



GSE 800

Attitudes to the Environment

S1 Evening 2015

Department of Geography and Planning

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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W3A 412

4-5pm Wednesdays

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) or GradDipEnv or GradDipSIA or GradCertSIA or GradCertSusDev or GradDipSusDev or MConsBiol or GradDipConsBiol

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:

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

Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the importance of understanding environmental attitudes in addressing environmental issues

Skills in analysing contemporary environmental issues from a variety of eco-philosophical standpoints in order to identify dilemmas and solutions.

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 report</u>	10%	6pm Wednesday 18 March
<u>Critical Reflection</u>	25%	6pm Friday 3 April
<u>Eco-philosophy essay</u>	35%	6pm Wednesday 3 June
<u>Group presentation</u>	25%	From week 8 onwards
<u>Feedback on readings</u>	5%	all semester

Short report

Due: **6pm Wednesday 18 March**

Weighting: **10%**

What is meant by the social construction of nature and why is the concept important? Write a short one page report that critically analyses how nature is socially constructed in contemporary society. Your report should draw on one or more 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:

- Skills in analysing contemporary environmental issues from a variety of eco-philosophical standpoints in order to identify dilemmas and solutions.

Critical Reflection

Due: **6pm Friday 3 April**

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: **6pm Wednesday 3 June**

Weighting: **35%**

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

- a. Why do attitudes to nature matter? Draw on examples to illustrate your argument.
- b. Provide an indepth critical assessment that contrasts the ethics of the two eco-philosophies that most interest you.
- c. How can alternative eco-philosophies become more influential in shaping how humans interact with the environment? Discuss the possibilities, and the difficulties, of empowering alternative ideas in your answer.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to clearly identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the importance of understanding environmental attitudes in addressing environmental issues

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. The length of your group presentation will be determined in class but will not normally 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; geoengineering; factory farming; hunting; indigenous rights and environmentalism; veganism; nuclear energy; perceptions of environmental crisis; mining; artificial meat; coal seam gas; pest management; fire management.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to clearly identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the importance of understanding environmental attitudes in addressing environmental issues
- Skills in analysing contemporary environmental issues from a variety of eco-philosophical standpoints in order to identify dilemmas and solutions.
- The ability to work as a team and present ethical solutions to contemporary environmental challenges.

Feedback on readings

Due: **all semester**

Weighting: **5%**

An important component of the class are the required readings that all students must read each week. Students will be separated into small groups in which a coordinator will be identified. The coordinator will be responsible for assigning group members the role of discussants for each week whose responsibility will be to lead discussions on particular papers. Each week a group will be randomly selected in class to give a short presentation on the readings. The presentation will be assessed according to the group's understanding of the papers, the key insights they gained, and their ability to critically assess strengths and weaknesses in the arguments presented.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Delivery and Resources

The unit will be taught through 13x3 hour sessions on Wednesday nights from 6:30-9:30pm. Most sessions will involve a lecture accompanied by tutorial-style activities. Outside of class students 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	25 Feb	Introduction: Social natures	AM	
2	4 March	Indigenous nature	FB	
3	11 March	Western nature	AM	Reading feedback begins
4	18 March	Anthropocentric environmentalism	AM	Short report due
5	25 April	Biocentrism and animal rights	AM	
6	1 April	Ecocentrism and deep ecology	AM	Critical reflection due
MID-SEMESTER BREAK				
7	22 April	Ecofeminism	AM	
8	29 April	More-than-human	AA	Group presentations begin
9	6 May	Neo-liberal natures	AA	
10	13 May	Changing attitudes to nature	AM	
11	20 May	The politics of environment	AM	
12	27 May	Environmental justice	AM	
13	3 June	Future nature	AM	Eco-philosophy essay due

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/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

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 - 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

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 outcome

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

Assessment tasks

- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation
- Feedback on readings

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

- Ability to clearly identify the core ethical principles of different eco-philosophical approaches
- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the importance of understanding environmental attitudes in addressing environmental issues

Assessment tasks

- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation
- Feedback on readings

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

- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the importance of understanding environmental attitudes in addressing environmental issues
- Skills in analysing contemporary environmental issues from a variety of eco-philosophical standpoints in order to identify dilemmas and solutions.

Assessment tasks

- Short report
- 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 clearly 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

- Critical Reflection
- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation
- Feedback on readings

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.