



GEOP800

Attitudes to the Environment

S1 Evening 2017

Department of Geography and Planning

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	3
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	6
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	7
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	8

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Andrew McGregor

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Contact via email

W3A 412

by appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MEnv or MEnvEd or MEngMgt or MEnvMgt or MEnvPlan or MPlan or GCertEnvPlan or MEnvStud or MIntRel or MSusDev or GradDipEnv or GradDipSIA or GradCertSIA or GradCertSusDev or GradDipSusDev or MConsBiol or GradDipConsBiol or GradDipIntRel or MDevStud or MSc in (Biodiversity Conservation or Remote Sensing and GIS or Environmental Health) or PGDipSc in Biodiversity Conservation

Corequisites

Co-badged status

GEOP700

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:

Advanced understanding of the core ethical principles underpinning different eco-philosophical approaches.

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

Advanced understanding of the politics surrounding the formation of environmental attitudes.

Advanced understanding of the relevance of eco-philosophies to contemporary and future societies.

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

General Assessment Information

Written assignments are to be submitted via iLearn. A late penalty of 5 marks per day will be deducted from an assignment submitted after the due date, unless permission for an extension has previously been granted by the course convenor. The criteria and standards for each assignment will be made available via iLearn. All assessment tasks must be completed in order to pass the unit.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Short report</u>	15%	No	6pm Tuesday 21 March
<u>Critical Reflection</u>	25%	No	6pm Tuesday 11 April
<u>Eco-philosophy essay</u>	30%	No	6pm Tuesday 6 June
<u>Group presentation</u>	20%	No	From week 8 onwards
<u>Group reading task</u>	10%	No	all semester

Short report

Due: **6pm Tuesday 21 March**

Weighting: **15%**

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:

- Advanced understanding of the relevance of eco-philosophies to contemporary and future societies.

Critical Reflection

Due: **6pm Tuesday 11 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 practices. Draw from the eco-philosophical literature to inform your reflections.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Eco-philosophy essay

Due: **6pm Tuesday 6 June**

Weighting: **30%**

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 a in-depth critical assessment that contrasts the ethics of the two eco-philosophies that most interest you. As part of your analysis consider their relative influence (or potential influence) on society.
- c. How can alternative eco-philosophies be put into practice? Discuss the possibilities, and the difficulties, of empowering alternative ideas in your answer.
- d. Are environmental movements successfully changing human relations to nature? Discuss their achievements and ongoing challenges in striving to create more sustainable worlds. (You may wish to focus in on environmental movements in a particular country to make your case).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Advanced understanding of the core ethical principles underpinning different eco-philosophical approaches.
- Advanced understanding of the politics surrounding the formation of environmental attitudes.

Group presentation

Due: **From week 8 onwards**

Weighting: **20%**

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, veganism; nuclear energy; mining; artificial meat; coal seam gas; pest management; fire management; Anthropocene; population growth; rewilding; etc

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Advanced understanding of the core ethical principles underpinning different eco-philosophical approaches.
- Advanced understanding of the politics surrounding the formation of environmental attitudes.
- Advanced understanding of the relevance of eco-philosophies to contemporary and future societies.
- Ability to work as a team and present ethical solutions to contemporary environmental challenges.

Group reading task

Due: **all semester**

Weighting: **10%**

Each week time will be set aside for small groups discussions of the readings that will be facilitated by student discussants. These reading sessions will be assessed in two ways:

- 5 marks will be assigned to the discussants for their organisation and delivery of their

session

- 5 marks will be assigned to each student in the class for their overall participation in class discussions over the semester (participation also includes the iLearn online discussion boards)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Advanced understanding of the core ethical principles underpinning different eco-philosophical approaches.
- Advanced understanding of the politics surrounding the formation of environmental attitudes.

Delivery and Resources

The unit will be taught through 13x3 hour sessions on Tuesday nights from 6-9pm in 25 Wallys Walk (W6B) Room 336. 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.

GEOP800 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
	Section A	Eco-philosophies and environmental attitudes		
1	28 Feb	Introduction: Social natures	AM	
2	7 March	Indigenous nature	FB	
3	14 March	Western nature	AM	Group reading tasks begin
4	21 March	Anthropocentric environmentalism	AM	Short report due
5	28 March	Biocentrism and animal rights	AM	
6	4 April	Ecocentrism and deep ecology	AM	

7	11 April	Ecofeminism	AM	Critical reflection due
Mid-semester break				
8	2 May	More-than-human	AA	
Section B		Environmental attitudes in society		
9	9 May	Environmental movements: North and South	AM	Group presentations begin
10	16 May	Contesting environmental attitudes	AM	
11	23 May	Market environmentalism	AM	
12	30 May	Environmental justice	AM	
13	6 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_2016.html

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

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

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.m](#)

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://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources 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 upon and develop informed 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 outcomes

- Advanced understanding of the core ethical principles underpinning different eco-philosophical approaches.
- Advanced understanding of the politics surrounding the formation of environmental attitudes.

Assessment tasks

- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation
- Group reading task

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

- Advanced understanding of the core ethical principles underpinning different eco-philosophical approaches.
- Advanced understanding of the politics surrounding the formation of environmental attitudes.

Assessment tasks

- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation
- Group reading task

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

- Advanced understanding of the politics surrounding the formation of environmental attitudes.
- Advanced understanding of the relevance of eco-philosophies to contemporary and future societies.

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

- 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

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

Assessment tasks

- Critical Reflection
- Eco-philosophy essay
- Group presentation
- Group reading task