Philosophy and the Environment

PHIL 10064 (Honours)

Outline

In this course, we examine the deep ecophilsophy of Arne Naess that takes its inspiration from the monist philosophy of Spinoza and will contrast with the ecophilosophy of Phemister inspired by the pluralist philosophy of Leibniz. We will explore issues of interconnectedness of living and nonliving entities, the relational identities of living beings, Naess’s notions of Self-realisation and Wide-identification, as well as questions concerning intrinsic, instrumental, relational, moral, aesthetic and spiritual values. We will also consider moral and aesthetic issues relating to bio- and onto-egalitarianism, biodiversity and variety, progress and the ideal of perfection.

Assessment

Mid–term essay (30%): Due Thursday 28th February by 12 noon
Final Essay (70%): Due Thursday 25th April by 12 noon

Essential Set Texts


Pauline Phemister (2016). Leibniz and the Environment (Routledge)

Recommended secondary texts


**Provisional Outline**

**Week 1: Introduction (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz**

*Core Reading*

Naess, ‘Spinoza and Ecology’, *Philosophia*


**Week 2: Naess: Ecophilosophy and Ecosophy**

*Core Reading*

Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, pp. 21-47


**Week 3: Naess: Qualities and Relations**

*Core Reading*


**Week 4: Naess: Values and Norms**

*Core Reading*

Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, pp. 68-86
Week 5: Naess: Technology, Progress and Lifestyle  
*Core Reading*  
Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, pp. 87-103

Week 6: Naess: Ecosophy T and Self-Realisation  
*Core Reading*  
Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, pp. 84-86, 163-196

Week 7: Phemister: Natural World, Activity and Beauty  
*Core Reading*  
Phemister, *Leibniz and the Environment*, chapter 4

Week 8: Phemister: Relational Values  
*Core Reading*  
Phemister, *Leibniz and the Environment*, chapter 5

Week 9: Phemister: Space and Place  
*Core Reading*  
Phemister, *Leibniz and the Environment*, chapter 6

Week 10: Phemister: Communication and Empathy  
*Core Reading*  
Phemister, *Leibniz and the Environment*, chapter 7

Week 11: Phemister: Temporality  
*Core Reading*  
Phemister, *Leibniz and the Environment*, chapter 8