

# VALUES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

PHIL 37  
2:45 – 4:00 T/Th  
Carnegie 214  
Office Hours: 10-11am Tuesday/Thursday  
or email to schedule appointment

Professor Jordan Daniels  
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Office: Pearsons 205



## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Are we ethically responsible for the natural world? Are we equally responsible towards it? Do we have moral obligations toward non-human animals, toward non-animal living things, toward non-living things? What is the very nature of ethical responsibility and moral obligation—is it uniquely human? How does history inform the ways we regard nature? Who are “we” in posing these questions?

This course examines these issues by introducing students to the burgeoning discipline of environmental philosophy. Our course is divided into three main units. In Unit 1, **Morality, Value, and Non-Human Nature**, we open by questioning a common set of dualisms in moral thinking: morality as opposed to animal nature, and reason as opposed to emotionality. We explore the themes of: 1) what is the moral standing of non-human beings; 2) whether morality or ethical responsiveness itself is a uniquely human quality; 3) what is at stake in the distinctiveness of human action; and 4) what responsibilities we have towards non-human animals. We will evaluate different ethical frameworks for designating the value and the rights of non-human animals, examining utilitarian, deontological, evolutionary, and ecofeminist perspectives.

In Unit 2, **Land Ethics**, we turn to the question of how to account for ethics that apply to larger and more complex systems of nature. How can we conceptualize moral responsibilities to ecosystems? Does this problematize the moral frameworks we have discussed so far?

In Unit 3, **Knowledges, Natures, Decolonial Ecologies**, we interrogate how coloniality has shaped the ways nature is understood and lived today. We therefore trace the central conceptual dualisms of humanity and nature, mind and matter, value and fact, investigating the role these fundamental distinctions have played—and continue to play—in ways of organizing life. We pose the philosophical and political question: how might different conceptions of nature interact, coincide, and miss one another in conflicts over land use and climate justice? We will conclude the course attempting to come up with a satisfactory way of conceptualizing “nature” or “natures” in our contemporary social-political world.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the class, I hope students will be able to understand knowledge creation, engage multiple perspectives, and investigate meaningful questions in the domain of environmental philosophy. Here are some more specific learning outcomes we will work towards:

- Students are able to articulate the differences between anthropocentrism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism
- Students learn to evaluate claims about the moral considerability of non-human nature and can compare diverse ethical frameworks
- Students are able to culturally and historically situate our discussions of nature and human beings' relations to nature
- Students can define settler colonialism and Indigeneity
- Students assess their own place in the world and their own responsibilities to human, non-human, and non-animal nature



## COURSE MATERIALS

Frans de Waal, *Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). ISBN: 978-0691169163

Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).  
ISBN: 978-0822359630

We will be reading nearly the entirety of these two books, and you can purchase them in the Claremont bookstore. I also recommend you search online for a second-hand copy!

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Participation

Regular attendance and your engaged attention are expected. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Excused absences include illness or Covid-related difficulties and notification prior to class beginning. (See Covid policy below.) I also reserve the right to add short quizzes if students do not seem prepared. These quizzes will count towards your participation grade.

Participation can take many forms: being vocal in discussion, active listening, respectful engagement with your peers, and meeting with me in office hours.

I encourage everyone to experiment with forms of participation that may be new for them. If you find yourself taking up a lot of space in the classroom, try directing your questions and comments to other students. If you don't find vocal participation to be intuitive, practice by asking a question—odds are, other students share your question or you might spark a really generative new direction. Alternately, focus on the weekly blog to develop thoughts that you can then bring to class discussion.



I divide your participation grade into two units of 10 points so that you can take note of your standing around halfway through the course.

### Thursday Blog

These are chances for you to engage with your peers and synthesize the material we have been covering in the readings and in course meetings. The blog will be continuous throughout the semester, and you are required to post a comment of 4-8 sentences once a week, by Thursday, 11:59pm (see syllabus and Sakai for weeks when no blog is required), though you are encouraged to engage beyond that and to comment on fellow students' posts. Your participation will be graded equivalent to  $\checkmark$ ,  $\checkmark+$ ,  $\checkmark-$ . A  $\checkmark$  amounts to full credit, while a  $\checkmark+$  is a truly exceptional post. A  $\checkmark-$  reflects minimal or superficial engagement.

## Midterm Paper

You will complete one argumentative paper of 5-7 pages that focuses on our first unit, Morality, Value, and Non-human Nature. The assignment will be distributed in class, and you are to upload the assignment to Sakai. Please submit a double-spaced **Word document**, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font.

## Final Paper

By the end of the semester, you will turn in a final argumentative paper of 7-10 pages, double-spaced, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font with normal margins. You will receive the assignment in class.

\*For papers, I suggest you use the Chicago Manual of Style for citations, though APA and MLA are also acceptable as long as you are consistent. Here is a helpful guide: [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

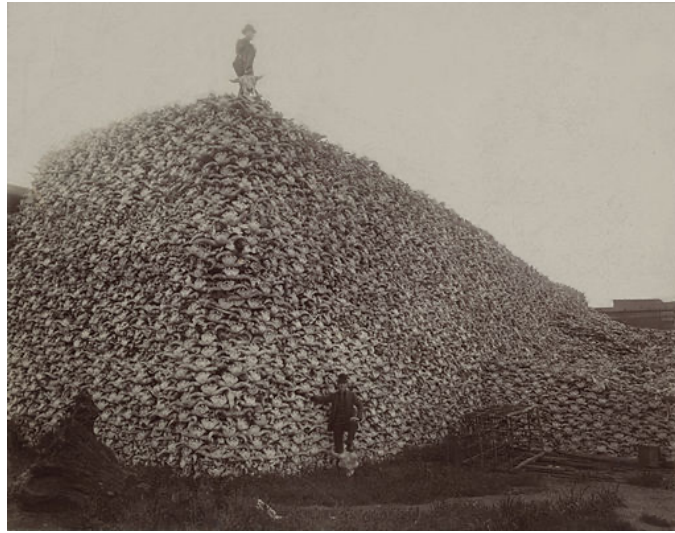
## Extra Credit

Environmental Analysis will host preeminent historian of fire, Stephen Pyne, in the first week of February. He will be giving two talks, “The Pyrocene: How Humans Created a Fire Age,” and “Strange Fire: Europe’s Encounter with Fire around the World.” You will receive 1 point of extra credit for attending one or both of these events and submitting a one-page reflection paper.

## GRADE TOTAL

ACTIVITY		POINTS
Participation		10
Participation		10
Thursday Blog	Sakai	20
Midterm Paper	Word, Sakai	30
Final Paper	Word, Sakai	30
TOTAL POINTS		100
Extra Credit		1

## POLICIES AND RESOURCES



### Covid Safety Awareness

The faculty at the 5C's knows that person-to-person interaction provides the best liberal arts education. The best learning occurs in small communities. This year we are gathering in person for what we do best: create, generate, and share knowledge. During the past academic year, we built community remotely, and this year we will build on the pedagogical improvements we acquired last year. For example, if we need to, we might meet on zoom from time to time.

Our health, both mental and physical, is paramount. We must consider the health of others inside and outside the classroom. All Claremont Colleges students have signed agreements regulating on-campus behavior during the pandemic; in the classroom, we will uphold these agreements. We need to take care of each other for this course to be successful. I ask you therefore to adhere to the following principles:

- There is a mask mandate for all indoor spaces on campus. You must wear a mask for the entire class; **eating and drinking are not permitted. Your mask must cover your mouth and nose.** The college has zero-tolerance for violations of this policy, and our shared commitment to the health and safety of our community members means if you come to class unmasked you will have to leave class for the day.
- Class attendance is required, but if you need to miss class for health reasons, concerning symptoms, suspected Covid exposure, unexpected dependent care, technology issues, or other emergency reasons I will work with you. Let me underscore this: please make your decisions always based on health, safety, and wellness—yours and others—and I will work with you at the other end. Take the symptom “Pomona Safe Daily Health Check” seriously; we’re counting on each other.
- When not in class, avoid closed public spaces, and if you can't avoid them: wear your mask properly, wash your hands, and maintain social distance.
- If you, or a family member, are experiencing hardship because of the pandemic, talk to someone in the Dean of Students office. You are not alone during this time.

The pandemic is fast-moving, and we might have to adjust these principles as the semester evolves. I am always happy to receive your feedback to make this course work.



Let's care for each other, show empathy, and be supportive. While there will likely be some community transmission and breakthrough infections, together, we can minimize their effect on our community and on your learning.

### **Technology Policy**

Phones, tablets, computers, and other electronic devices are great, but not for our classroom except in cases where accommodations are arranged. Let's practice sustained attention with one another, a welcome break after so much screen time last year. All PDFs should be printed unless permission is granted in advance.

### **Late Assignment Policy**

You will lose 50% of the possible points for any assignment that you submit late if you have not spoken with me before the deadline. I AM VERY HAPPY TO GRANT EXTENSIONS IF YOU WRITE/SPEAK WITH ME. Please communicate with me at least 48 hours before an assignment is due if you feel you need an extension.

### **Academic Integrity**

The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

### **Disability Accommodations**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your faculty and the Pomona Academic Support Services at <https://www.pomona.edu/accessibility> at the beginning of the semester if you have not already registered for accommodations.

### **Writing Center**

The Writing Center is open this semester! Writing and Speaking Partners meet one-on-one with students to talk about their work and provide feedback at any stage of their preparation process. Trained to think deeply about rhetoric and communication across the curriculum, these student peers facilitate conversations about everything from ID1 papers to senior theses, lab reports to creative writing, giving presentations to developing strategies for reading and engaging more deeply in class discussions. Additionally, Jenny Thomas, our Assistant Director of College Writing and Language Diversity, offers specialized writing and speaking support for multilingual students navigating English as an additional language. To make an appointment with a Writing or Speaking Partner, please log on to the Portal and go to Academics > Writing Center, or contact at [writing.center@pomona.edu](mailto:writing.center@pomona.edu).

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

In our classroom, we seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression

and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability.

### **Non-Sexist Use of Language**

We academics no longer use “man” or “mankind” to refer to the entirety of humanity or a hypothetical person. This extends to written work as well as discussions, and it will serve you well throughout the rest of your professional lives.

### **Content Warning**

In this course, we will be discussing animal cruelty, colonial and sexual violence, and colonial erasure.

### **CONTACT**

I prefer if you contact me via email at [Jordan.Daniels@pomona.edu](mailto:Jordan.Daniels@pomona.edu) rather than through Sakai.



## SCHEDULE (subject to change)

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### INTRODUCTION

#### Week 1

Tuesday, January 18

- Introduction; syllabus review

Thursday, January 20

- Reading due: Arne Næss, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement"

### UNIT 1: Morality, Value, and Non-Human Animals

#### Week 2

Tuesday, January 25

- Reading due: De Waal, *Primates and Philosophers*, "Morally Evolved: Primate Social Instincts, Human Morality, and the Rise and Fall of Veneer Theory," pgs. 1-58

Thursday, January 27

- Reading due: De Waal, *Primates and Philosophers*, pgs. 59-80

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, January 27

#### Week 3

(*A Utilitarian Approach*)

Tuesday, February 1

- Reading due: Peter Singer, "Morality, Reason, and the Rights of Animals," in *Primates and Philosophers*, pgs. 140-158

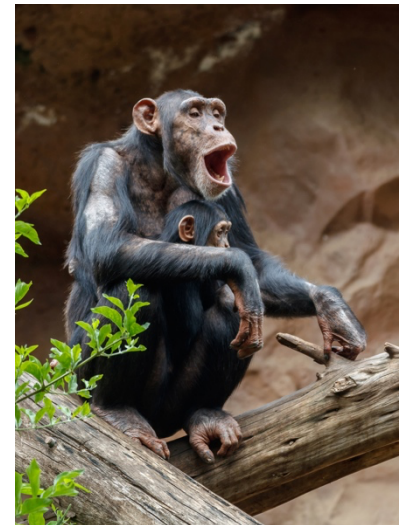
Thursday, February 3

- Reading due: Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal"

For further reference (not required):

- <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/19-02-2020/disabled-voices-on-peter-singer-whos-actually-listening-to-this-guy/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/16/magazine/unspeakable-conversations.html>

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, February 3





#### Week 4

*(A Deontological and Rights-based Approach)*

Tuesday, February 8

- Reading due: Christine Korsgaard, "Morality and the Distinctiveness of Human Action," in *Primates and Philosophers*, pgs. 98-119

Thursday, February 10

- Reading due: Tom Regan, "Animal Rights, Human Wrongs"

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, February 10

\*Stephen Pyne visits, Pyrocene Field Trip

#### Week 5

*(An Ecofeminist Approach)*

Tuesday, February 15

- Reading due: Deborah Slicer, "Your Daughter or Your Dog? A Feminist Assessment of the Animal Research Issue"

Thursday, February 17

- Reading due: Deborah Slicer, "Joy," in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, February 17

#### Week 6

Tuesday, February 22

- Reading due: De Waal, "Response to Critics," pgs. 161-181
- Reading due: "What Does a Parrot Know About PTSD?"  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/31/magazine/what-does-a-parrot-know-about-ptsd.html>

Thursday, February 24

- **Watch by class:** *Project Nim*, documentary available via Sakai
- **Thesis Workshop: bring thesis for midterm to class**



*\*Assignment due: MIDTERM PAPER*, 11:59pm, Monday, February 28\*

## UNIT 2: Land Ethics

### Week 7

Tuesday, March 1

- Reading due: Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic," "Thinking Like a Mountain"
- Reading due: Kyle Whyte, "Climate Change: An Unprecedentedly Old Catastrophe"

Thursday, March 3

- Reading due: J. Baird Callicott, "The Land Ethic"
- Reading due: J. Baird Callicott, "Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics Back Together Again"

*Assignment due: **Blog Post**, 11:59pm, Thursday, March 3*

### Week 8

Tuesday, March 8

- Reading due: Garret Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons"
- Reading due: Elinor Ostrom, "A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems"

Thursday, March 10

- Reading due: Holmes Rolston III, "Is There an Ecological Ethic?"

*Assignment due: **Blog Post**, 11:59pm, Thursday, March 10*

**\*SPRING BREAK\***



### UNIT 3: Natures, Knowledges, Decolonial Ecologies

#### Week 9

Tuesday, March 22

- Reading due: René Descartes, *Meditations* I-II, *Discourse on Method* selections

Thursday, March 24

- Reading due: Vanessa Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought & Agency Amongst Humans and Non-Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman Go on a European World Tour!)"

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, March 24

#### Week 10

Tuesday, March 29

- Reading due: Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, "Story 1: Agreeing to Remember, Translating, and Carefully Co-laboring," "Interlude 1: Mariano Turpo: A Leader In-Ayllu," pgs. 1-58
- *Recommended: Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator"*

Thursday, March 31

- Reading due: Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, "Story 2: Mariano Engages 'the Land Struggle': An Unthinkable Indian Leader," pgs. 59-89
- *Recommended: Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics"*

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, March 31

#### Week 11

Tuesday, April 5

- Reading due: Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, "Story 3: Mariano's Cosmopolitics: Between Lawyers and Ausangate," pgs. 91-116

Thursday, April 7

- Reading due: Kyle Whyte, "Indigenous Environmental Justice: Anti-Colonial Action Through Kinship"
- **Listen by class:** Red Nation Podcast, "All out for Wedzin Kwa w/ Sleydo and Jen Wickham," <https://directory.libs.yn.com/episode/index/show/therednation/id/21332375>
  - o Wing Chief Sleydo and Jen Wickham of Cas Yikh House in Gidimt'en Clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation discuss the ongoing struggle at Gidimt'en Checkpoint against the Coastal GasLink pipeline and RCMP invasions on unceded Wet'suwet'en territory.

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, April 7

## Week 12

Tuesday, April 12

- Reading due: Marisol de la Cadena, *Earth Beings*, “Story 4: Mariano’s Archive: The Eventfulness of the Ahistorical,” pgs. 133-139, 145-151, and “Story 5: *Chamanismo Andino* in the Third Millennium: Multiculturalism Meets Earth-Beings,” pgs. 179-208

Thursday, April 14

- Reading due: Kyle Whyte and Chris J. Cuomo, “Ethics of Caring in Environmental Ethics: Indigenous and Feminist Philosophies”
- Reading due: <https://wrm.org.uy/other-relevant-information/kari-oca-2-declaration-indigenous-peoples-global-conference-on-rio-20-and-mother-earth/>

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Friday, April 14

## Week 13

Tuesday, April 19

- Reading due: Charles Sepulveda, “Our Sacred Waters: Theorizing *Kuuyam* as a Decolonial Possibility”

Thursday, April 21

- Reading due: Wallace Cleaves and Charles Sepulveda, “Nature Land Acknowledgements Are Not the Same as Land,” <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-12/native-land-stewardship-needs-to-follow-acknowledgment>
- **Watch by class:** Winona LaDuke, “Indigenous Food Sovereignty” <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/sustainablefoodsystems/2018/02/06/winona-laduke-indigenous-food-sovereignty/>

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, April 21

## Week 14

Tuesday, April 26

- Guest Speaker (information to follow)

Thursday, April 28

- Field Trip: Robert Redford Conservancy

*Assignment due: Blog Post*, 11:59pm, Thursday, April 21

## Week 15

Tuesday, May 3

- Conclusion, evaluations

