Course aims and objectives
In this course we will focus on some of the central theoretical and practical ethical questions arising out of the distinctive relation human beings have to the natural environment. In particular, 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 issue of climate change. James Garvey’s *The Ethics of Climate Change* (2008) is useful background reading for the course.

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 ethical aspects of our relationship to the natural environment. Students will improve their ability to think critically about and defend philosophical positions, and will improve their critical reading and discussion skills. Students will also develop as participants in the wider social discussion of important political and ethical issues.

Teaching
Teaching on this course takes the form of a structured seminar from 9:00 – 10:50am every Monday in [room TBC]. For each week, there are materials that you should have engaged with *in advance of the seminar* (with the exception of the first seminar of term, in which there will be a screening of Al Gore’s film, *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*). 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.

Assessment and feedback
40% of the mark for the course will be given for two in-class assessments, and 60% for a take home test.
The in-class assignments will be exercises intended to improve your writing/discussion skills and prepare you for the final exam. The first in class assignment will take place in week 7, and the second on week 9. The final take home exam will cover concepts from the entire course and will involve an essay where you can draw on your previous work on the in-class assignments. The exam will be released on the 8th of April, and will be due on the 11th of April. Please consult the PPLS Undergraduate Student Handbook for further information about general regulations and advice around coursework and assessments.

Please do feel free to come and talk to me about any aspect of the course during my office hour on Mondays from 14.00 – 15.00 in DSB 6.08.

**Syllabus**

Required material is marked by a solid bullet point, like this: •. Additional material is marked by an outlined bullet point, like this: o.

**Week 1: Introduction to Environmental Ethics and Climate Change (14th January)**
In this seminar we will watch Al Gore’s film, *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*. There will then be a discussion of the major themes of this film. There is also reading for this seminar, as follows:


**Week 2: What is value, and how should it be distributed? Prisoners’ Dilemmas, and the Tragedy of the Commons, Types of Responsibility (21st January)**

• Geoffrey Sayre-McCord (2015), ‘The Prisoner’s Dilemma’ Wireless Philosophy, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGY2X0VoRpl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGY2X0VoRpl)
• 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)
• James Garvey (2008) *The Ethics of Climate Change*, ch. 3.

**Week 3: What are rights? Where do they come from? Who has them? (28th January)**

• 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 (4th February)**

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

**Week 5: Is there a viable and distinctive Land Ethic? (11th February)**

_Flexible learning week, no teaching 18-22nd February_

**Week 6: Moral Status of Distant People and Animals, Parfit’s “Non-identity Problem” and “The Repugnant Conclusion” (25th February)**

**Week 7: What is the ethically fair distribution of rights to pollute? (4th March)**
- Singer, ‘One Atmosphere’ from his *One World* (Yale University Press, 2004)

**Week 8: Who is more deserving distant needy or future generations? (11th March)**
- 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? (18th March)**

**Week 10: Should we be vegetarians? (25th March)**
• Food Carbon Footprint Calculator: http://www.foodcarbon.co.uk/login_2.php

Week 11: Catch-up and Concluding Discussion (1st April)