

**Environmental Nexus ENV200C: Moral and Political Philosophy.**  
to be read and used in conjunction with ENV200 Lectures Syllabus

**Instructors:**

Dr Ewan Kingston: (Section head) [ewan.kingston@princeton.edu](mailto:ewan.kingston@princeton.edu). (Preferred office hours Fri:1230-230: [[WASE link](#)]. If not possible, by email appointment). Zoom link for office hours: <https://princeton.zoom.us/j/98787050132>

Dr Ian Campbell [ijc@princeton.edu](mailto:ijc@princeton.edu) (Office hours by email appointment).

Contents (click on a heading to go straight there)

- PRECEPT SECTION GOALS: ..... 2
- OUTLINE ..... 2
- RESOURCES ..... 2
- ASSESSMENT ..... 3
  - PARTICIPATION ..... 3
    - Forum posts: ..... 3
    - Zoom attendance in precept: ..... 3
    - Thoughtful in-class contributions: ..... 3
    - Cross-stream application conversations: ..... 4
- WRITTEN WORK ..... 4
  - Micro-essay ..... 4
  - Essay outline ..... 4
  - Longer essay (2000-2500 words) ..... 4
- POLICIES ..... 5
  - Academic Integrity and Collaboration: ..... 5
  - Class Recording ..... 5
  - Communication: ..... 5
  - Penalties for late submission of written work ..... 5
  - Special Requirements: ..... 5
- GENERAL PRINCETON RESOURCES Outside ENV200C: ..... 6
  - Writing Center ..... 6
  - The Library ..... 6
  - Wellness Resources ..... 6

## PRECEPT SECTION GOALS:

This section is designed to enable you to develop an understanding of a wide range of moral/ethical<sup>1</sup> and political issues involved in the environmental challenges covered in the wider course. The section is grounded in the language and tradition of analytic moral and political philosophy. Students will be inducted into the practices of reading and writing in this normative discipline, which prioritizes clear expression and logical argument.

It is designed to be accessible to all students, including those concentrating in the social sciences, humanities, or arts, without prerequisites. Our goal is to enrich your intellectual life and help you develop the skills and tools to think and speak and write with clarity and insight about these issues, so as to become more informed and empowered.

As a result of taking this course, you should be able to:

- understand the basic principles of a range of major moral and political theories and how they relate to the environmental nexus.
- assess and develop arguments about the normative importance of various policies, norms, practices and institutions concerning the environment.
- identify and assess ethical and political questions that arise in relation to other approaches to the environment, including economic, scientific, and literary analysis

## OUTLINE

The precepts are structured both to tie in with the lectures and to naturally progress from more specific topics to more general topics. On the [course map](#) you will see the course splits roughly in three. After the first precept, there are 5 precepts that are topic-focused precepts: 2 precepts each on climate justice, biodiversity and animals, and 1 on water. The next 2 precepts focus on institutions and governance. The final three precepts are on big-picture themes in the course.

## RESOURCES

In the **precepts**, we discuss topics and practice philosophical dialogue together.

The [course map](#) is the live document of what we are reading for each precept as well as key dates.

**Readings** will be stored on blackboard under course materials, sorted by week.

There will be a **weekly message** from the preceptors which will often provide help for the readings.

You can come to **office hours** (or request an appointment outside office hours) for any reason or no reason! The preceptors are here to help.

**Each other:** having conversations and respectful arguments with each other outside formal class time can be highly fruitful to your development. This will look a little different than if you were on campus, but you should certainly not hesitate to reach out to a class member if they said something interesting

---

<sup>1</sup> While some thinkers treat these as distinct concepts, in this course we treat them as synonyms that pick out matters of ultimate value and right and wrong.

Version 1.1 10/1/2020 – Posted to Blackboard

in class you'd like to follow up on.

## ASSESSMENT

The grade from this section is worth 45% of your final grade. Think of this as 45 possible points made up of:

### PARTICIPATION

12 points total

Forum posts:

5 points

**How to succeed:** 24 hours before each precept, engage adequately in the weekly precept forum raising a question or making a comment about the readings. To engage adequately means either making one post that genuinely engages with both readings, or two posts that genuinely engage with one reading each. In at least two weeks one of your posts should be a reply to someone else's post.

**How graded:** Full points: Engage adequately in at least 8 of the 10 weeks with readings (weeks 3-12). .5 points off for every missed week (e.g. Engage adequately in 7 weeks = 4.5 points, 6 weeks = 4 points, etc.)

**Why:** Writing a question or comment posts helps you engage with the reading material, and help preceptors prepare precepts that take the discussion further.

Zoom attendance in precept:

3 points

**Why attend?** Attending precept means practicing the chance to practice philosophical skills of listening to each other's arguments, assessing them, and responding.

**How to succeed:** Attend the precepts. Turn on your video (with whatever background you prefer to use), unless you have an unexpected difficulty or have arranged otherwise with your preceptor.

**Why use your video?** Non-verbal communication helps preceptors and fellow students read the room which improves discussion.

**How graded:** Full points for 1 or less unexcused absence. 1 point off for every unexcused absence after the 1<sup>st</sup>. Examples of adequate excuses are: a religious observance, an approved accommodation, or a serious illness, or other exceptional circumstances. Points may be deducted at preceptor's discretion for unarranged or unexplained lack of video.

Thoughtful in-class contributions:

2 points.

**Why:** Dialogue is the lifeblood of ethical and political reasoning, and practicing expressing complex or abstract ideas is one of the skills the section teaches.

**How to succeed:** Make a genuine attempt to engage thoughtfully in precept discussions. High quality forum posts above the requirement (see above) can substitute for this element through technical or other challenges.

**How graded:** discretion of the preceptor. You will be given feedback mid-course about your in-class contributions.

**Cross-stream/application conversations:****2 points**

**Why:** Applying and theories and concepts you are learning to practical or cross-cutting issues will help solidify what you have learned and recognize opportunities for further leaning.

**How to succeed:** (i) meet twice in the semester with a partner (to be finalized in week 3) either from another stream of 200C, or from 200A, the Social Analysis precept, to discuss the work we are doing in connection with an applied topic in the Environmental Nexus. Preceptors will explain how to find a partner closer to the time (ii) Submit a brief report - a paragraph or two (100-200 words) summarizing each discussion. Due dates for reports are posted on the course map.

**How graded:** 2 points for 2 adequate reports, 1 point for 1 report.

**WRITTEN WORK****33 points total****\*\*FOR ALL DUE DATES SEE THE COURSE MAP\*\***

## Micro-essay

**6 points**

**Why:** writing a philosophical argument helps you ascertain the structure of your own thoughts about a topic, and where you need more evidence or to make your own thinking more explicit. Succinct argumentative writing is a highly valuable skill.

**How to succeed:** write a well-argued and clear 500 word essay on a given prompt or a prompt of your own design, approved by your preceptor.

**How graded:** Letter grade: a detailed rubric will be distributed with essay prompts early in the course.

## Essay outline

**7 points**

**Why:** planning your project, and soliciting feedback at an early stage is a vital tool for any research project. It will also give preceptors a chance to help you improve your essay.

**How to succeed:** write a 1 page outline of your essay that clearly shows what you plan to argue for and how you intend to argue for it.

**How graded:** letter grade: a detailed rubric will be distributed with essay prompts early in the course.

## Longer essay (2000-2500 words)

**20 points**

**Why:** This longer essay is the formal opportunity not only to argue for your favored position on a controversial topic, but show how well you understand opposing views and the objections that might be raised against your favored view. It will develop the skills of clear, argumentative writing from the micro-essay.

**How to succeed:** Write an essay that meets the requirements in the rubric.

**How graded:** letter grade. See the grading rubric on blackboard.

## POLICIES

### Academic Integrity and Collaboration:

Students are responsible for adhering to *Rights, Rules and Responsibilities* and the academic regulations that include (but not limited to) the avoidance of plagiarism and the use of proper source citation – some of which are summarized at the website *Academic Integrity at Princeton*

<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/intro/index.htm>

**In this course, acceptable forms of collaboration include:** brainstorming ideas; sharing written work as a model for others to study; receiving general comments from a student to what is clear and unclear in your work, where you could expand or shorten, further resources to look at. It is not acceptable to do a line edit or rewrite of another person's paper; the words and ideas in the written work required by the course must be each student's own.

### Class Recording

Preceptors might record class sessions for students who are unable to attend, but the videos will only be provided to those students who missed and should be treated as strictly confidential. You may choose to “opt out” of any recording, in which case you should contact me to arrange alternative ways to participate. Faculty own the copyright to their instructional materials, and so students should not record any class sessions without my permission. For this same reason, recordings that I make of our class may not be posted online or shared with anyone other than students enrolled in this course.

### Communication:

Important information will be shared by emails sent through the following forms:

Blackboard Announcements

Blackboard Emails

Some preceptors might also use Slack.

You are responsible for checking your Princeton email account and Slack (if appropriate) regularly and frequently.

### Penalties for late submission of written work:

There will be a penalty of 1/3 of an overall grade for every 48-hour period or portion thereof that a paper is late, unless a valid reason is confirmed by a Dean or medical practitioner or other exceptional circumstances apply in the judgment of the preceptor.

### Special Requirements:

If you have any particular requirements (e.g. for test-taking or note-taking), the Office of Disability Services should let us know in a confidential manner and on a need to know basis, but you are welcome to draw our attention to any such issues and we will be discreet.

## GENERAL PRINCETON RESOURCES Outside ENV200C:

### Writing Center

The [Writing Center](#) offers student writers free one-on-one conferences with experienced and trained fellow writers. Appointments focus on helping students devise drafting and revision strategies, based on the specific assignment at hand. Writing Center Fellows offer appointments 7 days a week and also hold drop-in Writing Lab hours Sunday through Thursday afternoons and evenings during the semester. All appointments at the Writing Center are confidential.

### The Library

At the library, there are two specialists in the environment: [Willow Dressel](#) and [Emily Wild](#) and one in philosophy: [Wayne Bivens-Tatum](#). Librarians are more than happy to help you find out how to find stuff out! Besides all the online books and journals, the Library can also digitize chapters of books (through the catalog page for the book) and help you source articles and chapters not available online or held by Princeton through [article express](#). (There's a disclaimer that it might be slow due to COVID, but Dr Kingston has found it to still typically take 2 working days or less).

### Wellness Resources

Don't forget the [University Health Services](#) and [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) still offer telehealth: call 609-258-3141 for either service. The Women's center curates a list of other helpful resources available for Princeton Students online <https://winter.princeton.edu/virtual>. The [Office of Religious Life](#) has a range of distanced resources across a range of faith traditions.