Philosophy of Nature I

**Term 2 – 2022/2023**

Lectures: Mondays 12:35-13:55 (Parker Moot Room LT/Amory)

**Lecturer:** Dr Celso Neto (C.Alves-Neto@exeter.ac.uk)

**Office:** 1st Floor Byrne House, St. Germain Road

**Office Hours:** Fridays 13-15(online or in person)or by appointment

**Zoom Info (Office Hours):** Meeting ID: 957 8148 4979 Password: 462857

**Tutorials:** Tuesdays (Fortnightly) - Joseph Crickmore (J.Crickmore@exeter.ac.uk)

# Course Description

What is Nature? How do (should) humans relate to it? This module introduces you to these and other central issues in the philosophy of nature. The relation between humans and the natural world is examined from different perspectives, including Darwinism and non-Western philosophy. The module provides a historical reconstruction of these traditions and discusses their ethical implications for our (human) actions today. Students with an interest in philosophy of science will enjoy this module in particular, but it also speaks to those who have interdisciplinary interests in the ethical and ideological appeals to nature in Western and Non-Western culture.

# Learning Outcomes

* Understand the basic concepts and problems in the philosophy of nature, as well as their historical development
* Critically examine views and arguments in philosophy of nature
* Identify research problems in philosophy of nature and conduct research on them
* Write essays presenting your own views cogently and convincingly

# Assessment

* *Essay Plan*: 500 words (formative, 0% of the final mark). Deadline: Feb 15th (Week 5) via e-mail
* *Essay*: 2000 words (summative, 60% of the final mark). Deadline: March 2nd (Week 7) via BART
* *Written Exam* (summative, 40% of the final mark). Deadline: Exam Period, May, via BART

Essay questions will be available on ELE. Essays should address the chosen question and must follow the structure of the Essay Plan. Guidelines for developing the Essay Plan will be available on ELE. Marking criteria are also described there.

The written exam will be marked for clarity, accuracy, depth, and scope of knowledge. Sample questions will be distributed for study purposes before the exam.

# Plagiarism and Misconducts

Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. These and other acts of misconduct will not be tolerated by the instructor. Suspicious cases of misconduct will lead to an investigation and adequate penalty according to the Teaching Quality Assurance Manual ([12 - Academic conduct and practice - Teaching Quality Assurance Manual - University of Exeter](https://as.exeter.ac.uk/academic-policy-standards/tqa-manual/aph/managingacademicmisconduct/)).

# Schedule and Readings

# Week 1: Conceptual and Historical Background

# *No required Reading*

# Suggested Reading: Collingwood, R. G. (1934/44) Chapter 1: ‘Introduction’, in *The Idea of Nature*.

# Week 2: Intelligent Design

* Required Reading: Sober, E. (2007). What is wrong with intelligent design?. *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, *82*(1), 3-8.
* Suggested Reading: Sober, E. (2018). *The design argument*. Cambridge University Press.

# Week 3: The Gaia Hypothesis

* Required Reading: Kirchner, J. W. (2002). The Gaia hypothesis: fact, theory, and wishful thinking. *Climatic change*, *52*(4), 391-408.
* Suggested Reading I: Lenton, T. M., & Latour, B. (2018). Gaia 2.0. *Science*, *361*(6407), 1066-1068.

# Week 4: Purpose in Nature

* Required Reading: Ruse, M. (2000). Teleology: yesterday, today, and tomorrow?. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, *31*(1), 213-232.
* Suggested Reading: Babcock, G., & McShea, D. W. (2021). An externalist teleology. *Synthese*, *199*(3), 8755-8780.
* Suggested Reading: Allen, Colin and Jacob Neal, "Teleological Notions in Biology", online at The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2020 Edition)

# Week 5: Substance and Process

* Required Reading: Meincke, A. S. (2022). One or two? A Process View of pregnancy. *Philosophical Studies*, *179*(5), 1495-1521.
* Suggested Reading: Nicholson, D. J., & Dupré, J. (2018). “Introduction” in *Everything flows: towards a processual philosophy of biology* Oxford University Press.

# Week 6: Essentialism

* Required Reading: Okasha, S. (2002). Darwinian metaphysics: Species and the question of essentialism. *Synthese*, *131*(2), 191-213.
* Suggested Reading: Ereshefsky, M. (2010). What's wrong with the new biological essentialism. *Philosophy of Science*, *77*(5), 674-685.

# Week 7: Human Nature

* Required Reading: Machery, E. (2008). A plea for human nature. *Philosophical Psychology*, *21*(3), 321-329.
* Suggested Reading: Kronfeldner, M., Roughley, N., & Toepfer, G. (2014). Recent work on human nature: Beyond traditional essences. *Philosophy Compass*, *9*(9), 642-652.

# Week 8: Mind in Nature

* Required Reading: Goff, P. (2017). Panpsychism. In *Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*
* Suggested Reading: Goff, P. (2018). Did the Universe Design itself? *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*

# Week 9: Ecofeminism

* Required: Roach, C. (1991). Loving your mother: On the woman-nature relation. *Hypatia*, *6*(1), 46-59.
* Suggested: Merchant, C. (1980) *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution. Chapter 1.*

# Week 10: Ecofeminism (cont.)

* Required: Gaard, G. (2011). Ecofeminism revisited: Rejecting essentialism and re-placing species in a material feminist environmentalism. *Feminist formations*, *23*(2), 26-53.
* Suggested: Warren, K. J. (1990). The power and the promise of ecological feminism. *Environmental ethics*, *12*(2), 125-146.

# Week 11: Recap

* *No Required Readings*

# Suggested Reading

All students must read the texts listed above. It is also recommended that you read the following books:

* Coates, P. (1998) ***Nature: Western Attitudes since Ancient Times***

## Dear, P. (2006) The Intelligibility of Nature: How Science Makes Sense of the World

## Dupre, J. (2021) Metaphysics of Biology

* Koyré, A. (1957) ***From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe***
* Merchant, C. (1980) ***The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution***
* Sterelny, K. and Griffiths, P. E. (1999) ***Sex and Death***

# Online Resources

* **SEP - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy** (available through electronic library).
* **The Philosopher's Index**, searchable bibliography (available through electronic library**)**.
* **JSTOR**, searchable repository of scholarly articles (available through electronic library**)**
* **PHILPAPERS,** searchable repository of philosophical articles (online)