. Provide an indepth critical assessment of the arguments of one or two eco-philosophical arguments that most interest you.
- c. Are alternative eco-philosophies likely to become influential in mainstream culture? Discuss the possibilities, and the difficulties, of empowering alternative ideas in your answer.
- d. There is no such thing as nature. Discuss.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches
- Understanding of the major challenges and opportunities with regard to changing environmental attitudes.

Group presentation

Due: **From week 8 onwards**

Weighting: **25%**

Environmental issues can be interpreted through a range of different eco-philosophical lenses.

In this assignment you will work with other class members to develop a group presentation that demonstrates your understanding and ability to communicate eco-philosophies by analysing a contemporary environmental issue. You are welcome to choose any issue that interests your

group (some suggestions are below). You are encouraged to be creative in your presentation and are welcome to use unconventional presentation techniques such as debates, role plays, audience interaction, skits etc. Your group presentation should not exceed 30 minutes. Your grade will be comprised of a overall group mark weighted by peer assessment of your contribution. More details will be made available during class.

Suggested topics: logging; genetically modified organisms; large dams; whaling; climate change; factory farming; hunting; indigenous rights and environmentalism; veganism; nuclear energy; perceptions of environmental crisis; mining; artificial meat.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches
- Ability to analyse contemporary environmental issues from a variety of eco-philosophical standpoints in order to identify ethical challenges and solutions.
- The ability to work as a team and present ethical solutions to contemporary environmental challenges.

Delivery and Resources

The unit will be taught through 13x3 hour sessions on Thursday nights from 6:30-9:30pm. Most sessions will involve a lecture accompanied by tutorial-style activities. Outside of class student are expected to complete assigned readings and undertake research on topics to complete the assessment requirements. The sessions require active and informed student input.

GSE800 will make use of web-based teaching support through iLearn. Students will require access to the internet and regular contact with the unit's iLearn site. To complete assignments students will need access to basic word processing programmes and submit assignments via turnitin. Some students may wish to make use of powerpoint or prezi for class presentations.

Unit Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Lecturer	Assignment
1	6 March	Introduction: The social construction of nature	AM	
2	13 March	Indigenous nature	FB	
3	20 March	Western nature	AM	
4	27 March	Anthropocentric environmentalism	AM	Assignment 1
5	3 April	Being non-human	GW	

6	10 April	Animal rights	AM	
MID-SEMESTER BREAK				
7	1 May	Deep ecology	AM	
8	8 May	Eco-feminism	AM	Presentations begin
9	15 May	More-than-human	DH	Assignment 2
10	22 May	Neo-liberal natures	AM	
11	29 May	Attitudes and agency	AM	
12	5 June	Environmental movements	AM	
13	12 June	Future nature	AM	Assignment 3

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understanding of social constructionist approaches to nature and the relevance of these ideas for addressing environmental challenges.
- Ability to identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches

Assessment task

- Eco-philosophy essay

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Understanding of social constructionist approaches to nature and the relevance of these ideas for addressing environmental challenges.
- Ability to identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches
- Understanding of the major challenges and opportunities with regard to changing environmental attitudes.

Assessment tasks

- Critical Reflection
- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to analyse contemporary environmental issues from a variety of eco-philosophical standpoints in order to identify ethical challenges and solutions.
- Understanding of the major challenges and opportunities with regard to changing environmental attitudes.

Assessment tasks

- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different

social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- The ability to work as a team and present ethical solutions to contemporary environmental challenges.

Assessment task

- Group presentation

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches
- Ability to reflect and develop personal environmental attitudes and identify their relevance to practice.

Assessment tasks

- Short essay
- Critical Reflection
- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Ability to reflect and develop personal environmental attitudes and identify their relevance to practice.

Assessment task

- Critical Reflection

Readings

Recommended texts

Essential readings will be provided week by week – there is no set text for this course. The list below provides you with some starting points for engaging with the assessment tasks. For assessments you should reference academic books and journal articles - please note that wikipedia is not considered an authoritative source of knowledge for this unit. A good database for searching for journal articles is Scopus - available on the MQ library website.

Books and collections

Anderson, A. (1997) *Media, culture, and the environment*. UCL Press, London.

Beder, S. (1997) *Global spin: the corporate assault on environmentalism*. Scribe Publications, Melbourne

Callicot, J. B. (1989) *In defense of the land ethic: Essays in environmental philosophy*. SUNY Press, Albany, New York..

Callicot, J.B. (1987) *Companion to A Sand County Almanac: Interpretive and critical essays*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison..

Carson, R.(1963) *Silent Spring*. Hamish Hamilton, London.

Castree, N. (2005) *Nature*. Routledge, Abingdon.

Castree, N. & B. Braun (eds) (2001) *Social nature: Theory, practice, politics*. Blackwell, Malden.

Cooper, D., & Palmer, J. (1992) *The environment in question: Ethics and global issues*. Routledge, London.

Cronon W. (ed.) (1996) *Uncommon ground: rethinking the human place in nature*. W. W. Norton and Company, New York

Devall, B., & Sessions, G. (1985) *Deep ecology: Living as if nature mattered*. Peregrine Smith Books, Salt Lake City.

Dobson, A. (1995) *Green political thought* (2nd Ed.). Routledge, London

Dryzek, J. (1997) *The politics of the earth: environmental discourses*. Oxford University Press, Oxford

Dryzek, J. & D. Sclosberg (eds) *Debating the earth: the environmental politics reader*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 358-364.

Eckersley, R.(1992) *Environmentalism and political theory: toward an ecocentric approach*. State University of New York Press, Albany.

Fox, W. (1990) *Toward a transpersonal ecology: developing new foundations for*

environmentalism. Shambhala, Boston.

Goodin, R. E. (1992) *Green political theory*. Polity Press, Cambridge.

Gore, A. (1992) *Earth in the balance: Ecology and the human spirit*. Houghton Mifflin, New York

Guha, R. & J. Martinez-Alier (1997) *Varieties of environmentalism: essays north and south*. Earthscan Publications, London.

Greer, J. & K. Bruno (1996) *Greenwash: the reality behind corporate environmentalism*. Third World Network & The Apex Press, Malaysia.

Haila, Y., & Levins, R. (1980) *Humanity and nature: Ecology science and society*. Pluto Press, London.

Hajer, M. (1995) *The politics of environmental discourse: ecological modernisation and the policy process*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Hutton, D. & L. Connors. (1999) *A history of the Australian environmental movement*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Jamieson, D. (ed.) (2003) *A companion to environmental philosophy*. Blackwell Reference Online (available via library website <http://voyager.mq.edu.au/vwebv/holdingsInfo?searchId=1972&recCount=50&recPointer=21&bibId=1186887>)

Leopold, A. (1949) *A sand county almanac*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Masson, J., & McCarthy, S., (1996) *When Elephants Weep: the emotional lives of animals*. Vintage Books, London.

Masson, J. (2009) *The face on your plate: The truth about food*. Norton and Company, New York.

Mathews, F. (1991) *The ecological self*. Routledge, London.

McPhee, J. (1987) *The control of nature*. Pimlico Press, London.

Merchant, C. (1980) *The death of nature: Women, ecology, and the scientific revolution*. Harper & Row, New York.

Merchant, C. (1992) *Radical ecology: The search for a livable world*. Routledge, New York.

Nash, R. F. (1989) *The rights of nature. A history of environmental ethics*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin.

Norton, B. G. (1987) *Why preserve natural variety?* Princeton University Press, Princeton., New Jersey.

Norton, B.G. (1991) *Toward unity among environmentalists*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Oelschlaeger, M. (1991) *The idea of wilderness*. Yale University Press, New Haven.

O'Riordan, T. (1981) *Environmentalism* (2nd Edition). Pion, London.

Papadakis, E. (1993) *Politics and the environment: the Australian experience*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

- Passmore, J. (1974) *Man's responsibility for nature*. Duckworth, London.
- Peet, R. & M. Watts (eds) (1996) *Liberation ecologies: environment, development, social movements*. Routledge, London.
- Pepper, D. (1984) *The roots of modern environmentalism*. Croom Helm, London.
- Pepper, D. (1993) *Eco-socialism: from deep ecology to social justice*. Routledge, London.
- Pepper, D. (1996) *Modern environmentalism: an introduction*. Routledge, London.
- Plumwood, V. (1993) *Feminism and the mastery of nature*. London and New York. Routledge.
- Regan, T. (1982) *All that dwell therein: Essays on animal rights and environmental ethics*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Regan, T., & Singer, P. (eds). (1976) *Animal rights and human obligations*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Rolston, H., 111. (1989) *Environmental ethics: Duties to and values in the natural world* Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- Rowell, A. (1996) *Green backlash: global subversion of the environmental movement*. Routledge, London.
- Sachs, W. (ed.) *Global ecology: a new arena of political conflict*. Zed Books, London
- Schmidtz, D. & E. Willmott (2002) *Environmental ethics: What really matters, what really works*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Singer, P. (1975) *Animal liberation: A new ethics for our treatment of animals*. Routledge, New York.
- Singer, P. (ed.) (1985) *Defense of animals*. Routledge New York.
- Thomas, K. (1983) *Man and the natural world: A history of the modern sensibility*. Pantheon Books, New York.
- Tuan, Y. (1990) *Topophilia: A study of environmental perception, attitudes and values*. Columbia University Press, New York.

Articles

- Anderson, K. 1995. Culture and nature at the Adelaide Zoo: at the frontiers of 'human' geography. *Transactions: Institute of British Geographers* NS 20:275-294.
- Bird, E. 1987. The social construction of nature: theoretical approaches to the history of environmental problems. *Environmental Review* 11:255-264.
- Callicott, J.B. (1984) Non-anthropocentric value theory and environmental ethics. *American Philosophical Quarterly*. 21, 299-308.
- Cosgrove, D. 1990. Environmental thought and action: pre-modern and post-modern. *Transactions: Institute of British Geographers* NS:15:344-358
- Crook, S. & J. Pakulski 1995. Shades of green: public opinion on environmental issues in

Australia. *Australian Journal of Political Science* 30:39-55.

Cussen, K., 2002 Aesthetics and Environmental Argument. *Essays in Philosophy*, Vol.2 Number 1. <http://www.humboldt.edu/~essays/cussen.html>

Elliot, R. (1990) Metaethics and environmental ethics. *Metaphilosophy* 16, 103-117.

Fitzsimmons, M. 1989. The matter of nature. *Antipode* 21:106-20.

Fox, M. (1978) Animal liberation: A critique. *Ethics* January 1978, pp. 107-121.

Fox, W. (1983) Deep ecology: A new philosophy for our time? *Ecologist* 14, 194-200.

Harrison, C. & J. Burgess 1994. Social constructions of nature: a case study of conflicts over the development of Rainham Marshes. *Transactions: Institute of British Geographers* NS 19:291-310.

Hayward, T., (1997) Anthropocentrism: a misunderstood problem, *Environmental values* 6, pp. 49-63.

Jamieson, D., (1998) Animal Liberation is an environmental ethic, *Environmental Values* 7 (1).

Kidner, D.W. (2000) Fabricating Nature: A critique of the social construction of Nature, *Environmental Ethics* 22(4).

King, R.J. (1991) Environmental ethics and the case for hunting. *Environmental Ethics* 3 (1) 59-85.

Light, A., (1996) Callicott and Naess on pluralism. *Inquiry* 39 pp. 273-294.

McGregor, A. 1998. Ruralness, development and democracy: media, myths and meaning at Lake Cowal, New South Wales. *Australian Geographer* 29:191-203.

Naess, A. (1980) The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. *Inquiry* 16, 95-100.

Paden, R. (1990) Moral metaphysics, moral revolutions and environmental ethics. *Agriculture and Human Values* Summer-Fall 1990 pp.70-80.

Regan, T. (1976) What sort of beings can have rights? *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 14, 485-498.

Rolston, H., 111. (1981) Values in nature. *Environmental Ethics* 3, 113-128.

Routley, V. (1975) Critical notice of Passmore's 'Man's responsibility for nature'. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 53, (pp171-185)

Sale, K. 1984. Bioregionalism: a new way to treat the land. *The Ecologist* 14:167-173.

Sylvan, R. (1985) A critique of deep ecology. *Radical Philosophy*, 40-41.

Taylor, P. W. (1981) The ethics of respect for nature. *Environmental Ethics* 3, 197-218.

Thomson, J. (1987) A refutation of environmental ethics. *Environmental Ethics* 12, 147-160.

Warren, K. (1990) The power and promise of ecological feminism. *Environmental Ethics* 12, 125-147.

Warren, M. A. (1983) The rights of the nonhuman world, in Elliot, R., & Gare, A. (eds) (1983) *Environmental philosophy: A collection of readings*. University of Queensland Press St. Lucia. pp109-133

White, L. 1967. The historical roots of our ecological crisis. *Science* 155:1203-1207.

Worster, D. (1980) The intrinsic value of nature. *Environmental Review* 4, 44-57.

Zimmerman, M. (1991) Feminism, deep ecology and environmental ethics. *Environmental Ethics* 9, 21-44.