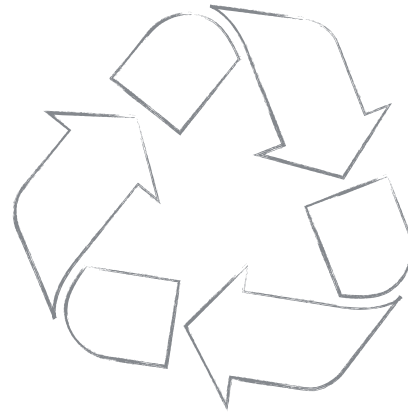**PHIL 117**

Nature, Environment, and Sustainability

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Office hours: By appointment

Description

This lecture/discussion course offers a wide-ranging and yet detailed exploration of sustainability from a philosophical perspective. The course will be divided into three thematic blocks: economic, environmental, and social sustainability. An additional block will offer us the opportunity of exploring how these three phenomena intersect and what role individuals and communities play in the resolution of sustainability problems.

Throughout the course of the semester, we will read a variety of texts that will enable us to approach sustainability issues not only from a theoretical point of view but also from a technical and practical perspective as well. The analysis of these texts, class discussions, and group exercises will be supplemented by a series of out-of-class activities that will allow us to get a closer look at how sustainability problems are currently addressed in our community. Finally, students will have the opportunity to develop their ideas and thoughts about these pressing problems on several assignments designed with the aim of helping them improve their capacity of comprehension, analysis, and critical reflection.

Required Texts and Useful Links

Peter Singer. *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-0300103052 (available at the bookstore).

Other texts will be made available online through Canvas (check schedule below).

Useful links (some of them with suggestions for further reading):

- *http://piedmont.emory.edu*
- *https://sustainability.emory.edu*
- *https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/*
- *http://sustainability.psu.edu/fieldguide/resources/*

Attendance, Participation, Assignments, and Grading ....

Attendance: Students must make every effort to attend all class sessions. Repeated unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the final grade. Let me know at the beginning of the semester if there are special circumstances that need to be considered. Please, arrive on time and have with you a hard or electronic copy of the texts under discussion.

Participation: Students must prepare for all class sessions by attentively reading the assigned material. They are expected to engage in class discussions, participate in group exercises, and attend all out-of-class activities.

Assignments: Students are required to submit several papers throughout the semester. Each of these papers must be submitted online through Canvas (as a Word or PDF document). They must include a descriptive title, the student's name, date, and page numbers. Please use a 12-points font (Time New Roman or similar), 1 inch margins, and double space between lines.

Papers submitted 24 hours beyond the deadline will receive a deduction of one letter grade. Papers submitted between 24 and 48 hours after the deadline will receive a deduction of two letter grades. No paper will be accepted after 48 hours of the deadline.

The instructor will not review full drafts of papers but students are encouraged to discuss the content, direction, and purpose of each of these papers during office hours.

- **Topic essays**: Students must submit one set of short essays in response to questions posed by the instructor (300-350 words each). These should draw on and explicitly cite the readings covered during the previous sessions.

- **Short expository paper**: Students must submit one expository paper (1,000-1,200 words) discussing at least *two readings* among those covered during the previous sessions.

- **Short argumentative paper***:* Students must submit one argumentative paper (1,000-1,200 words) discussing at least *two new readings* among those covered during the previous sessions. It must contain a clear thesis statement and offer a properly developed argument in its support.

- **Final paper**: Students must submit one argumentative paper (2,000-2,500 words) discussing at least *three new* readings among those covered throughout the course and *two secondary sources*. This paper must contain a clear thesis statement and offer a properly developed argument in its support.

   Additionally, students must identify and include the name of at least three events or publications in which this paper could be presented or published (although it is not required that the paper is actually presented or published), for example, undergraduate conferences, workshops, undergraduate journals, newspapers, magazines, or blogs, among others. A brief description of the conference or publication with the guidelines for contributors must be included.

- **Proposal and presentation**: In preparation for the final paper, students must submit a brief proposal (300-350 words) explaining its main purpose, thesis, basic argument, and sources. After receiving feedback from the instructor, students will prepare a final version of this proposal and present it in class in a 7-10 minutes talk. The rest of the students will have the opportunity to provide constructive comments and suggestions.

Grading:

- Participation: 10%
- Topic essays: 10%
- Short expository paper: 15%
- Short argumentative paper: 20%

- Final paper proposal: 5%
- Final paper presentation: 5%
- Final paper: 35%

Course Policies and Important Information for Students

The Honor Code: The Honor Code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council:
http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html

Citation and plagiarism: All texts submitted must be the student's own original work. The student must make sure that all quotations and paraphrased ideas are fully and accurately cited.

This course may employ plagiarism-detection software, including Turnitin, for any required assignments. Turnitin compares submitted work to sources available on the internet, archived databases of essays, journals, books, and other publications, and its database of assignments submitted in the past at Emory and other universities. Work that generates concerns about originality or citation methods will be reviewed and submitted to the Honor Council as appropriate. This software does not substitute for the judgment of the instructor and other authorities in the detection of plagiarism, and other methods may be employed in this course to determine that all work abides by the standards set forth in the Honor Code.

Confusion over what counts as plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. Should you have any questions about what plagiarism is, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Council without exception. For additional information on citation procedures visit:
https://guides.libraries.emory.edu/c.php?g=49955&p=323977

Green/paperless policy: Students are encouraged to incorporate "green" practices into all aspects related to this course whenever possible. All information about the course as well as texts and other materials (except for the required text, which can be purchased at the bookstore) will be posted on Canvas. All assignments must be sent online through Canvas as a Word or PDF document.

Use of electronic devices: The use of certain electronic devices (laptops and tablets, but not phones) is allowed provided they are used responsibly for purposes related to class work and as a way of improving the learning process. Random web surfing, checking emails, accessing social media, or playing video games is strictly prohibited.

Academic support and other resources: There is a variety of resources available to students. To learn more, visit the following websites and/or consult the instructor:

- **Access and disability resources:**
If you have a documented disability and have anticipated barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, or presume having a disability (e.g. mental health, attention, learning, vision, hearing, physical or systemic), and are in need of accommodations for this semester, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) and the instructor. *http://accessibility.emory.edu*

- **Counseling and psychological services:**
Emory University's Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free, confidential services for students including: initial assessments, crisis intervention, community referrals, brief individual, couples, and group counseling, consultation, community outreach services, and educational workshops.
http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/index.html

- **English as a second language (ESL Program):**
The ESL Program supports Emory College students who speak English as a second language both directly (through tutoring as well as through academic support for non-native speakers) and indirectly (through the collaborative partnerships that the program has established with other programs throughout the College).
http://college.emory.edu/oue/current-students/international-students/esl-program.html

- **General support for students:**
The Office for Undergraduate Education offers programs to support student learning. These include mentoring, coaching, and tutoring services for individuals and small groups. *http://college.emory.edu/oue/*

• Writing support and peer tutoring (Emory Writing Center):

Tutors in the Emory Writing Center Program are available to support Emory College students as they work on any type of writing assignment, at any stage of the composing process. Tutors can assist with a range of projects, from traditional papers and presentations to websites and other multimedia projects. Students who are non-native speakers of English are welcome to visit either the Writing Center tutors or the ESL tutors. *http://writingcenter.emory.edu*

Schedule and readings ....

Weeks 1 - 2: Introduction

We will begin the course by reflecting on the general notion of sustainability. To that end, we will read a variety of introductory texts and talk about what sustainability is and what it means to commit to a sustainable life.

Writing workshop (week 2).

- Bill Hopwood, Mary Mellor, and Geoff O'Brien. "Sustainable Development: Mapping Different Approaches." *Sustainable Development* 13 (2005): 38-52.
- David W. Orr. "Four Challenges of Sustainability." *Conservation Biology* 16:6 (December 2002): 1457-1460.
- Thomas Princen. "Principles of Sustainability: From Cooperation and Efficiency to Sufficiency." *Global Environmental Politics,* 3:1 (2003): 33-49.
- Peter Singer. *One World.* Preface and Chapter 1: "A Changing World."

Weeks 3 - 5: Economic sustainability

Our first thematic block will revolve around economic sustainability. We will read and reflect about issues such as economic distribution, systemic poverty, and global equality, among others.

Out-of-class activity with Green Chamber of the South (week 4).

Topic essays due (date TBD).

- Thomas W. Pogge. "Severe Poverty as a Human Rights Violation." In *Freedom from Poverty as a Human Right: Who Owes What to the Very Poor?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Peter Singer. *One World.* Chapter 3: "One Economy."

- James Gustave Speth. "Real Growth: Promoting the Well-Being of People and Nature." In *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008.

Weeks 6 - 8: Environmental sustainability

We will devote the central part of the semester to the important problem of environmental sustainability by reading and talking about the challenge of climate change, the problem of air and water pollution, and the relation of humans to the natural world.

Visit to the Emory WaterHub (week 7).

Short expository paper due (date TBD).

- Allen Carlson. "Appreciation and the Natural Environment." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37, 3 (Spring 1979): 267-275.
- Richard and Val Routley. "Against the Inevitability of Human Chauvinism." In *Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century.* K. E. Goodpaster and K. M. Sayre (eds.). Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979.
- Peter Singer. *One World.* Chapter 2: "One Atmosphere."
- Paul W. Taylor. "The Ethics of Respect for Nature." *Environmental Ethics* 3:3 (1981): 197-218.

Weeks 9 - 11: Social sustainability

Our third thematic block will revolve around issues such as social inequality, environmental racism, and the importance of tolerance, solidarity, and justice.

Out-of-class activity with Hands On Atlanta (week 10).

Short argumentative paper due (date TBD).

- Martha C. Nussbaum. "Cosmopolitan Emotions" and "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism." In *For Love of Country?* Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.
- Peter Singer. *One World.* Chapter 5: "One Community."
- Laura Westra. "The Faces of Environmental Racism." In *Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001.

Weeks 12 - 14: Sustainability, responsibility, and action

In our last thematic block, we will address sustainability as an all-encompassing phenomenon by exploring the intersection among economic, social, and environmental issues and will reflect on some of the world's most pressing challenges related to sustainability as well as on the role of individuals and communities in their resolution. **Final paper proposal due (date TBD).**

- Julian Agyeman, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans. "Exploring the Nexus: Bringing Together Sustainability, Environmental Justice and Equity." *Space and Polity* Volume 6, Issue 1 (2002): 77-90.
- Christopher Barrington-Leigh. "Sustainability and Well-Being: A Happy Synergy." *Development* Volume 59, Issue 3-4 (2016): 292-298.
- Daniel R. Faber and Deborah McCarthy. "Neo-liberalism, Globalization and the Struggle for Ecological Democracy: Linking Sustainability and Environmental Justice." In *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*. Julian Agyeman, Robert D. Bullard, and Bob Evans (eds.). Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003.
- Peter Singer. *One World.* Chapter 6: "A Better World?"
- Arjen E. J. Wals and Aaron Benavot. "Can We Meet the Sustainability Challenges? The Role of Education and Lifelong Learning." *European Journal of Education* Volume 52, Issue 4 (2017): 404-413.

Week 15: Final conclusions and individual presentations

We will devote our last week to individual presentations and final comments and discussions.

Optional writing bootcamp (date TBD).

Final paper due (date TBD).