



Philosophy 2242F (570)
PHILOSOPHY OF THE EARTH
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: R. Duvernoy
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

This course considers contemporary environmental thought and how we understand the relation between humanity and the Earth. Topics include: climate change and justice, place and knowing, eco-affectivity and spirituality, and integral ecology. This course explores this question through world philosophical traditions including: East Asian Buddhist, Indigenous, and Western philosophy.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category B

Subject Code: PHILOSOP

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College
Department of Philosophy
PHILOSOPHY 2242F 570– Philosophy of the Earth

Mode of instruction: In-person

Instructor: Russell Duvernoy, PhD

Contact Information: rduverno@uwo.ca

Office Hours: *Office hours information can be found on OWL Brightspace*

PREREQUISITES: None.

ANTIREQUISITES: None.

DESCRIPTION: This course studies how different understandings of nature and the Earth impact environmental behavior and sense of ethics. Topics include: the connection between cosmology and ethics; can nature tell us what is right?; where do values come from?; kinship and nonhuman relatives, ecological community, nonhuman personhood, bioregionalism, place and knowing, and integral ecology. The course balances traditional philosophical practice (reading, writing, discussion) with experiential activities, including work in the King's Community Garden and campus walks.

This course has four objectives:

1. Explore different traditions of philosophical thought in relation to the Earth, introducing students to the concept and approach of integral ecology.
2. Develop critical and analytical skills in reading and writing arguments.
3. Give students philosophical frameworks for deepening their connection to place, nature and the Earth.
4. Provide students with opportunities for engagement to put philosophical ideas into action, through focus on campus projects including the community garden.

REQUIREMENTS: Assessment for the course consists of: three in class quizzes (3 x 10%); one Experiential Learning written report (10%); Learning from Place project (two stages leading to a final written paper, 5%, 10%, 20% = 35%); in person Final Essay Exam (20%) and Participation and Attendance (PAS) (5%). Brief descriptions below, full details for all assignments on Brightspace.

In Class Quizzes (3 x 10%= 30%): The course has three written quizzes that occur at the beginning of class and focus primarily on the reading assignment for that day. The format typically involves one or two short answer questions and is closed book. Quizzes are formally unannounced, though I will sometimes provide hints letting you know when to expect a quiz. Students can make up one missed quiz without formal excuse or documentation. After that, they will need formal documentation explaining the absence in order to make up the quiz.

Experiential Learning Report (10%): Students are required to complete two experiential learning activities, trips, or events outside of class. A list of possible suggestions can be found on Brightspace, as well as procedures for documentation. Students write a brief report on these experiences following a template on Brightspace, due at the end of the term.

Learning from Place Project (two stages leading to a final written paper, 5%, 10%, 20% = 35%): Students develop a semester long writing project detailing their relationship with a place as a means of applying and reflecting on course themes and ideas. The project culminates in a written paper of approximately five to seven pages, due at the end of the term and worth 20% of your final grade. There are two previous written deliverable assignments, a brief description and rationale of the chosen place (5%) and a progress report (10%). Full details for the assignment can be found on Brightspace.

Final Exam (in person) (20%): Students will be given themes and topics before the exam to prepare. They will then write the exam in person during the final exam period. Themes cover the entire course. Further details to be posted on OWL. Final Exam date TBA.

Participation and Attendance (PAS) (5%): A critical part of this class is contributing to a collegial intellectual community with principles of learning through discussion and listening. While class sessions will involve some lecture, the practice of philosophy is also vitally concerned with listening and sharing ideas between classmates. This course is also registered as an experiential learning class and as such students must complete at least **two** experiential activities *outside of* class for full participation.

Rubric for final PAS grade: Students are granted two unexcused absences, after that the following rubric applies:

100-90: 0 missed classes / satisfied experiential learning with at least two extra activities

80-90: 1 missed class / satisfied experiential learning with at least two event activity

70-80: 1-3 missed classes / satisfied experiential learning with at least one event activity

60-70: 4-5 missed classes / no extra activity recorded

50-60: 5-6 missed classes / no extra activity recorded

40-49: more than 6 missed classes

Note on Excused Absences: If students face unavoidable conflicts creating problems for attendance, **they should contact me as soon as possible to discuss**. Absences will not be excused retroactively.

Experiential Activities and Events: This course is officially registered as an Experiential Learning class with Western as part of the Certificate in Ecological Justice and Climate Ethics. Students are required to complete **at least two** experiential activities *outside of class*. This is in addition to the class walks and excursions that will occur in regular class time. There are a number of possibilities for how to do this to accommodate students' varying schedules. More details available on Brightspace.

NOTE on DUE DATES: Students may hand in written assignments up to one week (7 days) past the stated due date with no grade penalty. **Papers are not accepted after the seven day grace period without a formal accommodation.** This policy does not apply to in class quizzes.

Note on CHATGPT, Reading, and Writing: ChatGPT and similar AI-based online tools pose novel challenges for ethical usage in the service of learning. These tools become problematic when they are used as replacements for the work of reading and writing, which are fundamental to the process of philosophical education. For this reason, all writing assignments must be the students' original work and use of ChatGPT or similar online AI tools to generate papers is the equivalent of plagiarism. *If I suspect a written assignment is not a students' original work, the assignment will receive a zero and ask students to meet with me individually.*

METHOD: This course is in an in-person format. Class sessions balance text-based lecture and discussion. The course also includes opportunities for outdoor experiential activities that include campus walks, outdoor reflective exercises in the community garden, and other possible trips to be announced.

This course begins Sept. 4, 2025 and continues until Dec. 22, 2025, honoring all important dates derived from University approved guidelines and academic policies (<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-dates-and-events/>).

TEXT: There are no required texts for this course. All readings will be posted on the class Brightspace site.

READING SCHEDULE: The reading schedule posted below is provisional may change depending on class discussions. Readings and Videos are to be completed *before* the class session.

Monday Sept 8: Introductions, Class Plans and Themes, Integral Ecology

Required Reading: Pope Francis, selections from *Laudato Si, Laudato Deum*

Optional Reading: Felix Guattari, *the Three Ecologies*

Monday Sept 15: Sensibility, Imagination, and Knowledge(s)

Reading: Aldo Leopold "The Land Ethic"

Baptiste Morizot "The Ecological Crisis as a Crisis of Sensibility"

Monday Sept 22: Indigenous Conception of Place

Reading: Daniel Wildcat "Realizing Our Human-Selves in the Nature-Culture Nexus" from (*Red Alert!: Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge*); Robin Wall Kimmerer *Braiding Sweetgrass*, "Skywoman Falling", "The Council of Pecans" (p. 3-23)

Watch: Dr. Wildcat video

Class Event: Niigaan Sinclair in the Community Garden

Monday Sept 29: Phenomenology of Place

Reading: Watsuji Tetsuro, *Climate: A Philosophical Study*, Chapter 1, (p. 1-17)

Class event: Possible Campus walk TBA

Learning From Place Assignment One due Monday Sept 29 at midnight

Monday Oct. 6: Place, Person and Bioregionalism

Reading: Bioregionalist Quiz online

“Bioregional Vision and Values” Mike Carr

Vine Deloria Jr. “Reflection and Revelation: Knowing Land, Places ,and Ourselves”

Optional Reading: Joanna Macy “The Ecological Self”

Class Event: Climate Humanities workshop, Western Main Campus

Monday Oct. 13: NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

Monday Oct 20: Nature and Normativity

Reading: Steven Vogel “Against Nature” from *Thinking like a Mall*

“Thought Experiment: The Last Man on Earth” (Richard Routley)

Gregory Bateson “The Roots of Ecological Crisis”

Class event: Possible campus walk TBA

Monday Oct 27: Science, Religion, and the Anthropocene

Reading: Thomas Berry, selections from *The Great Work*

Lynn Margulis, selections from *Symbiotic Planet*: Chapter 7 “Ashore”,

Chapter 8 “Gaia”

“The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives” Steffen, Grinevald, Crutzen & McNeil

Optional Reading: “Not all humans: Radical Criticism of the Anthropocene

Narrative” Hasana Sharp

Class Event: Possible campus walk TBA

Reading Week Nov 3 to Nov 9

Monday Nov 10: Economy and Place

Reading: Wendell Berry “The Whole Horse”

“Rise of the Juggernaut” Jason Hickel

“Shadow Places and the Politics of Dwelling” Val Plumwood

Learning from Place Assignment Two due Friday November 14 at midnight

Monday Nov 17: Technology and Place

Reading: “Will Technology Save us?” by Jason Hickel

“Geoengineer the Planet? More Scientists Now Say it must be an Option” by Fred Pearce

“Geoengineering Justice: the Role of Recognition” by Marjon Hourdequin

Monday Nov 24: Personhood and Animacy

Reading: Robin Wall Kimmerer, “Learning the Grammar of Animacy”, “Allegiance to Gratitude”

“Nature in the Active Voice” Val Plumwood

“Legal Rights for Rivers” by E. O’Donnell & J. Talbot-Jones*

Watch: Ursula Biemann “Forest Law”/ “Urban Wildlife and Rhythms of the City” Sue Ruddick

Monday Dec 1: Social Ecology and Injustice

Reading: Interview with Robert Bullard “Climate Justice”

Kyle Whyte “Against Crisis Epistemology”

Val Plumwood “Introduction” to *Environmental Culture*

Optional Reading: Murray Bookchin “What is Social Ecology?”

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING REPORT DUE by Tuesday Dec. 2 at Midnight

Monday Dec 8: Emotions, Climate Change, and the Future

Reading: selections from *Summertime* by Danielle Celermajer

“The Psychoterratic in the Symbiocene” by Glenn Albrecht

Final ‘Learning from Place’ paper due Tuesday Dec. 9 at midnight

Finals Dec. 11 to Dec. 22:

Final Essay Exam date TBA

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under Special Examinations).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University

College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-supportservices/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safecampus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammarchecking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.