

Columbia University
School of International and Public Affairs
MPA Environmental Science and Policy Program
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ENVP U6225.001

ETHICS, VALUES AND JUSTICE



Course Overview

What do ethics require of human action in relation to the natural and built environments? The answer to this question varies among stakeholders according to their values, which may be viewed as just or unjust. What are these values, and how are differences among them to be assessed and managed ethically? The complexity of such questions is compounded by a recurrent problem of voice. Some human and nonhuman stakeholders, such as future human generations and nonhuman entities, cannot verbally express themselves. Other human stakeholders, such as unprotected laborers, may have little or no opportunity to voice their standpoints. Others may undertake to do so but are unintentionally or intentionally neglected, misunderstood or misrepresented; while the standpoints of still others may be simply repudiated, censored or otherwise silenced. Despite these difficulties, an increased sense of the need to include ethics in public and private, or public, civic and social organizational and individual decision making has emerged, particularly since the 1980s. At the same time, practical agendas and academic studies increasingly articulate and address ethical processes and issues.

The course is focused upon sustainability ethics, which constitute a second generation of environmental ethics. The course material is organized into three sections. The first addresses the rise and transformation of environmental ethics from their first generation, called environmental ethics, to their second generation, called sustainability ethics. Heavily debated clusters of environmental ethics are identified, and new directions in sustainability ethics are introduced. The second and third sections of the course address two sets of sector-based sustainability ethics. One set includes land, water, air and waste ethics; and the other includes

energy, food, place, consumption and climate ethics. An overall movement from more abstract debates to more practical applications is discussed. Such applications typically involve the work of “watchdogs”, or monitoring mechanisms, such as grassroots movements that promote local activism and even citizen brigades, established NGOs that create data-based indicators and undertake litigation, corporations and shareholders pursuing social responsibility, governmental institutions providing oversight and regulation, and both traditional and new forms of investigative media. Students will have the opportunity to conduct research on sustainability ethics in relation to an organization or sector they select.

Throughout the course, ethical practice is central to the overall discussion: how can we apply sustainability ethics, values and justice, and ensure their continued application? What kinds of initiatives, innovations and proposals can we design to bring individual and institutional goals into alignment with an array of relevant ethical standpoints, while reducing and negotiating conflicts among them? The aim is to equip decision makers with the understanding, vocabulary, conditions and models needed to generate and implement initiatives that meet the ethical requirements of sustainability.



Course Objectives

Students are expected to learn how to evaluate and manage the competing ethical claims of stakeholders concerning social, economic and environmental benefits and harms. On completing the course, students should be able to:

- (1) identify and assess ethical problems concerning the biotic whole and its sectors;
- (2) decipher and understand ethics in statements, documents, arguments and outcomes;
- (3) create mechanisms for ethics training and monitoring in the practice of management;
- (4) recognize the distinct ethical challenges of wild nature and managed nature;
- (5) anticipate the distinct ethical challenges of urban and agrarian environments;
- (6) mediate competing basic needs of non-human and human nature;
- (7) design incentives or disincentives to influence, alter or enforce climate-related issues;
- (8) map conflict and corruption in local, regional, national, international and global arenas;
- (9) apply sustainability ethics to policy and project design, and in public discourse;
- (10) utilize cases and case histories to inform, improve and ground decision making.

Course Topics and Readings

In advance of each class, students should become familiar with the materials posted in the Files section of our Canvas site, reading the 4 required articles. A relevant website is also provided weekly as a source of additional information and potential research. Occasionally, some background readings may be posted, and will be designated as optional. Note that the required readings have all been selected from different journals, with the purpose of demonstrating the wide range of cross-disciplinary inputs in the field of sustainability.

During each class session, the required readings will be discussed, and students will have the opportunity to express their thoughts on them.

Section I. The Rise and Transformation of Environmental Ethics

Week 1. Human Ethics: Critical Limitations

September 5

Thoreau, Henry David. "Economy." In *Walden: or, Life in the Woods*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854. Chapter 1.

Muir, John. "Hetch Hetchy Valley." In *The Yosemite*. New York: The Century Co., 1912. Chapter 16.

Leopold, Aldo. "The Land Ethic." In *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1949. Part III.

Carson, Rachel. "And No Birds Sing." In *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1962. Chapter 8.

Website: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

Week 2. Environmental Ethics: Deep Divides

September 12

Gao, Shan. "Can Chinese Philosophy Embrace Wilderness?" *Environmental Ethics* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 147-159.

Hourdequin, Marion, and David G. Havlick. "Restoration and Authenticity Revisited." *Environmental Ethics* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 79-93.

Cordeiro-Rodrigues, Luis. "Understanding the Impact of the Animal Enterprise Terrorist Act (AETA) on Animal Advocacy." *Environmental Ethics* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 355-375.

Tin, Tina. "From the Anthropocentric to the Abiotic: Environmental Ethics and Values in the Antarctic Wilderness." *Environmental Ethics* 39, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 57-74.

Website: National Science Foundation – The Antarctic Treaty (December 1959)
<https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/antarct/anttrty.jsp>

Week 3. Earth Justice: Unaccountable Trade-offs
September 19

Gordon, Gwendolyn J. “Environmental Personhood.” *Columbia Journal of Environmental Law* 43, no. 1 (August 2018): 49-91.

Schuler, Douglas, Andreas Rasche, Dror Etzian, and Lisa Newton. “Corporate Sustainability Management and Environmental Ethics.” *Business Ethics Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (April 2017): 213-237.

Howell, Jordan P., Jennifer Kitsin, and David Clowney. “Environments Past: Nostalgia in Environmental Policy and Governance.” *Environmental Values* 28, no. 3 (August 2019): 305-323.

Temper, Leah, Dylan McGarry, and Lena Weber. “From Academic to Political Rigor: Insights from the ‘Tarot’ of Transgressive Research.” *Ecological Economics* 164 (July 2019): 1-14.
DOI.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2019.106379.

Website: Earth Charter Initiative – The Earth Charter
<http://earthcharter.org/discover/the-earth-charter/>

Week 4. Biocultural Ethics: Exculpatory Narratives
September 26

Neale, Timothy, Rodney Carter, Trent Nelson, and Mick Bourke. “Walking Together: A Decolonizing Experiment in Bushfire Management on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.” *Cultural Geographies* 26, no. 3 (January 2019): 341-359.

Lecuyer, Lou, Rehema M. White, Birgit Schmook, Violaine Lemay, and Sophie Calme. “The Construction of Feelings of Justice in Environmental Management: An Empirical Study of Multiple Biodiversity Conflicts in Calakmul, Mexico.” *Journal of Environmental Management* 213 (May 2018): 363-373.

French, Matthew, Abdul Popal, and Habib Rahim. “Institutionalizing Participatory Slum Upgrading: A Case Study of Urban Co-production from Afghanistan 2002-2016.” *Environment and Urbanization* 31, no. 1 (April 2019): 209-230.

Ahmed, Khandaker Jafor, Shad Md Atiqul Haq, Francoise Bartiaux. “The Nexus between Extreme Weather Events, Sexual Violence, and Early Marriage: A Study of Vulnerable Populations in Bangladesh.” *Population and Environment* 40, no. 3 (March 2019): 303-324.

Website: The World Happiness Report 2019
<https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2019/>

Section II. Sector-Based Sustainability Ethics (A)

Week 5. Land Ethics: Border Barriers

October 3

Chapman, Mollie, Terre Satterfield, and Kai M. A. Chan. “When Value Conflicts are Barriers: Can Relational Values Help Explain Farmer Participation in Conservation Incentive Programs?” *Land Use Policy* 82 (March 2019): 464-475.

Biswas, Debashish, Emily S. Gurley, Shannon Rutherford, and Stephen P. Luby. “The Drivers and Impacts of Selling Soil for Brick Making in Bangladesh.” *Environmental Management* 62, no. 4 (June 2018): 792-802.

Flomenhoft, Gary. “Historical and Empirical Basis for Communal Title in Minerals at the National Level: Does Ownership Matter for Human Development?” *Sustainability* 10, no. 6 (June 2018): 1-27. DOI:10.3390/su10061958.

Brubaker, Rogers. “Populism and Nationalism.” *Nations and Nationalism: The Journal of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism* (April 2019): 1-23. DOI: 10.1111/nana.12522.

Website: United Nations Global Land Outlook – Regional Reports 2019
<https://knowledge.unccd.int/glo/global-land-outlook-regional-reports>

Week 6. Water Ethics: Downstream Burdens

October 10

Woelfle-Erskine, Cleo. “Beavers as Commoners? Invitations to River Restoration Work in a Beavery Mode.” *Community Development Journal* 54, no. 1 (January 2019): 100-118.

Tiwale, Sachin, Maria Rusca, and Margaret Zwarteveen. “The Power of Pipes: Mapping Urban Water Inequities through the Material Properties of Networked Water Infrastructures - The Case of Lilongwe, Malawi.” *Water Alternatives* 11, no. 2 (2018): 314-335.

Conker, Ahmet. “Understanding Turkish Water Nationalism and its Role in the Historical Hydraulic Development of Turkey.” *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 46, no. 5 (June 2018): 877-891.

Baranyai, Gabor. “Transboundary Water Governance in the European Union: The (Unresolved) Allocation Question.” *Water Policy: Official Journal of the World Water Council* 21, no. 3 (June 2019): 496-513.

Web Page: Water Integrity Network—Annual Report 2018
<https://www.waterintegritynetwork.net/annual-reports/>

Week 7. Air Ethics: Invasive Irritants

October 17

Sorio-Lara, Julio A., Javier Tarrino-Ortiz, Paolo Bueno, Alejandro Ortega, and Jose M. Vassallo. “A Collaborative Appraisal Framework to Evaluate Transport Policies for Improving Air Quality in City Centers.” *Cities* 92 (September 2019): 112-124.

Boso, Àlex, Alvaro Q. Hofflinger, Christian Oltra, Boris Alvarez, and Jaime Garrido. “Public Support for Wood Smoke Mitigation Policies in South-Central Chile.” *Air Quality, Atmosphere & Health* 11, no. 9 (November 2018): 1109-1119.

Cheshire, Lynda, Robin Fitzgerald, and Yan Liu. “Neighborhood Change and Neighbor Complaints: How Gentrification and Densification Influence the Prevalence of Problems between Neighbors.” *Urban Studies* 56, no. 6 (May 2019): 1093-1112.

Li, Jing, Kaitlin Burroughs, Mirza Farzana Halima, Teresa L. Penbrooke, Erin Seekampa, and Jordan W. Smith. “Assessing Soundscape Preferences and the Impact of Specific Sounds on Outdoor Recreation Activities Using Qualitative Data Analysis and Immersive Virtual Environment Technology.” *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism* 24 (2018): 66-73.

Website: The World Justice Project – Rule of Law Index 2019
<https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/publications/rule-law-index-reports/wjp-rule-law-index-2019>

Week 8. Waste Ethics: Prohibitive Residues

October 24

Sasaki, Shunsuke, Kohei Watanabe, Niluh Widyaningsih, and Tetsuya Araki. “Collecting and Dealing of Recyclables in a Final Disposal Site and Surrounding Slum Residence. The Case of Bantar Gebang, Indonesia.” *Journal of Material Cycles and Waste Management* 21, no. 2 (March 2019): 375-393.

Yukalong, Nachalida, Beverley Clarke, and Kirstin Ross. “Solid Waste Management Solutions for a Rapidly Urbanizing Area in Thailand: Recommendations Based on Stakeholder Input.” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15 (June 2018): 1-23.
DOI:10.3390/ijerph15071302.

Bradshaw, Carrie. “Waste Law and the Value of Food.” *Journal of Environmental Law* 30, no. 2 (July 2018): 311 (1-18).

Inigo, Edurne A. and Vincent Blok. “Strengthening the Socio-ethical Foundations of the Circular Economy: Lessons from Responsible Research and Innovation.” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 233 (October 2019): 280-291.

Website: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Toxics Release Inventory (TRI Program)
<https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/tri-data-and-tools>

Section III. Sector-Based Sustainability Ethics (B)

Week 9. Energy Justice: Inadequate Transitions

October 31

Blondiau, Yuliya, and Ammanuelle Reuter. “Why is the Grass Greener on the Other Side? Decision Modes and Location Choice by Wind Energy Investors.” *Journal of Business Research* 102 (September 2019): 44-55.

Fraser, Timothy, and Andrew J. Chapman. “Social Equity Impacts in Japan’s Mega-solar Siting Process.” *Energy for Sustainable Development* 42 (February 2018): 136-151.

Narula, Rajneesh. “Multinational Firms and the Extractive Sectors in the 21st Century: Can They Drive Development?” *Journal of World Business* 53, no. 1 (January 2018): 85-91.

Harjanne, Atte, and Janne M. Korhonen. “Abandoning the Concept of Renewable Energy.” *Energy Policy: The International Journal of the Political, Economic, Planning, Environmental and Social Aspects of Energy* 127 (April 2019): 330-340.

Website: The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative – Progress Report 2019

<https://eiti.org/homepage>

Week 10. Food Justice: Insecure Provisions

November 7

Soper, Rachel. “From Protecting Peasant Livelihoods to Essentializing Peasant Agriculture: Problematic Trends in Food Sovereignty Discourse.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 46 (January 2019): 1-21. DOI:10.1080/03066150.2018.1543274.

Béné, Christophe, Peter Oosterveer, Lea Lamotte, Inge D. Brouwer, Stef de Haan, Steve D. Prager, Elise F. Talsma, and Colin K. Khoury. “When Food Systems Meet Sustainability – Current Narratives and Implications for Actions.” *World Development* 113 (January 2019): 116-130.

Cavallero, Eric. “Opportunity and Responsibility for Health.” *The Journal of Ethics: An International Philosophical Review* (August 2019): 1-18. DOI.org/10.1007/s10892-019-09300-7.

Emmerman, Karen S. “What’s Love Got to Do with It? An Ecofeminist Approach to Inter-animal and Intra-cultural Conflicts of Interest.” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 22, no. 1 (February 2019): 77-91.

Web Page: Codex Alimentarius International Food Standards—UN Food and Agriculture Organization

<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/about-codex/en/#c453333>

<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/codex-texts/all-standards/en/>

Week 11. Place Justice: Negligent Takeovers

November 14

Kuurne, Kalsa, and M. Victoria Gomez. “Feeling at Home in the Neighborhood: Belonging, the House and the Plaza in Helsinki and Madrid.” *City & Community* 18, no. 1 (March 2019): 213-237.

Tulier, Melody Esther, Carolina Reid, Mahasin S. Mujahid, Amani M. Allen. “‘Clear Action Requires Clear Thinking’: A Systematic Review of Gentrification and Health Research in the United States.” *Health and Place* 59 (September 2019): 102173 (1-10).

van Meerbeke, Gabriel Ortiz and Bjørn Sletto. “‘Graffiti Takes its Own Space’: Negotiated Consent and the Positionings of Street Artists and Graffiti Writers in Bogota’.” *City – Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 23, no. 3 (August 2019): 366-387.

Dominic, Tara. “A New Statelessness? The Truman Doctrine, the Modern Latin American Mercenary, and the Economic Entrenchment of the Third World.” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 31 (2018): 1-14. DOI 10.1007/s10767-017-9262-x.

Website: Our Common Home – Encyclical, 2015
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Week 12. Accoutrement Justice: Excessive Acquisitions

November 21

Didi, Sonali, Ruoh-Nan Yan, Brittany Bloodhart, Vickie Bajtelsmit, Katie McShane. “Exploring Young Adult Consumers’ Sustainable Clothing Consumption Intention-Behavior Gap: A Behavioral Reasoning Theory Perspective.” *Sustainable Production and Consumption* 18 (April 2019): 200–209.

Tokatli, Nabahat. “Fashion, Functionality, and the Contemporary Consumer.” *Journal of Consumer Culture* (May 2018): 1-21. DOI: 10.1177/1469540518773814.

Fournier, Susan, and Claudio Alvarez. “How Brands Acquire Cultural Meaning.” *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 29, no. 3 (July 2019): 519-534.

Khalil, Elias L. “Wellbeing and Happiness.” *The Journal of Value Inquiry* (December 2018): 1-26. DOI.org/10.1007/s10790-018-9678-1.

Website: La Via Campesina, International Peasants Movement – Annual Report 2018
<https://viacampesina.org/en/la-via-campesina-2018-annual-report/>

Week 13. Thanksgiving Holiday

November 28

Week 14. Climate Justice: Unnatural Extinctions

December 5

Gardiner, Stephen M. “The Threat of Intergenerational Extortion: On the Temptation to become the Climate Mafia, Masquerading as an Intergenerational Robin Hood.” *The Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 47, no. 2-3 (2017): 368-394.

Bouwer, Kim. “The Unsexy Future of Climate Change Litigation.” *Journal of Environmental Law* 30, no. 3 (2018): 483 (1-21).

Illingworth, Sam, and Kirsten Jack. “Rhyme and Reason-using Poetry to Talk to Underserved Audiences about Environmental Change.” *Climate Risk Management* 19 (January 2018): 120-129.

Nerini, Francesco Fuso, Benjamin Sovacool, Nick Hughes, Laura Cozzi, Ellie Cosgrave, Mark Howells, Massimo Tavoni, Julia Tomei, Hisham Zerriffi, and Ben Milligan. “Connecting Climate Action with other Sustainable Development Goals.” *Nature Sustainability – Perspective* 2 (August 2019): 674-680.

Website: Ethical Systems, Business Integrity through Research – Research Essay, Ethics Pays <https://www.ethicalsystems.org/content/ethics-pays>

Week 15. Term Paper Commentaries

December 12 [or sooner]

Course Materials

Required reading materials are indicated under weekly topics in the Files section of our Canvas site, typically as PDFs. To access a reading, simply click on the title in the Files section. You may also download it into your own computer.

In addition, for the purpose of review, PPTs used in class will be posted weekly in the Files section of our Canvas site.

Course Requirements and Grades

Course requirements are listed below, together with their grade point values.

1. **Class Attendance:** Attendance will be given a maximum weight of **13%**. One grade point will be given for each attended class session. Attendance should be timely and regular. An absence is excused only with (a) prior e-mail notification for a critical documented purpose, or (b) emergency verification. Attendance should be professionally “attentive”, or without distracting use of electronic or other equipment.
2. **Class Participation:** Participation will be given a maximum weight of **26%**. Two grade points will be given for active participation in each class session, including at least one significant contribution to class discussion in each of the three sections of the course. Active participation includes both (a) raising questions and offering comments connected meaningfully

to ongoing discussion; and (b) introducing readings by sharing highlights and considerations pertaining to them.

3. **Discussion Entries:** Discussion entries posted on our Canvas website in the Discussion section will be given a maximum weight of **26%**. A maximum of two grade points will be given for the timely preparation and posting of an informative, perceptive, coherent and cogent essay-style statement pertinent to the reading material assigned for a class session. One such statement should be prepared in advance of each class session. The statement is due by Wednesday, 2 p.m. before the Thursday class to which it pertains. Students should consider the possibility of accomplishing their readings and posting their statements over the weekend prior to any class.

4. **A Paper:** A paper focusing on a specific, clearly framed case of innovation in or deviation from sustainability ethics in public, civic and private organizational activity will be given a maximum weight of 35%. The paper should explain why the relevant conduct or policy in the selected case is ethical or unethical, with reference to the sustainability ethics addressed in the course, or how the conduct or policy demonstrates “best practices” or “corrupt practices”. A topic proposal and some preliminary research are components of the assignment to ensure focus and feasibility. The paper should be submitted both online and in paper copy by Friday, December 13, at 11:59 p.m. Informal commentaries on student papers will be scheduled for Thursday, December 12, during the usual class time framework.

Additional details regarding course requirements will be posted, as needed, in the Assignments section of our Canvas site.

Each student’s points for all requirements (class attendance, class participation, discussion entries and the paper) will be totaled, and a class curve will be established. Final grades will be provided on a letter grade scale.

Statements of University Policy

Academic Integrity Statement

The School of International and Public Affairs does not tolerate cheating and/or plagiarism in any form. Students who violate the Academic Integrity guidelines or the Student Conduct and Community Standards will be subject to the Dean’s Disciplinary Procedures. These rules can be viewed online at:

<http://studentconduct.columbia.edu/>

Please familiarize yourself with the proper methods of citation and attribution. Columbia provides some useful resources online, and you are strongly encouraged to familiarize yourself with these various styles before conducting your research:

<http://library.columbia.edu/research/citation-management.html>

Violations of the Academic Integrity guidelines and the Student Conduct and Community Standards will be reported to the Associate Dean for Student and Alumni Affairs.

Facilities Accessibility Statement

Columbia is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with documented disabilities. A student's disability status and reasonable accommodations are individually determined based upon disability documentation and related information gathered through the intake process. For more information regarding this service, please visit the University's Health Services websites at:

<https://health.columbia.edu/>

<http://www.health.columbia.edu/disability-services>

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