

EEB 176—Ecological Ethics

Tuesdays 2-3:50 PM
Room: LaKretz 100

Instructor: Daniel T. Blumstein
Office: 4808 Life Sciences
Office hours: tba
Phone: 267-4746
Email: marmots@ucla.edu

Welcome to Ecological Ethics! Unlike a medical ethics course, we will debate and discuss topics more relevant to ecology, evolution and behavior. I believe there are many issues that involve some ethical debate and consideration. We will spend the first two weeks organizing and preparing for our first set of debates. We can decide (today) to discuss issues other than those I've suggested and as you and your 'opponent' research topics, we can agree to focus on an aspect of a complex topic.

I am here, throughout the quarter, to help you find references and bounce ideas off in preparation for your debates and term papers. Each week, for the following 8 weeks, pairs of students will assign readings and present opposing positions on the week's topic.

The week before you present, you are expected to assign several key papers and ensure that fellow classmates have them (.pdfs would be an ideal way to share papers).

The debate will be structured (see grading sheet below). In addition to a formal debate, you will also be expected to facilitate a discussion among classmates. Finally, at the end, we'll poll the class and see what the consensus is.

The Thursday following your debate, you must submit (electronically) an 8-10 page term paper (your literature cited section is not included in the page count) giving background on the issue and supporting your position on the ethical question. You will lose 5 points per day for late submissions. The paper should be sent as a .pdf file and you should send it to me as well as to the rest of the class. Your term paper will be properly referenced and written in the style of a paper from the journal *Animal Behaviour* (http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/622782/authorinstructions). Note: please use American English spellings.

Your final letter grade will be based on class participation (20%--you are expected to continue to actively participate after you have completed your debate and term paper), your presentation of your position, your efficacy of facilitation during the debate (40%), and your term paper (40%). Everyone will be expected to read several papers per week, and to actively participate in the class discussion. If we're not fully enrolled (18 people), you will be expected to participate in more than one debate.

Schedule

30 September: Introduction and organization, library research & preparation
7 October: The use of animals in curiosity driven research
14 October: Killing carnivores to conserve their prey
21 October: The ethics of genetically modifying organisms for conservation
28 October: Branding and toe-clipping for marking: are they ever justifiable?
4 November: Is recreational hunting/fishing ethically defensible?
11 November: *No class, Veteran's Day*
18 November: Zoos: are they ethically defensible?
25 November: Immunocontraception and wildlife fertility control
2 December: Wildlife translocations & reintroductions
9 December: Ecosystem restoration: is it possible?

Grading sheet

Debate (40 points total)

10 min statement of why the issue is ethically questionable, your position, and evidence supporting your position (each side gets 10 min). Notes are fine, but you should not read your talk in a monotone! (20 points)

5 min rebuttal of alternative position (each side gets 5 min). Be sure to address and challenge any major points your opponent raised. (10 points)

40-50 min of facilitated debate and discussion: 10 points for your efficacy of leading the discussion—are you asking questions of others? Are you able to effectively answer questions, or (better yet) encourage fellow students to answer questions themselves. It's OK (and encouraged!) to get together with your 'opponent' beforehand and to plan how you want to handle the discussion.

Note: in the last 5-10 min we'll poll people on how they feel about a topic after reading and hearing your presentations. You will NOT be evaluated on your beliefs or position, only on how well you articulate and defend a particular position.

Term paper (40 points total)

Introduction and background literature on the idea: What is the history of the idea, why is it controversial? What has been written about it? Expect to read and cite between 15-30 articles on any given topic/position. (15 points)

Justification of your position: After writing the background and introduction, cite information in support of your position. (10 points)

Rebuttal on possible alternative arguments: Based on the in class debate. (5 points)

Literature cited: is it in the correct *Animal Behaviour* format? Is it complete? (5 points)

Grammar, writing, typos., etc.: Note: if your writing is unclear, you will lose points elsewhere. (5 points)