

Sample Syllabus

Ethics and Climate Change

PHL 499/599

Spring 2011

Tuesdays, 4-7

Hovland 100

Kathleen Dean Moore, instructor

kmoore@oregonstate.edu, 541-737-5652

Office hours Tuesdays 10-12 and by appointment

Text: *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*

Reading and Assignment Schedule

March 29 Do we have a moral obligation to take action to protect the future of a planet in peril?

Read Introduction

April 5 Yes, for the survival of humankind.
Yes, for the sake of the children.

Read gray matter for 1 and 2; Gus Speth, Daniel Quinn, the Dalai Lama, E. O. Wilson, Alan Weisman*, Oren Lyons, Scott Russell Sanders, Gary Snyder, John Paul II and Bartholomew I, Derrick Jensen.

April 12 Yes, for the sake of the Earth itself.
Yes, for the sake of all forms of life on the planet.

Read gray matter for 3 and 4; Brian Turner, Holmes Rolston, Stuart Chapin, Thich Nhat Hanh, Kate Rawles, Dave Foreman*, Carly Lettero, Shepherd Krech, Gary Nabhan, David Quammen, Robert Pyle.

April 19 Yes, because justice demands it.

Read gray matter for 10; Sheila Watt-Cloutier*, Carl Pope, Michael Crow, Steve Vanderheiden, Lauret Savoy, Ismail Serageldin, Peter Singer, Carl Safina.

- April 26 Yes, for the stewardship of God's creation.
Yes, to honor and celebrate Earth and Earth systems.
- Read gray matter for 8 and 13; Sallie McFague*, Marcus Borg, Seyyed Nasr, Tri Robinson, Marty Kaplan, Bron Taylor, Thomas Berry, Linda Hogan, Mary Evelyn Tucker and Brian Swimme.
- May 3 Yes, because all flourishing is mutual.
Yes, because compassion requires it.
- Read gray matter for 7 and 9; George Tinker, Fred Allendorf, Jonathan F. P. Rose, Mary Catherine Bateson, Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, Edwin Pister, Kimberly Wade-Benzoni, Jesse Fink, Libby Roderick, Wangari Maathai, Ming Xu and Xin Wei*, James Garvey, Sulak Sivaraksa, Quincy Troupe.
- May 10 Yes, because the world is beautiful.
Yes, because we love the world.
- Read gray matter for 11 and 12; Bernd Heinrich, John Vucetich, Hank Lentfer,* Alison Deming, Baird Callicott, bell hooks, Katie McShane, Steve Kellert, Wendell Berry, Kathleen Dean Moore.
- May 17 Yes, to honor our duties of gratitude and reciprocity.
Yes, for the full expression of human virtue.
- Read gray matter for 5 and 6; Robin Morris Collin, Bartholomew I, Robin Kimmerer, Courtney Campbell, Debbie Bird Rose, Ursula Le Guin*, Brian Doyle, John Perry, Bill McKibben, Massoumeh Ebtekar, Dale Jamieson, Tom Friedman.
- May 24 Yes, because our moral integrity requires us to do what is right.
- Read gray matter for 14; Curt Meine, N. Scott Momaday, Ernest Partridge, Terry Tempest Williams, Paul Thompson, Joerg Tremmel, José Tundisi, Barbara Kingsolver, Michael Nelson*, Paul Hawken.
- May 31 Projects due

Assignments for three-credit course

1. Faithfully attend class.
2. For each class day, read the assigned material. Read it closely enough that you can answer short written questions about the material and participate usefully in class discussion.
3. For five class days, bring a written response to the reading assigned. Note that late work is not accepted. The written response might be any of the following:
 - a. Addressing one of the reasons that are the focus for that day's class, write a piece you might contribute to the book. Note that, like the other contributions, this might be a personal essay, an article, a poem, a letter, a prayer, or a song (unless you can think of another form). Note also that it needs to come in under 2,000 words.
 - b. A new "Ethical Actions" essay for one of the sections assigned for that day, suggesting what a person might do if the reason in that section speaks especially strongly to her or him. Note that these are meant not to tweak our technologies or consumer habits, but to supplant them, making a substantive or spiritual change.
 - c. A case study or example from your area of work or study, in which you describe a morally difficult situation, apply a moral principle from the given section, and draw a conclusion.
 - d. A blog posting for moralground.com, in which you write of your personal response to one of the arguments of the day. Note how carefully blogs are written, to get to the point quickly, make reference to a personal connection, and elicit a meaningful response.
4. For one class day, collaborate with other students to lead a 30-minute "discussion," understood broadly and creatively, of the essay marked with an asterisk*.
5. For one class day, collaborate with other students to bring a light and healthy snack, such as a bowl of apples.
6. Complete a term project, designed in consultation with the professor.

Grades

	3 credits
1. Class attendance	20 %
2. Careful reading	20
3. Written responses to reading	40
4. Discussion leadership	5
5. Project	15

Those taking the course for graduate credit will be expected to do a project that is a proportionately more significant investment of time and expertise than those taking the course as undergraduates.

Sample Course Announcement

SPECIAL NEW SPRING TERM COURSE

Ethics and Climate Change PHL 499/599

While climate change and other ecological emergencies present scientific and technological problems, the issues themselves are fundamentally moral problems. They call us to action grounded in reasons of justice and human rights, compassion, personal integrity, and radical self-interest.

This course will offer students the opportunities

- to examine the moral issues that we face as the climate changes,
- to learn how worldviews and values, together with science, shape moral arguments about what we ought to do,
- to read and learn from the world's moral leaders,
- to reason cogently about the difficult decisions we must make to defend intergenerational human rights and the rich abundance of life on Earth,
- and to acquire the skills and concepts to navigate in the choppy waters of a global moral discourse of (literally) world-changing importance.

Tuesdays, 3:30–6:30. Spring 2011

2 credits: class meets 3/29 to 5/24

3 credits: class meets 3/29 to 5/31 (incl. final project)

Prerequisites: A working knowledge of the facts of climate change is assumed; students do not need a formal background in philosophy or ethics.

Instructor: Kathleen Dean Moore, Ph.D., is the coeditor of *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*, and the author of *Wild Comfort* and many other books. She speaks about climate ethics to national audiences in the scientific, faith, social action, and environmental communities. She is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Oregon State.