

MATERIALS FOR A SHORT UNIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN AN INTRO PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS, OR APPLIED ETHICS COURSE

Charles Goldhaber / cgoldhaber@gmail.com

This packet contains materials for integrating short unit on climate change into an introduction to philosophy, ethics, or applied ethics course. More specifically, it collects together various materials used in a lower division philosophy course called *Philosophy and Public Issues*, which met in the spring of 2019 at the University of Pittsburgh.

The unit on climate change was three class meetings, covered over 1.5 weeks. But it could easily be adapted to go on for longer longer—perhaps significantly so in discussion heavy courses.

The packet contains the following **materials**:

-- Course syllabus	2
-- Three 2-page handouts	10
-- Related essay questions	16

The **readings** used were:

– Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*. 2014. Simon & Schuster Publishing. Introduction, pp. 1–28 and Chapter 5: “Beyond Extractivism: Confronting the Climate Denier Within,” pp. 161–187.

– John Broome, “The Ethics of Climate Change.” *Scientific American*, June 2008, pp. 69–73.

Please feel free to use or adapt any of these materials for your own teaching!

Philosophy 0350: Philosophy and Public Issues [REVISED]

Spring 2019 / Monday & Wednesday 10:00–10:50 / G24 CL

Lecturer: Chuck Goldhaber

Contact: cag109@pitt.edu

Office Hours: Mon/Wed 11:30–12:30, or by appointment, in 1009B CL

Teaching Assistants

Jason Kay

jason.kay@pitt.edu

OH: Mon 3:15–4:15

& Wed 11:30–12:30

in 1009D CL

Daniel Webber

d.webber@pitt.edu

OH: Tues 12:30–1:30

& Wed 11:30–12:30

in 1009G CL

Pablo Zendejas-Medina

pablo.medina@pitt.edu

OH: Mon 12:30–1:30

& Wed 11:30–12:30

in 1009G CL

Course Description

Public life presents us with countless, difficult moral questions: How much energy and resources are we required to put toward ending the harms of racism? Do we owe anything to future human beings, or to ones who live very far away? If so, do we need to radically change our own lives and habits in the face of global climate change? Do we have obligations to collectively protest or tear down certain industries or governments? Is there a fundamental right to healthcare? Must we help the poor? Is it always wrong to kill other human beings? Is it just as wrong to let them die?

In this class, we seek to answer these questions through argument and ethical theory. In doing so, we will discover not just *what* we should do, but *why* we should do it. We will make headway on a broader question about the extent to which public life makes moral demands on individuals. By the end of the course, students will be more capable of recognizing these moral demands and convincing others of their importance.

Course Structure

The **first half of the course** concerns ethical issues at the beginning and end of life. We will begin with a five-week discussion of the morality of abortion. During this discussion, students will be introduced to a variety of ethical theories and approaches, and asked to compare their merits. The various approaches to the morality of abortion will be paired with relevant classical texts from the history of moral philosophy. We will then discuss the morality of euthanasia (or mercy killing) for two weeks, approaching it through the lens of several ethical theories.

The **second half of the course** focuses on a variety of pressing current issues which concern justice, fairness, and the demands which public life places on each of us. We will discuss reparations for racism, responding to climate change, and ending poverty. After spending a week on each of these issues, we will turn to more abstract questions about the extent and nature of morality's demands on individuals.

Course Requirements

% of course grade

- Up to 60 pages per week of dense philosophical reading
- Regular participation in weekly recitations 7%
- Six in-lecture reading quizzes (pop) 10%
- One short writing exercise (250–300 words) 4%
- Three papers (800–1100 words) on provided topics each 18%
- A final exam 25%

Required Texts

All readings will be available on CourseWeb. So no need to buy any books.

Please print all readings and bring them with you for reference in lecture and recitation.

Why isn't there a bound course packet/reader? The University must pay publisher's fees to print and bind course packets. They also charge a lot for the materials and labor. I would have loved to make course readers available for everyone in the course. But I do not want to make everyone pay the approximately \$200 price for them! Makes sense?

You should print the readings yourself using your free printing quota. And you may have the printed readings bound at a copy shop for less than \$10. I recommend doing this, so you can keep all the course readings in one place. Just print the readings in the order they appear on CourseWeb and use this syllabus as a table of contents.

Readings

In the schedule below, readings are listed underneath the dates by which they must be read. The readings are dense and tough, and may take more than twice as long to read as typical readings. Make sure you budget enough time to read them carefully, and several times.

Cursory readings will not provide enough preparation to make lecture and recitation valuable learning experiences. You absolutely must read each reading multiple times to do well in this course. No one gets everything in one read—not even your professors!

Bring physical copies of the week's readings to lecture and recitation. You may want to print all the readings from CourseWeb, and have them bound, so that you don't have to print new readings every week, and instead have everything in one place.

Participation

Regular verbal participation in group discussions during recitation is not only required for receiving a good participation grade. It is also crucial for developing philosophical

reasoning skills, which are very closely related to conversational and debate skills. If you are feeling shy in class, come to office hours, and let's start talking there.

Attendance in lecture and recitation is mandatory. Each unexcused absence after the first will result in a 1% deduction from your course grade. Lateness may be treated as an absence, so make sure to arrive on time.

Quizzes

Six pop quizzes will be given during the semester *in lecture* at unannounced times. Each quiz will test reading comprehension, and be in short answer format. They will be open-note/text. You may reference any physical texts, but may not use electronics.

Quizzes will often be at the beginning of class. Arrive on time. Missed quizzes cannot be made up. But, as a courtesy, the lowest grade of the six will be dropped. The remaining quizzes will each account for 2% of your course grade.

Papers

The papers (800–1100 words) are due 3/1 (Fri), 3/29 (Fri), and 4/22 (Mon) at 3:30pm sharp. Papers should be blinded. Your PeopleSoft Number should appear on them, but NOT your name. Submit your papers according to your TA's specifications.

Each paper must address one of several provided topics concerning the course texts. These will be distributed 2/11 (Wed), 3/18 (Mon), and 4/8 (Mon). You may write on your own topic, with your TA's approval. To get this, email your TA within 72 hours of receiving the paper prompts. Your email should include a question of no more than 50 words, followed by roughly 50 words explaining how you will answer that question. Your TA is at liberty to reject your proposed topic, if it is deemed unmanageable or insufficiently developed.

Papers must be clear, concise, rigorous and well argued. You must reconstruct views and arguments from course texts in your own words, using quotes and citations to back up your interpr. Each paper must evaluate these views and argument through use of objections and replies.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of the Writing Center, located at 317B O'Hara Student Center. For information about the center, visit: www.writingcenter.pitt.edu. You can easily make an appointment with a writing consultant online.

A short 'argument-reconstruction' writing exercise (250–300 words) is due 1/23 (Wed), 10am sharp. Details will be provided in lecture and on CourseWeb, 1/14 (Mon).

Final Exam

The final exam (Fri, 4/26, 10–11:50am) will include true/false and short essay questions. Possible essay questions will be provided in advance (Mon, 4/8). The final exam will be open note/text. You may bring in any physical notes, but no electronics may be used.

Late Policy

Late work drops a full grade for every 24 hours past the deadline (e.g., from A- to B-). No late work will be accepted 72 hours beyond the deadline.

No exams or quizzes can be made up.

Accommodations

If you need special accommodations regarding the assignments, classroom, or other aspects of the course, please do not hesitate to notify me, your TA, and, if appropriate, Disability Resources and Services. Please do so as early as possible, so that we can make the needed accommodations in a timely manner. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 to schedule an appointment. The office is located at 140 William Pitt Union.

Prohibitions

Cell phones must be silenced and stowed away during class.

If using a laptop or tablet in lecture or recitation, please sit on the left side of the classroom. As to not distract your peers, use these devices only for note taking. In order to prevent temptation, you should disable your wifi while in lecture and recitation. Students found using laptops or tablets for purposes other than note taking or class participation will receive significant penalties to their course grade. Same deal with cell phones, which should not be used at all.

No eating is allowed in the classroom. Drinks are ok.

Academic Integrity

Any form of cheating, including plagiarism, will result in a failing grade for the course. You are responsible for knowing what counts as plagiarism or cheating. Consult the University's webpage: <http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity>.

To ensure a safe and constructive learning environment for all, please join me in the commitment to respect everyone's identities and rights, regardless of differences.

Grading Scale

100.00–97.00% A+	89.99–87.00% B+	79.99–77.00% C+	69.99–67.00% D+
96.99–93.00% A	86.99–83.00% B	76.99–73.00% C	66.99–63.00% D
92.99–90.00% A–	82.99–80.00% B–	72.99–70.00% C–	62.99–60.00% D–
			<60.00% F

Borderline grades may be bumped up, for students whose work improved over the term!

Schedule of readings and assignments

PART ONE: BEGINNING AND END OF LIFE ETHICS

1/7 (Mon) – Introduction

- Discussion of course themes, syllabus and assignments.

1/9 (Wed) – Abortion I: Rights-based approaches

- Carefully re-read this syllabus
- Pope John Paul II, “The Unspeakable Crime of Abortion,” *Evangelium Vitae* (1993), §§11–15, 58–63.

1/14 (Mon) – Abortion I: Rights-based approaches (cont.)

- Michael Tooley, “Abortion and Infanticide,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1972), pp. 37–65. (You may skip §5, pp. 55–62).
- Short writing exercise assigned

1/16 (Wed) – Abortion II: A consequentialist approach

- Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. 1789 (1907). Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, pp. 1–7.

1/21 (Mon) – MLK, Jr. Day, NO CLASS

1/23 (Wed), 10am sharp: Short writing exercise due

1/23 (Wed) – Abortion II: A consequentialist approach (cont.)

- Don Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral” *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (1989), pp. 183–202.

1/28 (Mon) – Abortion III: A Kantian approach

- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Mary Gregor and Jens Timmerman. 1785 (2012). Cambridge University Press. pp. 27–30, 33–36.

1/30 (Wed) – Cancelled due to extreme weather!

2/4 (Mon) – Abortion III: A Kantian approach (cont.)

- Harry Gensler, “A Kantian Argument Against Abortion,” *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 1, (1985), pp. 57–72.

2/6 (Wed) – Abortion IV: A virtue ethics approach

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.C.W. Taylor. 2006. Clarendon Press. Book II, Chs. 2, 6–7, pp. 3–4, 8–13.
- Rosalind Hursthouse, “Virtue Theory and Abortion,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* Vol. 20 No. 3 (1991), pp. 223–232.

2/11 (Mon) – Abortion IV: A virtue ethics approach (cont.)

- Hursthouse (continued) pp. 232–246.
- Paper 1 topics handed out and discussed

2/13 (Wed) – Abortion V: A feminist approach

- Judith Jarvis Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1971), pp. 47–56.

2/18 (Mon) – Abortion V: A feminist approach (cont.)

- Thomson (continued), pp. 56–66.

2/20 (Wed) – Euthanasia I: A consequentialist approach

- Watch The New York Times’s Retro Report: “Jack Kevorkian and the Right to Die” https://youtu.be/J_EKwSX0sVE (copy-paste link into web browser, 15-min)
- Peter Singer, “Voluntary Euthanasia: A Utilitarian Perspective,” *Bioethics*, Vol. 17, No. 5–6 (2003), pp. 526–541.

2/25 (Mon) – Euthanasia II: A Kantian approach

- Kant (again), pp. 39–43.
- J. David Velleman, “A Right of Self-Termination?” *Ethics*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (1999), pp. 606–620. [*Note*: pp. 620–628 are optional].

2/27 (Wed) – Euthanasia III: A virtue ethics approach

– Philippa Foot, “Euthanasia,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1977), pp. 85–96.

3/1 (Fri) 3:30pm sharp: PAPER 1 DUE

3/4 (Mon) – Euthanasia III: A virtue ethics approach (cont.)

– Foot (continued), pp. 96–112.

PART TWO: THE MORAL DEMANDS OF PUBLIC LIFE

3/6 (Wed) – Climate change I: Denial

– Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*. 2014. Simon & Schuster Publishing. Introduction, pp. 1–28.

Spring break, 3/9–17: NO CLASS

3/18 (Mon) – Climate change II: Economics

– John Broome, “The Ethics of Climate Change.” *Scientific American*, June 2008, pp. 69–73.

– Paper 2 topics handed out

3/20 (Wed) – Climate change III: Changing our attitude

– Klein (continued), Chapter 5: “Beyond Extractivism: Confronting the Climate Denier Within,” pp. 161–187.

3/25 (Mon) – Racism

– Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 2014. PDF version. pp. 1–23.

– Visit <https://www.theatlantic.com/reparations> to view images and graphs (required). You can find an audio version there too (optional).

3/27 (Wed) – Racism (cont.)

- Coates (continued), pp. 23–58.

3/29 (Fri) 3:30pm sharp: PAPER 2 DUE

4/1 (Mon) – Poverty

- Peter Unger, *Living High and Letting Die*. 1996. Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 (selections), pp. 3–20.

4/3 (Wed) – Poverty (cont.)

- Unger (continued), Chapter 2 (selections), pp. 24–61.

4/8 (Mon) – Poverty (cont., again)

- Unger (continued), Chapter 3 (selections), pp. 75–80.
- Paper 3 topics and final exam review questions handed out and discussed

4/10 (Wed) – The demands of morality I: Having integrity

- Bernard Williams, “A Critique of Utilitarianism.” Excerpted in Gardener, Gardener and Caney (eds.), *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*. 2010. Cambridge University Press. pp. 124–132.

4/15 (Mon) – The demands of morality II: Recognizing their urgency

- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham City Jail.” Reprinted in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, ed. James Washington. 1991. Harper Collins Publishing. pp. 289–302.

4/17 (Wed) – Conclusion

- No new reading!

4/22 (Mon) 3:30pm sharp: PAPER 3 DUE

4/26 (Fri), 10:00–11:50am: FINAL EXAM, in the usual classroom

Climate change I: Denial

Philosophy and Public Issues, Spring 2019

Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*, Introduction

I. Our current trajectory

Scientific consensus: 99.94% of the 54,195 climatology papers from 1991 to 2015 agree that human activity is raising the global temperature. (James L. Powell 2017, “The Consensus on Anthropogenic Global Warming Matters”)

Main mechanisms: greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂, methane); deforestation.

... by extraction, energy, manufacturing, agriculture, transportation industries.

American Association for the Advancement of Science (2014): “pushing global temperatures past certain thresholds could trigger abrupt, unpredictable and potentially irreversible changes that have massively disruptive and large-scale impacts... We can think of this as sudden climate brake and steering failure where the problem and its consequences are no longer something we can control” (Klein 1, epigraph).

Probable effects: Scale with temperature.

Already: Glacier melt; hottest global temperatures; “supercharged natural disaster;” often gruesome death of starfish, bats, moose, etc. (2, 26–28).

+4°C: Regular catastrophic heat waves; storms; continent-wide droughts; the melting of Antarctica and the Arctic ice; 1–2 meter sea level rise; acidification of ocean; loss of biodiversity; feedback loops exacerbating warming (12–15).

→ *effects on humans*: tens of thousands killed by extreme weather events; global famines leading to massive migration, political tension, and war; flooding of major coastal cities such as New York, LA, Shanghai, Mumbai, etc.

+ more?: Runaway warming → unstoppable extinction of most life on earth.

International Energy Agency and others: We are on track for **6°C** (10.8°F).

Climatologist Lonnie Thompson: “Virtually all of us are now convinced that global warming poses a clear and present danger to civilization” (15).

Our reactions: Not enough!

- Climate change summits set dangerous targets (2°C) that are non-binding (11–12).
- Global emissions increased 3.4% per year in 2000s; the increase is increasing (20).
- Relief funds appropriated to dredge canals for coal barges to go down Mississippi (3).

Klein’s image: *We all* are the passengers on the plane sinking into the tarmac (1–2).
“What is wrong with us?” (17).

II. Problem 1: Deregulated capitalism

Why are we not addressing the danger? Why are emissions still going up, not down? Not because of difficulties with coordination, tech, or sacrifice, or because it's too late.

Klein: “Because those things fundamentally conflict with deregulated capitalism, the reigning ideology for the entire period we have been struggling to find a way out of this crisis” (18).

The crisis coincides with an era of widespread privatization.

Market fundamentalism: (i) privatization; (ii) deregulation; (iii) low corporate taxes.

This has “systematically sabotaged our collective response to climate change” (19).

“Our economic system and our planetary system are now at war” (21).

A solution: Encourage low-carbon sectors of the economy to expand and create jobs. Contract high-carbon sectors. This requires major change in economic policy.

III. Problem 2: Denial

Climate change will be treated as a crisis when enough of us agree it is one (6).

But, right now, almost all of us are climate change deniers (3–4).

Not just those of us who deny the science; but those who fail to integrate it practically.

- Denial = wishful thinking about a technological breakthrough, philanthropy.
- = weighing the benefits of reacting against the lost economic development.
- = telling ourselves we're too busy to learn or do anything about it.
- = obsessing only about our own 'footprint,' avoiding collective action.

Klein: Real change is possible, but “we first have to stop looking away” (10).

- = facing the ugly truths, e.g., disintegrating starfish, frightening statistics.
- = getting informed and involved in direct, collective action/organization.

The silver lining: “Climate change... could become a galvanizing force for humanity, leaving us all not just safer from extreme weather, but with societies that are safer and fairer in all kinds of other ways as well” (7).

It can also be exploited by industries for security, monopolies, “weather futures” (9).

Our willingness to look directly at climate change will determine how this goes.

“Climate change changes everything. And for a very brief time, the nature of that change is up to us” (28).

Discussion questions:

- (1) Is Klein right that market fundamentalism “sabotages” attempts to combat climate change? If so, how does this work? If not, what does stand in the way?
- (2) Is Klein right that weighing climate change reforms against their economic costs—in her words: “trying to be hyper-rational about it” (p. 3)—is a kind of denial?

Climate change II: Economics

Philosophy and Public Issues, Spring 2019

I. Using economic models to make decisions

Say you're the CEO of Apple; your job is to grow your company's net worth over time.

To do this, it's often crucial to think long-term: Perhaps spending a lot on R&D this year, in order to launch the new iPhone next year, makes Apple more money overall.

But your job also requires you to think short-term.

Why? Because the greater your net worth is now, the more assets you can invest in things that make your company grow, like R&D, hiring, manufacturing, stock, etc.

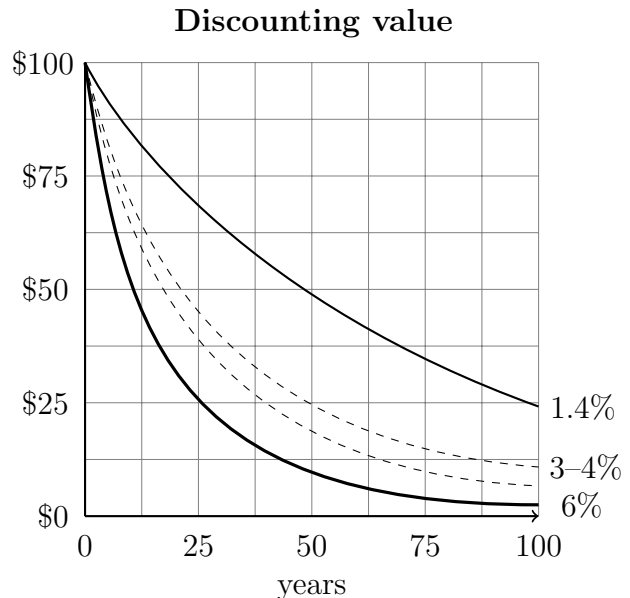
Moral: The sooner you get investable assets, the more your net worth grows over time.

Investible assets reliably lead to growth. So, effectively, \$100 *now* is worth more than \$100 *in one year*, which is worth more still than \$100 *in 10 years*, and so on.

Economists take this into account when they weigh costs and benefits which take place over time: They **discount** future amounts to present value equivalents.

The **discounting rate** used in economics is the same as the **rate of return**: the rate of expected gain from invested assets (~3–4%).

Any expected future profits can then be weighed against present costs by multiplying the former value by $\frac{1}{(1+dr)^y}$



II. John Broome, “The Ethics of Climate Change”

Climate change calls us to make present day sacrifices to avoid future harms. We must reduce emissions, live less lavishly *now* to avoid floods, famines, war *in the future* (70).

We can use economic modeling to weigh these costs over time, and decide public policy. ... we just have to determine the right discount rate.

Stern: Discount rate of 1.4%: \$100 now → \$50 in 50 years → \$25 in 100 years

Nordhaus: Disc. rate of 6%: \$100 now → \$6.50 in 50 years → 30¢ in 100 years

Stern's model gives ~100x the value Nordhaus's does to goods 100 years from now!

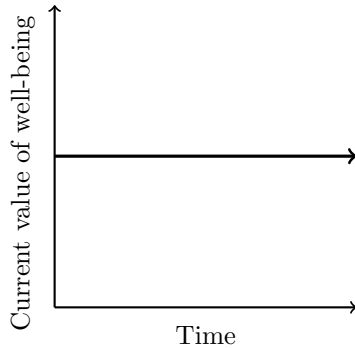
So, Stern concludes we must invest at least 1% of global production on efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, whereas Nordhaus concludes we need not.

Question: What accounts for the difference in their discount rates?

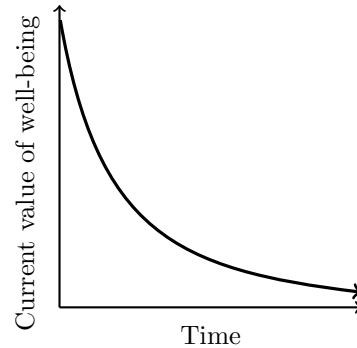
Broome: Nordhaus's rate is determined mostly on economic grounds, whereas Stern's factors in ethical considerations as well (71).

Ethical question 1: Is the well-being of future people just as important as ours?

Yes → **Temporal Impartiality**

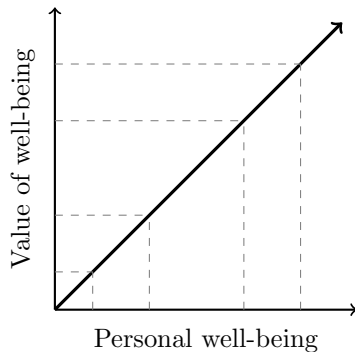


No → **Temporal Discounting**

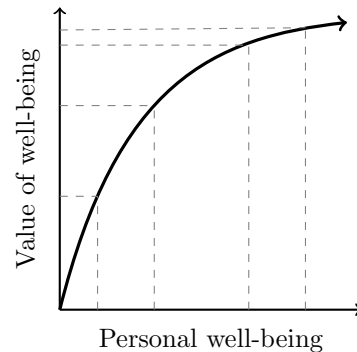


Ethical question 2: Is it equally valuable for a wealthier person to receive some benefit as it is for a poorer person? (E.g.: J. Bezos gets a flight upgrade vs. you do.)

Yes → **Utilitarianism**



No → **Prioritarianism**



If people in the future will be richer (have greater well-being) than now, prioritarianism tells us to discount future well-being, whereas utilitarianism does not (71–2).

Discussion questions: (1) What are the answers to the two ethical questions? How should they affect the discount rate? And what would we learn from those effects?

(2) To what extent is it justified to think that people in the future will be better off?

(3) Is the focus on the far future, and future people, distorting? E.g., IPBES: 95% of world's arable land may be degraded by 2050 (<https://bbc.in/2RT6P5v>).

(4) Broome asks, “How much should we sacrifice today to improve the lives of future people richer than we are?” (70). It's tempting to hear this as inviting us to postpone responding to climate change until later. Does economic modeling tend to do the same, as Klein suggests?

Climate change III: Changing our attitude

Philosophy and Public Issues, Spring 2019

Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*: Chapter 5

Nauru: A small South Pacific island country. 8 sq. mi, 11,000 people.
A longtime stop for birds, who left behind valuable phosphate of lime.
Boom, exploitation (162–3). Money laundering, prison camps, rising waters (164–8).
A “convenient trash can” (168); what we don’t see doesn’t bother us.
→ *Solastalgia*: homesickness while still at home.

Klein: We’re treating our whole planet like we treated Nauru.

Extractivism: Economy based on removing raw materials from the earth.
“A nonreciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the earth” (169). Also, a mindset:

Derham (1713): “We can, if need be, ransack the whole globe, penetrate into the bowels of the earth, descend to the bottom of the deep, travel to the farthest regions of this world, to acquire wealth” (171)

Industrialization: The apparent liberation from nature, via mechanized labor.

Watt (1824): “Be the winds friendly or contrary, the power of the Steam Engine overcomes all difficulties. . . Let the wind blow from whatever part of the world it may, let the destination of our force be to whatever part of the world it may, you will have the power and the means, by the Steam Engine, of applying that force at the proper time and in the proper manner. . . Nature can be conquered, if we can but find her weak side” (172–3).

Klein: Industrialization allowed for an “intoxicating promise of freedom from the physical world” (173).

Increased production rates also gave rise to a market economy for new goods.

. . . but both came at the price of “*sacrifice zones*”: damage which we look away from.

e.g., “the black lungs of the coal miners;” “the poisoned waterways surrounding the mines;” exploited people, esp. in colonies; Nauru.

We *have to* avert our eyes from “sacrifice zones” to maintain the illusion of freedom.

That’s part of why industrialization drives colonialism; the sacrifice zones, where the extraction occurs, need to be out of sight.

Hence, “the potent and brutal combination of coal and slave labor” (173).

Part of why climate change is so *frightening*: It forces us to face up to “our vulnerability to the elements” (175).

To get over extractivism, we have to give up our mindset since industrialism. We must recognize that we depend on, and are utterly vulnerable to, a nature we cannot control.

This recognition is familiar from Eastern and Native American philosophies; American environmentalist thought (e.g., Muir, Thoreau, Carson); etc. (183–6).

But resistance to extractivism faces:

- A challenge from both left- and right-leaning people favoring GDP growth.
- A temptation for countries (esp. poorer ones) to pollute for profit.
- A temptation to “magical thinking” a “narrative that assures us that, however bad things get, we are going to be saved at the last minute “whether by the market, by philanthropic billionaires, or by technological wizards” (186). [Cf. chs. 6–8]

On the other hand, many movements to resist climate change are growing quickly.

... these movements will need to push for a change in mindset, along with economy.

Discussion questions:

(1) What “sacrifice zones” support our lives and lifestyles, here and now, in Pittsburgh, PA, 2019? What places and people do we have a hidden, “nonreciprocal, dominance-based relationship” with?

A women’s march sign: “Ever wonder what you’d do during slavery or the Holocaust? You’re doing it now!” (Cf. resisters, collaborationists, bystanders.)

(2) Is Klein right that the key to stopping climate change is ending the “extractivist” mindset? If not, why not? If so, would this show that Broome’s approach is flawed?

(3) Ok, so you’re ready to change your “extractivist” mindset! But how do you do that? Is that even possible while living in a culture and economy based on extraction?

Klein: This will involve an emotional change. But only focusing ‘inward,’ on your own feelings is still a kind of denial (see Introduction), and self-defeating. The whole culture & economy need to change, with it. That requires collective action.

Klein’s recommended activist organization: www.350.org.

350’s goals: (i) A fast and just transition to 100% renewable energy; (ii) No new fossil fuel projects; (iii) Follow the money: the divestment movement.

[In all this, an aim to support oppressed peoples to lead; political candidates who share the agenda; and indigenous rights (often the only legally valid claim).]

One easy option: Change your home energy source to renewable energy.

[Free, takes 2 minutes: www.arcadiapower.com or www.greenmountainenergy.com]

A little harder: Reduce or stop your consumption of meat, dairy; fly/travel less.

Local action, information events: Join mailing list: sustainableearth.cmu@gmail.com

International youth movement to politicize climate change: www.sunrisemovement.org

Comics: <https://xkcd.com/1732/> (info); <https://bit.ly/2THEqRl> (activist advice)

Second Paper Assignment

Philosophy and Public Issues, Spring 2019

Assignment

Write an **800–1100 word** paper responding to one of the prompts. Include your PeopleSoft Number, prompt number, and a word count on the first page, but **NOT** your name. Submit your paper according to your TA's specifications **by Friday, 3/29, 3:30pm sharp**.

Expectations

The goal of the paper is to persuade your reader. In order to do this effectively, the paper must be clear, concise, well argued, and substantiated with evidence. Your paper must critically engage with the relevant parts of course readings.

All the guidelines from the first paper assignment apply here! Take a few minutes to reread them. Like, really. Do it.

Prompts

(1) Imagine your doctor diagnosing you with a serious case of Alzheimer's disease, which will soon lead to severe and incapacitating dementia. According to the utilitarian, Kantian or virtue ethicist, would it be okay for you to commit suicide?

In responding, consider *exactly two* of these moral theorists, and what they would say. Which of these *two* gives the better verdict, and why?

(2) Many pet owners and shelters enlist the help of vets to 'put down' their cats and dogs with a lethal injection of sedatives and barbiturates. Would Foot find this practice morally acceptable? Would her judgment be correct? Why or why not?

(3) What would utilitarianism say about climate change? Would that be the right view about it? Why or why not?

(4) Why does Klein think that using economic cost-benefit analysis to approach public policy decisions about climate change is a kind of climate change "denial" (p. 3)? Is she right to think this? Why or why not?

Note: You may write a paper responding to your own question about euthanasia or climate change, with your TA's approval. To get this, email your TA within 72 hours of receiving the paper prompts. Your email should include a question of no more than 50 words, followed by roughly 50 words explaining how you will answer that question. Your TA is at liberty to reject your proposed topic, if it is deemed unmanageable or insufficiently developed.