Aims and Objectives
In this course we will grapple with some of the central theoretical and practical ethical questions arising out of the distinctive relation human beings have to the natural environment. More specifically, we will focus on the ethical implications of climate change. In the first part of the course, we will consider several theoretical topics in ethical theory of direct relevance to the ethics of climate change. In the second part of the course, we will explore several practical topics raised by the ethics of climate change. If you want a good background book to read ahead of taking the course, I recommend James Garvey’s *The Ethics of Climate Change* (2008).

Class Meetings, Semester 2
This course will normally meet for an hour large seminar all together on Wednesdays, and then meet in smaller groups for more detailed discussions later. However, in the first week of the class, we will meet all together for 1h50m to screen and discuss a film. Here are the details:

- **Film Screening and Discussion**
  Week 1, Wednesday, 10am-11:50am, 2.05 Ogilvie, Geography Building
  [If you have a timetable clash at 11, come along for the first half and I’ll explain how you can watch the rest of the film on your own]

- **Seminars**
  Weeks 2-11, Wednesday, 10am-10.50am, Dugald Stewart Building room 1.20

- **Tutorials**
  - Honours 1: Thursday, 15:10-16:00 in G.203 Teaching Room 2 – Doorway 3, Medical School
  - Honours 2: Thursday, 16:10-17:00 in 01M.473 Teaching Room 13 – Doorway 3, Medical School
  - MSc tutorial: TBA
Intended Learning Outcomes
By taking this course, students will increase their understanding of some foundational issues in ethical theory. They will also gain familiarity with some of the specific ethical concepts crucial for thinking clearly about our relation to the natural environment. Students will improve their ability to defend a philosophically controversial position. They will also improve their critical reading and discussion skills, developing as a learner and participant in the wider social discussion of important political and ethical issues.

Note on Reading/Viewing Material
For each week, there are materials that you should have engaged with in advance of the Wednesday seminar. These are always things to read and sometimes also videos or multimedia to have a look at. The point of the seminars is not for me to tell you what is said in these materials but for us to discuss questions, both interpretative and philosophical, arising from your prior engagement with this material. The required materials are listed below, under each week, as a dark bullet point. I have also listed supplementary readings that can deepen or broaden your education on a particular topic; these might also be relevant for writing an essay on the topic. These are listed below, under each week, as a light bullet point.

Assessments and Opportunities for Feedback
In this course, there will hopefully be many opportunities to learn different kinds of things and in diverse ways. I'll endeavour to give you rolling feedback on how you are doing with respect to the learning outcomes.

To this end, for undergraduates, the course will be assessed by 10% class participation, 30% in class assignments, and 60% take-home exam. For MSc students, the course will be assessed by 10% tutorial presentations, 30% in-class assignments, and 60% a final essay.

For undergraduates, class participation will be assessed by your attendance at the Wednesday seminar and your participation in the later tutorial, according to the participation feedback form (posted on Learn), which I will fill out each week. To calculate your final participation mark, the lowest week’s mark will be dropped. This is to account for the possibility of absence for whatever reason. If you are going to miss more than one week’s seminar/tutorial, please speak to me in advance, as the course might not be for you.

For both undergraduates and MSc students, the in-class assignments will be exercises intended to improve your writing/discussion skills and prepare you for the final exam. The first one, will be completed in week 7 of the course, the second one in week 9 of the course; in both cases, you will need to do some writing in advance of the
Wednesday seminar in order to have something to do the assignment on. (More details will be posted on Learn.)

The final will cover concepts from the entire course and involve an essay where you can draw on your previous work on the in-class assignments. Released online Monday 10th April 2017 from 9am; Return Thursday 13th April 2017, by 12pm, via Learn/TurnItIn.

Please consult the PPLS Undergraduate Student Handbook for further information about general regulations and advice around coursework and assessments.

**Course Topics**

**Week 1: Introduction to Environmental Ethics and Climate Change**

Film Screening and Discussion: *Six Degrees Could Change the World*


**Week 2: What is value, and how should it be distributed? Prisoners’ Dilemmas, and the Tragedy of the Commons, Types of Responsibility**

- Matthew Chrisman (2016) ‘Tragedy of the Commons’ University of Edinburgh Teaching Video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15PVi7Y569g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15PVi7Y569g)

**Week 3: What are rights? Where do they come from? Who has them?**

- Mary Robinson ‘Why Climate Change is a Threat to Human Rights’ TED Talk: [https://www.ted.com/talks/mary_robinson_why_climate_change_is_a_threat_to_human_rights](https://www.ted.com/talks/mary_robinson_why_climate_change_is_a_threat_to_human_rights)

**Week 4: Cost-Benefit Analysis, Uncertainty vs. Risk, Expected Value Theory, Externalities, Discount Rates**

- John Broome ‘Goodness’ (ch. 6) and ‘Uncertainty’ (ch. 7) from his (2012) *Climate Matters* (Norton).
  - Broome (2012) ‘The Future vs. the Present’ (ch. 8) also recommended

**Week 5: Is there a viable and distinctive Land Ethic?**


**Spring Vacation – no class, no readings**

**Week 6: Moral Status of Distant People and Animals, Parfit’s “Non-identity Problem” and “The Repugnant Conclusion”**


**Week 7: What is the ethically fair distribution of rights to pollute?**

- Singer, ‘One Atmosphere’ from his *One World* (Yale University Press, 2004)

**Week 8: Who is more deserving distant needy or future generations?**

- Population Clock: [http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/](http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/)

**Week 9: Are destructive and/or violent protests against climate change morally permissible, required?**

**Week 10: Should we be vegetarians?**

• Food Carbon Footprint Calculator: [http://www.foodcarbon.co.uk/login_2.php](http://www.foodcarbon.co.uk/login_2.php)

**Week 11: Catch-up and Concluding Discussion**