

# Study Guide for Environmental Philosophy (Spring 2017)

## — 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** (both sides) to help you in 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) What is Locke's account of the origin of private property?
- (2) What kinds of common property does Locke discuss, and how does he justify their privatization?
- (3) Discuss the limits that Locke places on our ability to privatize the commons: What are they? Are they appropriate? Did they omit any?
- (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) 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?
- (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? Be able to discuss these, as well as any limitations on this right.
- (8) How does Locke account for the possibility of wide differences of wealth distribution? What do you think?
- (9) 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?
- (10) Be able to describe and evaluate these concepts from Rawls's theory of justice: the original position, the veil of ignorance, the maximin principle.
- (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.

### Population, Consumption, and Food Ethics

- (12) 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?
- (13) What are the various senses of carrying capacity? How might this multiplicity of meanings affect Hardin's argument?
- (14) What distinguishes the Malthusians and Cornucopians (as discussed in the McKibben essay)? Do we have any reason to believe that there are "limits to growth"? What form might these limits take?
- (15) What does Bill McKibben mean by "Earth2" and what are the implications of this Earth2?
- (16) How should we, in 2017, 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?
- (17) 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?
- (18) How are overpopulation, over-consumption, and unequal distribution of resources related to famines? Be able to explain Sen's account of famine.
- (19) 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?
- (20) **Repeat question, with a twist:** 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 whatever and however we want, so long as we are able to lawfully purchase what we consume? (Even if this consumption is environmentally harmful? Even if this consumption is wasteful?)