

FIL 2390/4390 Environmental philosophy

Spring semester 2020

Home exam May 18 – May 21, 2020

Length: maximum 10 pages a 2300 characters, including Bibliography

Choose one of the following three assignments:

1. According to Callicott, the problem of intrinsic value in nature is “the most critical and most recalcitrant theoretical problem of environmental ethics”. Why do you think Callicott holds this view? Proceed to critically discuss Callicott’s own position on the value question, and compare it with that of another environmental philosopher on the syllabus in doing so.
2. Most environmental philosophers take as their point of departure that there is a need to break with anthropocentrism. Explain why this is such a widely shared premise. Discuss the reasons you see both for endorsing this premise and for opposing it.
3. Jonas, Mathews and Vetlesen argue that Western philosophy since Descartes has effected an abyss between nature and humans, and they seek to demonstrate the philosophical as well as practical (real life) consequences. Set out the main consequences intended and discuss the extent to which you find it plausible that creating the abyss has helped justify current exploitative and nature-degrading practices.