

## **PHIL 2710: Ethics of Climate Change**

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Adsett  
Office: Online – Skype, Zoom, or E-Mail  
Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Local PEI Time  
Wednesday, and Thursdays  
or  
By appointment  
E-Mail: [dadsett@upei.ca](mailto:dadsett@upei.ca)  
Skype: [adsett.daniel@gmail.com](mailto:adsett.daniel@gmail.com)  
live:.cid.53b3ba9c64c5b7c6  
Class Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Location: Zoom  
Days: Mondays and Fridays  
Dates: July 5<sup>th</sup> – August 17<sup>th</sup>

### **Required Texts:**

Byron Williston, *Ethics of Climate Change: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2019). Abbreviated as *ECC*.

The titles and locations of other readings can be found in the **Articles** document posted on **Moodle**

### **Description:**

This course investigates the ethical problems associated with climate change, including: What ethical frameworks are helpful for evaluating the complex social, environmental, intergenerational and international ethical issues that climate change raises? What moral responsibility do individuals have for helping to resolve problems in which their whole society is implicated? What is the fairest and most effective way to limit greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions? Is our current rate of GHG emissions a new form of domination – not only over the earth and other civilizations, but also over future generations? Does the massively collective nature of climate change necessitate new ways of conceptualizing environmental ethics?

### **Course Objectives:**

*By the end of the semester, each student will have . . .*

- An understanding of the major ethical issues involved in debates concerning climate change
- An acquaintance with some major theoretical views about how individuals, collectivities, corporations, and nations relate to the environment
- An understanding of how to apply philosophical analyses to environmental issues
- An ability to clearly understand how mitigatory and adaptive strategies are being used to deal with climate change

### **Grading:**

Each student will be graded on (1) eight online contributions, (2) one mid-term exam, (3) one presentation, and (4) one final exam. Each online contribution will consist of an original post *and* one response to another students' posts for a total of 40 points. The mid-term will be worth 20 points. There

will be one presentation, to be completed with a partner, worth 20 points, and one final exam, worth 20 points. Further information on how to complete the presentation, exams, and online posts is in the **Guidelines** section of this course's **Moodle** site. For policies concerning missed assignments, see the **Policies for Late Work and Extra Credit** below. In all, each student's final grade will be out of 100:

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| Online Posts: | 40  |
| Presentation: | 20  |
| Mid-Term:     | 20  |
| Final Exam:   | 20  |
| Total:        | 100 |

### **Important Dates:**

Last Day to Withdraw: July 28<sup>th</sup>

Final Exam Due: August 16<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 PM Local PEI Time

### **Attendance Policy:**

Because this is an online course and students will likely be dispersed across different time zones, showing up to the weekly Zoom meeting will not be mandatory. That being said, I strongly encourage everyone to attend. During each meeting we will review the readings, talk about the articles and summaries, discuss our online posts, have our presentations, and get to know each other.

### **Policies for Late Work and Extra Credit:**

Presentations missed for unexcused reasons will not be able to be given at an alternative time unless arrangements are made beforehand. Discussion posts will not be able to be submitted late and each test will need to be completed within the allotted time-frame. For work towards bonus marks, students must contact me before July 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Academic Dishonesty:**

Acts of academic misconduct will be taken seriously in this course. Violations of academic integrity will be addressed in accord with the regulations of the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Philosophy. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to the following:

#### ***Cheating***

1. Submitting the work of another as one's own
2. Obtaining or attempting to obtain answer keys or questions for an exam, test, or quiz
3. Using unauthorized electronic devices during an exam, test, or quiz
4. Providing answers for an exam, test, or quiz to assist another student
5. Providing one's own work for another to use
6. Completing another student's assignment for him/her or having one's own assignment completed by another
7. Using paper writing companies and other third parties to complete assignments

#### ***Plagiarism***

1. Using the ideas of another without properly citing or sourcing them
2. Putting forward the ideas of another as if they are one's own

***Academic Fraud***

1. Submitting material already used in another course or at another institution
2. Buy or selling answers to assignments, exams, tests, or quizzes

**Disability/Special Needs:**

Anyone with a confirmed disability or special need should contact me promptly so that appropriate accommodations, if needed, can be provided. If you have a disability or suspect yourself to have one, see <https://www.upei.ca/accessibility/disability-information> for more information.

**Acknowledgement of Indigenous Land Use:**

Even though this course will be held online, we need to remember that the physical infrastructure of the University of Prince Edward Island that makes this course possible exists on unceded and unpurchased land of the Mi'kmaq nation. Let's remember this debt we owe to the Indigenous peoples of the Maritimes as we reflect, in this course, on ways of thinking and living that have harmed both the environment and those who have cared for it.

## Schedule:

| Dates  | Topics | Readings and Recordings   | Recommended Readings and Recordings <sup>1</sup>  | Presentations and Assignments   |                                   |
|--------|--------|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| July   | 5      | Ecological Grief, Despair, Denial, Hope, and Identity                           |   |   |                                   |
|        | 9      | The Basic Science   | <i>ECC</i> – Chapter One                          | “Seth Klein on Fighting Climate Change Like It’s WWII”  |                                   |
|        | 12     | What is Climate Change Ethics?  | <i>ECC</i> – Chapter Two                          | “Ethics – Key Concepts”<br>“Kinds of Moral Theories”  | Presentations 1-2                 |
|        | 16     | Precautionary Policy  | <i>ECC</i> – Chapter Three                        | “Andrew Light Presents Valuing Climate Loss and Damage”<br>“Why Climate Change is a Threat to Human Rights”   | Presentations 3-4                 |
|        | 19     | International Justice   | <i>ECC</i> – Chapter Four                         | “Naomi Klein: The Case for a Green New Deal”<br>“The Green New Deal, Explained”   | Presentations 5-6                 |
|        | 23     | Climate Change, Agriculture, and the Question of ‘Livestock’                    | “Kiss the Ground” (to be viewed in class)         | “Interplanting”<br>“Climate Emergency: Feedback Loops”  | Presentations 7-8 / Mid-Term Exam |
|        | 26     | Intergenerational Justice, Indigenous Nations, Colonization, and Reconciliation | <i>ECC</i> – Chapter Five                         | ‘Introduction’ – “Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage”<br>“The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action”<br>“Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change: Report from the Arctic” | Presentation 9-10                 |
|        | 30     | Nature in the Anthropocene  | <i>ECC</i> – Chapter Six                          | “Anthropocene”  | Presentation 11-12                |
| August | 2      | Individual Duties   | <i>ECC</i> – Chapter Seven                        | Selections from “What Then Must we Do?”   | Presentation 13-14                |
|        | 6      | Geoengineering  | <i>ECC</i> – Chapter Nine                         | “Fine-Tuning the Climate”<br>“How Dangerous is Solar Geoengineering?”   | Presentation 15-16                |
|        | 9      | Reflections on Hope   | “Is it Wrong to be Hopeful about Climate Change?” |   | Presentation 17-18                |
|        | 16     | Final Exam to be completed by August 16 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM               |   |   |                                   |

<sup>1</sup> Links to these additional readings and recordings can be found on Moodle