

Course	PHIL61002
Title	Environmental Philosophy
Tutor	Professor John O'Neill

Course Content:

What makes for good public decisions about the environment? A variety of different and competing decision making tools and procedures have been employed in environmental decision making from formal procedures such as cost-benefit analysis and multi-criteria decision analysis to deliberative institutions such as citizens' juries and consensus conferences. In this course we look at the theoretical underpinnings of these different approaches. Doing so will take us into foundational issues in ethics in particular surrounding the utilitarian assumptions of some of these approaches. It will cover issues in social and political philosophy such as the use of market-based approaches to the solution of environmental problems, for example, different models of democracy and their role in environmental policy making, the appeal to justice and equality within and between different generations in environmental policy, the compatibility of environmentalism with liberalism, and debates around the politics of wilderness.

Assessment

One essay 3,750 words, 75%

Seminar presentation 15%

Participation/attendance 10%

Assessment of participation and attendance will be through a learning logs in which the student provides a self-reflective record of their learning experience and seminar preparation

Aims:

This course explores different answer to the question of what makes for good decisions about the environment. It will cover a number of issues in ethics, political philosophy and economics:

- Introduce some of the main economic approaches to decision making about the environment in theory and practice;
- Examine some of the main objections that have been raised about those approaches;
- Consider some of the recent deliberative alternatives to economic approaches;
- Critically assess the adequacy of these alternatives.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

After taking this module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of some major approaches to environmental decision making;
- Critically examine attempts to price environmental goods;
- Understand the theoretical foundations of cost-benefit analysis;
- Critically discuss different accounts of justice between and within generations;
- Appraise the major different approaches to sustainability;
- Consider the theory and practice of deliberative democracy as applied to environmental decisions;
- Assess the problems in extending standard accounts of decision making to include the interests of non-humans and future generations;
- Demonstrate ability to analyse and develop arguments ;

- Develop their own thoughts on what makes for good environmental decision making.

Preliminary reading

The main text will be my book *Markets, Deliberation and Environmental Value*. and a second book authored with Alan Holland and Andrew Light *Values and the Environment*. Discussions of a number of the main topics in the course will be also found in my earlier books *Ecology, Policy and Politics: Human Well-Being and the Natural World* (London, Routledge, 1993) which is still available as an e-text and *The Market: Ethics, Knowledge and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1998). A number of papers relevant to the course will be found in J. O'Neill, I. Bateman and R. K. Turner eds. *Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* (Edward Elgar, Aldershot, 2001). For each block I have outlined basic reading which will be the basis for discussion.