

## EXAM FIL2390/FIL4390, Spring 2021

Lecturer: Alejandra Mancilla

You must answer **three** questions in total: **two** from Section 1, and **one** from Section 2. Maximum extension for each answer: 800 words (excluding references).

### SECTION 1 Answer **two** questions.

1. Aldo Leopold's land ethic has been accused of deriving normative prescriptions from scientific facts, that is, deriving an *ought* from an *is*. Is this accusation well founded, and does it represent a problem for the land ethic as a viable ethics? Explain and discuss, using the texts from Aldo Leopold and Baird Callicott below.

Relevant texts:

Callicott, J. Baird. 2010. "The Conceptual Foundations of the Land Ethic." In *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. New York: State University of New York Press (it will be uploaded in Canvas).

Leopold, Aldo. "The Land Ethic." In *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There*, First edit., 201–26. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

### Answer

Candidates should mention some of the following:

Callicott's account of Hume's *is/ought* dichotomy, and how this is not a problem insofar as the transition from *is* to *ought* is justified. Two main ways to justify the transition: discovery of a connection between some cause and effect previously unknown (eg: we are part of nature and therefore dependent on it in a way that was ignored before), discovery that something ought to be the object of our passion (we have evolved closely together with other species and we should therefore treat them as kin).

Importance of emphasizing moral sentiments: sympathy, care, compassion, as the origins of morality. Reason does not create morality, but rather puts order in our original sentiments.

Idea of being members of one and the same community: ethics and society as correlative.

Land ethics being prudential and deontological at the same time. If they question this, that is fine too.

2. Canadian beavers were introduced in Tierra del Fuego, in the Southern tip of South America, in the 1940s. to start a fur industry. They were then let free. Now an estimated population of 100,000 beavers, thriving without predators, have occupied 16 million hectares of unique, indigenous forest. While North American trees grow back from their roots when beavers gnaw them, South American trees die, and the streams where beavers build their dams turn into bogs, creating massive environmental destruction. In

2008, the governments of Argentina and Chile discussed the possibility of total eradication, using killing traps along all the watersheds (you can read the full news here: <https://www.nature.com/news/2008/080618/full/453968a.html>).

What would advocates of animal welfare say on this matter? And what would advocates of ecocentric ethics respond? Discuss, using at least two of the following texts in the syllabus, and reflect more generally on the question whether animalist and environmentalist positions may be reconciled in theory and/or practice.

Relevant texts:

Callicott, J B. 1980. [“Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair.”](#) *Environmental Ethics*, no. 4: 311–38.

Callicott, Baird. [“Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Back Together Again.”](#) In *The Animal Rights/ Environmental Ethics Debate*, edited by Eugene C Hargrove, 249–62. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Jamieson, Dale. 1998. [“Animal Liberation Is an Environmental Ethic.”](#) *Environmental Values*, 41–57.

Singer, Peter. 1974. “All Animals Are Equal.” *Philosophic Exchange* 5 (1):103-116 (it will be uploaded in Canvas).

Answer

Animal welfarists would only agree if done painlessly (if this had been about animal rights, then they would be totally against culling, with or without causing pain to the animals). Ecocentrist approaches would favor eradication, to preserve “the good of the biotic community”.

More generally, this is one of the conundrums where it seems that animalists and environmentalists cannot but disagree in principle: while the former care for individual animal lives, the latter care for the good of the whole, in this case, the native ecosystem.

3. Val Plumwood’s critical ecofeminism proposes a relational approach to ethics, based on the acknowledgment of both difference and similarity between us and “earth others”. Explain what this means and compare Plumwood’s notion of “intentionality” to “sentience” (Singer) and “being a teleological center of life” (Taylor).

Relevant texts:

Plumwood, Val. 1993. “Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.” London: Routledge. Available at <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.uio.no/books/9780203006757>

Singer, Peter. 1974. “All Animals Are Equal.” *Philosophic Exchange* 5 (1):103-116 (it will be uploaded in Canvas).

Taylor, Paul W. 1981. [“The Ethics of Respect for Nature.”](#) *Environmental Ethics* 3 (3): 197–218.

## Answer

Intentionality is a scalar notion, and less demanding than sentience (there can be intentionality without capacity for pain and suffering), and finer than Taylor's idea of teleological centers of life. They all share that there is something valuable in being the kind of thing that responds to its environment, relates to others in that environment and persists in life.

It is relational because it is based on personal encounter and respect towards the other like unique. Plumwood says that here it is not about possessing a certain capacity or not, and yet, what is intentionality of not some sort of capacity?

## SECTION 2 Answer **one** question.

4. In 2007, the ex President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa, proposed a project to keep over a billion barrels of oil in the ground under Yasuni National Park, a biosphere reserve in the Equatorial Amazon. Correa offered to suspend oil extraction in one area of the park if the international community paid Ecuador 3.6 billion USD in return (half of the potential revenue from oil extraction). By 2012, however, only 200 million had been pledged and the initiative was abandoned, with oil drilling starting in 2016. Using at least two of the texts below, discuss the Yasuni model from the point of view of climate justice.

Relevant texts:

Gardiner, Stephen M. *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Mancilla, "From permanent sovereignty to permanent trusteeship", work-in-progress (it will be uploaded in Canvas).

Martínez-Alier, Joan. 2016. ["Global Environmental Justice and the Environmentalism of the Poor."](#) In *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory*, edited by Teena Gabrielson, Cheryl Hall, John M. Meyer, and David Schlosberg, 547–62. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shue, Henry. "Subsistence Emissions and Luxury Emissions." *Law & Policy* 15, no. 1 (1993): 39–60.

## Answer

Some of these points should be developed:

Yasuni project as a mitigation measure.

Subsistence versus luxury emissions.

Sharing the burdens of climate change: polluter pays, ability to pay, benefiter pays.

Value of conservation for climate change.

Environmentalism of the poor and social justice together with environmental justice.

Should states fully own their natural resources, or should they be trustees instead?

5. The development of wind power at a massive scale is a divisive issue in Norway today. While some argue that this will help to move the country towards a greener energy grid with a minimal

environmental impact, others reject the claim that wind power is greener, and point to the costs (environmental, social, political, economic) for local ecosystems and communities. Present your own view on the matter, backing it up or contrasting it with arguments that draw from at least two of the following sources in the syllabus.

Relevant texts:

Gardiner, Stephen M. *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Naess, Arne. 1973. [“The Shallow and the Deep, Long-range Ecology Movement. A Summary.”](#) *Inquiry* 16 (1–4): 95–100.

Plumwood, Val. 1993. “Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.” London: Routledge. Available at <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.uio.no/books/9780203006757>

Shue, Henry. “Subsistence Emissions and Luxury Emissions.” *Law & Policy* 15, no. 1 (1993): 39–60.

Answer

Here I expect reflection on some of these issues:

Shallow versus deep approaches in environmental conflicts (Naess)

Possibility of building a deep ecology platform against wind power? (Naess)

The costs of mitigation and who should bear them (Gardiner, Shue).

What would a non dualistic, critical ecofeminism would prescribe here? (Plumwood)