ES/PH 302 Ethics and Sustainability  
IES Abroad Freiburg

**DESCRIPTION:** Students are introduced to the concept of sustainability with a focus on its ethical implication, such as the question of whether or why present generations have a moral obligation towards future generations. The course provides basic knowledge of key ethical theories, such as utilitarianism and Kant’s categorical imperative.

The course also gives students an understanding of the concept of sustainability, its historical background and its current controversies, such as the concept of “weak” and “strong” sustainability. Ethical questions that arise in the context of sustainability are discussed, with specific focus on the climate change debate. Based on this theoretical background, students apply the key tenets of ethics and sustainability to issues such as climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Students reflect upon their own position regarding the “value” of nature and use this reflection to inform their analysis of the central lines of argumentation within environmental ethics. These include anthropocentrism, varieties of physiocentrism, extending the realm of rights and critical feminist perspectives.

**CREDITS:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45 hours

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**
- Lectures
- Discussions
- Group work
- Student presentations
- Excursions (if weather permits)
- Self-study

Moodle will be used to post additional material, share assignments, follow recent developments in the field and offer learning exercises.

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**
- Role Play – 15%
- Position paper - 20%
- Reading responses – 30% (x6, 5% each)
- Class participation - 5%
- Final exam - 30%

**Class Participation**
Participation during discussions based on the required readings, lectures, personal experiences and excursions

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**
By the end of the course students should be able to...
- Analyze and compare central tenets of key ethical theories
- Draw the connection between ethics and sustainability
- Define sustainability and its underlying principles
- Understand the difference between weak and strong sustainability
• Assess the ethical implications of climate change
• Reflect upon their own positions regarding the “value” of nature on the basis of their knowledge of differing viewpoints in environmental ethics: anthropocentrism and physiocentrism
• Be familiar with main ethical stances in environmental debates

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
IES Abroad courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instructor and the lecture/discussion format is regarded as the primary mode of instruction. Regular class attendance is mandatory.
• Every unexcused absence will lower your grade by 5%.
• Tests/presentations missed during unexcused absences cannot be repeated.
• If you miss a class it is your responsibility to catch up on everything that was covered in class.
• If you cannot attend class because you are sick, please go and see a doctor. S/he will issue a doctor’s note.

Without a doctor’s note your absence will count as an unexcused absence.

CONTENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Morning (9AM-12:30PM)</th>
<th>Afternoon (1:30-4PM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>What is ethics? Styles of ethical reasoning.</td>
<td>Readings: • Pojman 2000</td>
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<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Classical Ethical Theories Main concepts and analytical approaches</td>
<td>Readings: • Selections from the Brundtland Report</td>
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<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Climate Change Intro to Problems and Ethical Issues</td>
<td>Reading: • Grubb 1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>No class, self-study.</td>
<td>Reading: Review</td>
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</tbody>
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Week 2

| Session 1 | Climate Change Mitigation: Governance Solutions and Ethics | Readings: • Pogge 2002 |
| Session 2 | Climate Change Adaptation: Governance Solutions and Ethical Concerns | Readings: • Read the latest submission of your party/coalition as uploaded. Prepare a position paper (1 per group, 3 min talking) reflecting your position and ethical concerns. Additional research may be useful. |
Session 3  Climate Change Negotiation Simulation: UNFCCC  Role Play  
Readings:  
• Benson 2000  
• Optional: Routley and Routley 2000

Session 4  Moral Debates  
The Values of Nature  
Readings:  
• Singer 1974  
• White 1967

Session 5  No class, self-study.

Week 3

Sentience and the consideration of animals.  
Animal liberation.  
Readings:  
• Cullinan 2008

Physio-centric Ethics  
Extending the realm rights.  
(If weather permits, excursion.)  
Readings:  
• Warren 1990

Feminist Perspectives on Environmental Ethics  
Wrap-up and Feedback

Final Exam

No class.

REQUIRED READINGS:

• Grubb, M. 1995. Seeking fair weather: Ethics and the international debate on climate change. International Affairs, 71(3), 463-496