



GEOP700

Understanding Attitudes to the Environment

S1 Evening 2019

Department of Geography and Planning

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<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>	9

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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 MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

GEOP800

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 how eco-philosophies can be used in research.

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

General Assessment Information

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests. The criteria and standards for each assignment will be made available via iLearn.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Short report</u>	15%	No	11:55pm Sunday 17 March
<u>Critical Reflection</u>	25%	No	11:55pm Friday 12 April
<u>Eco-philosophy research essay</u>	30%	No	11:55pm Friday 7 June
<u>Group presentation</u>	20%	No	From week 8 onwards
<u>Group reading task</u>	10%	No	all semester

Short report

Due: **11:55pm Sunday 17 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 politics surrounding the formation of environmental attitudes.

Critical Reflection

Due: **11:55pm Friday 12 April**

Weighting: **25%**

Why do you care about the environment?

Write an essay of up to 1250 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 research essay

Due: **11:55pm Friday 7 June**

Weighting: **30%**

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

1) As human / nature divisions blur more researchers from the social sciences and humanities are focusing upon (socio)ecological issues - traditionally the domain of the natural sciences - often under the banner of the ecological (or environmental) humanities. Discuss some of the innovative ways that researchers within the ecological humanities approach research (eg environmental history, political ecology, multi-species ethnography, storytelling, etc.) and the eco-philosophies that most align with their approaches.

2) Discuss what eco-philosophy/ies will most inform your research in MRes Year 2. Justify your choice and reflect on what strengths and limitations of adopting this approach.

3) Choose a recent research book / special issue of a journal in your interest area. Critically analyse the environmental ethics that inform the research that has been conducted. Discuss whether the ethics consistent and appropriate, and what is highlighted and omitted through the ethical lens adopted.

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 how eco-philosophies can be used in research.

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 provides an eco-philosophical analysis of a contemporary environmental issue and generates practical and political insights. 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.

Fifty percent of your grade will be based on the quality of your individual contribution to the group activity. This will be assessed through the quality of your individual presentation and through peer assessment of your contribution to the group during the development of the presentation. The final 50% of the grade is a shared group mark based on the overall quality and effectiveness of the group presentation. More details, including a marking rubric, will be made available during class.

Suggested topics: deforestation; genetically modified organisms; large dams; whaling; geoengineering; carbon trading programs (e.g. REDD+, CDM); intensive animal production (factory farming); hunting; veganism; nuclear energy; mining; artificial meat; coal seam gas; pest management; fire management; Anthropocene; population growth; rewilding; renewable energy; entomophagy (eating insects); degrowth, 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.
- 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 co-taught with GEOP800 through 13 x 3 hour sessions on Monday nights from 6-9pm in 25 Wally's Walk Room 114. 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.

GEOP700 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	25 Feb	Introduction: Social natures	AM	
2	4 March	Indigenous nature	FB	
3	11 March	Western nature	AM	Group reading tasks begin
4	18 March	Anthropocentric environmentalism	AM	Short report due Sunday 17 March
5	25 March	Biocentrism and animal rights	AM	

6	1 April	Ecocentrism and deep ecology	AM	
7	8 April	Ecofeminism	AM	Critical reflection due Friday 12 April
Mid-semester break				
8	29 April	More-than-human	AM	Group presentations begin
Section B		Environmental attitudes in society		
9	6 May	Environmental movements: North and South	AM	
10	13 May	Environmental justice	AM	
11	20 May	Market environmentalism	AM	
12	27 May	Contesting environmental attitudes	AM	
13	3 June	Future nature	AM	Eco-philosophy research essay due Friday 7 June

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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> or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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>

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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 research 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 research 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 how eco-philosophies can be used in research.

Assessment tasks

- Short report
- Eco-philosophy research 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 research essay
- Group presentation
- Group reading task