



## SATURDAY ENRICHMENT ONLINE SPRING 2022

### *Philosophy and Nature*

Instructor: Hollie Joy Wagner  
Instructor's Email: hwagner@uw.edu

### **Course Description**

Are you fascinated with the natural world around you? Students will gain skills from a range of philosophical traditions such as forming deep and reflective questions, critical thinking, and engaging in civil dialogue. They will practice identifying and asking philosophical questions, particularly focused on nature, using provocative short stories and mythology, science texts, and videos designed to guide and focus our activities, discussions, and community building. Questions explored might include: What is the difference between “natural” and “manmade”? What does the way we interact with/communicate with nature say about how we understand society/civilization? Student interest will contribute to the weekly syllabus.

### **Learning Outcomes**

*Students will be able to:*

- Explore and articulate questions about our relationship to nature and society.
- Develop and thoughtfully share their perspectives with their peers.
- Make connections between literature, science, and philosophical themes such as environmental ethics.
- Express those connections through writing, discussion, and personal reflection.

### **Instructional Strategies**

We will begin each session with a mindfulness moment that will serve to bring focus to the course as well as to reflect on ourselves. We will read, dissect, and discuss excerpts from novels, short stories, and science texts and discover how these can be used as tools for understanding ourselves, society, and the natural world. Students will be supported in exploring questions that they wonder about and therefore will have an impact on where the discussions go. We will also watch and analyze film and video clips pertaining to these themes. For the final in-class “project,” students will choose a text or film and write about an extension of how they would see themselves in that world. They will employ skills of character development, personal narrative and reflection, and creative writing. They will also have the option to create a visual representation of the exercise through drawing, digital design, or video.

### **Resources and Materials**

Readings and videos will be posted in the Google Drive for students to access. Students should have paper and pen/pencil ready for taking notes.

### Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topics and Activities
Week 1 - April 2	Community Building Introduction to the theme of nature and our relationship to the environment Introduction to mindfulness moments and self-reflection Discuss development of final project
Week 2 - April 9	Mindfulness Moment and Self Reflection Nature and Consciousness - introduction to branches of philosophy Readings: <i>How Do Trees Communicate</i> and <i>Fungal Intelligence</i> Watch: clip from film <i>Fantastic Fungi</i> Discussion Writing Reflection
Week 3 - April 16	Mindfulness Moment and Self Reflection Watch: <i>Doing Philosophy in Nature</i> Discussion Writing Reflection
Week 4 - April 23	Mindfulness Moment and Self Reflection Reading: excerpt from <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> by Robin Wall Kimmerer Discussion Writing Reflection
Week 5 - April 30	Mindfulness Moment and Self Reflection Reading: excerpt from <i>Reclaiming the Commons</i> by Vandana Shiva Discussion Writing Reflection
Week 6 - May 7	Mindfulness Moment and Self Reflection Reading: <i>Everybody Needs a Rock</i> by Peter Parnall Discussion Writing Reflection
Week 7 - May 14	Mindfulness Moment and Self Reflection Final Project Workshop
Week 8 - May 21	<b>Final Class</b> Share Final Projects