

Study Guide for Environmental Philosophy (Spring 2018)

— Exam 1: Private Property, Population, Consumption, and Food Ethics —

In preparing your answers for these questions, remember that **I am not interested in your uninformed opinions**, and no one else should be either. Please develop your answers in the context of the readings, based on arguments and evidence. The exam will involve a set of essay questions (perhaps six or so) drawn from the following questions (in some combination or other, and probably not *verbatim*). You will need to write just **three essays**.

You may use **one sheet of notes** while writing your essays. (Your welcome.) The more you incorporate ideas, arguments, and facts from the readings, the stronger your essays will be.

Private Property and the Public Good

- (1) Give an example of a commons, and Hardin's account of the "tragedy of the commons." What solutions does he suggest to avoid this tragedy? What do you think of his solutions?
- (2) What is Locke's account of the origin of private property?
- (3) What kinds of common property does Locke discuss, and how does he justify their privatization?
- (4) The speech attributed to Chief Seattle offers a characteristically different understanding of the relationship of human beings to the natural world. Briefly describe this view, and compare it with that found in Locke's essay on property.
- (5) What do you understand to be the environmental implications of holding land privately as opposed to holding it in common?
- (6) Be able to describe the "taxonomy of rights" presented in class, giving examples of each kind of right.
- (7) What does the "right to property" typically include? Does it include the right to use our property in ways that harm others? Do we have a right to consume as much as our wealth allows?
- (8) What is Solow's account of sustainability?
- (9) How does Solow understand the conflict between our duties to future generations and our duties to the poor among us now?
- (10) What is distributive justice? What is the difference between historical (e.g., Nozick) and end-state (e.g., Rawls) accounts of distributive justice? How would adherents of these two accounts respond to the problems created by poverty?
- (11) What does Rawls mean by the natural and social lotteries? Be able to give examples of these, and how this might bear on questions of distributive justice.
- (12) In what sense is sustainability a matter of intergenerational distributive justice?

Population, Consumption, and Food Ethics

- (13) Discuss the competing metaphors of the spaceship and the lifeboat. What arguments does Hardin give to favor the latter? What, in general, do we want from our metaphors?
- (14) What are the various senses of carrying capacity? How might this multiplicity of meanings affect Hardin's argument?
- (15) What distinguishes the Malthusians and Cornucopians (as discussed in the McKibben essay)? Are there "limits to growth"? What form might these limits take?
- (16) What does Bill McKibben mean by "Earth2", and what are the implications of this Earth2?
- (17) How should we, in 2018, characterize the human population? Is it growing or declining? If one of these, is the rate of growth or decline increasing or decreasing? How does this compare with global population patterns of the previous several centuries? What are some of the causes of these demographic shifts?
- (18) Fox offers an argument for vegetarianism based on environmental concerns, while Engel offers an argument based on famine and malnutrition. What are these arguments? Do carnivores have a response worthy of our attention?
- (19) How are overpopulation, over-consumption, and unequal distribution of resources related to famines? Be able to explain Sen's account of famine.
- (20) What is the relationship between private property and hunger? When the value of property rights and the value of human life come into conflict, what should we do? How do we adjudicate this conflict? Which value wins?