

Arthur Obst
Curriculum vitae
Department of Philosophy • University of Washington
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Pronouns: he/him

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, Seattle, WA

PhD, Philosophy, 2023 (expected)

Dissertation: *Wilderness for wildness: Saving the wild in a post-natural world*

Abstract: Humanity stands at a crossroads. We are at the brink of a planetary crisis of our own making. Carbon emissions threaten a level of climate instability not seen in this epoch. Accelerating species loss invites the possibility of a “sixth great extinction.” Scientists warn that entire ecosystems are unraveling. Wilderness, some claim, has become a relic of a unretrievable past. At the end of nature, a chorus of new environmentalists insist that wilderness preservation must therefore be abandoned and defend instead a moral duty to manage the biosphere benevolently through unprecedented human intervention. This might involve turning back the sun through solar geoengineering, harnessing genomic engineering to resurrect species, or perhaps using technologies we have yet to even imagine. My dissertation resists this call by defending the moral value of ‘letting be’: of protecting the existence of wild systems that we do not attempt to control. I call this alternative picture a *wildness ethic* and argue that it has long been the beating heart of wilderness preservation. Moreover, the preservation and promotion of wildness not only remains possible but has never been more urgent. Ultimately, I argue that politically embracing a liberatory wildness ethic may be one of the few things capable of staying catastrophe for good.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, Seattle, WA

MA, Philosophy, 2019

Master’s Paper: Admitting reasons against emitting: From moral reasons to moral obligations against joyguzzling

DRAKE UNIVERSITY, Des Moines, IA

BA, Philosophy and English, summa cum laude, 2017

Capstone Paper: The green mountains are walking: Zen and environmental ethics

RESEARCH

AOS: Environmental Philosophy, Climate Ethics

AOC: Applied Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy, Normative Ethics/Ethical Theory

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy (2017-present)

Research Associate, Stephen Gardiner (September 2022).

Predocctoral Instructor, Department of Philosophy (Summer 2020, 2021, 2022)

Research Assistant, Stephen Gardiner (September 2019, 2020)

Research Assistant, Program on Ethics (2019-2020)

Philosophy Writing Center Supervisor, Department of Philosophy (2020-2021)

HONORS & AWARDS

<i>Melvin Rader Fellowship for Innovative Philosophical Projects</i>	
University of Washington	Summer 2022
<i>Graduate School Presidential Dissertation Fellowship</i> , University of Washington	Fall 2021
<i>Graduate Student Conference Presentation Award</i> , University of Washington	2019, 2022
<i>Graduate Teaching Assistantship</i> , University of Washington	2017-present
<i>Summa Cum Laude</i> , Drake University	Spring 2017

PUBLICATIONS

- Obst, A.R. (Forthcoming). Responsibility for climate harms. In Pellegrino, G. & Di Paola, M. (Eds.) *The Handbook of the Philosophy of Climate Change*. Springer.
- Obst, A.R. & Dout, C.C. (Forthcoming). Individual responsibility and the ethics of hoping for a more just climate future. *Environmental Values*.
- Obst, A.R. & Gardiner, S.M. (2023). *Dialogues on Climate Justice*. Routledge.

SELECT WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Obst, A.R. Flying from history, too close to the sun: The anxious, jubilant futurism of contemporary 'age of man' environmentalism. In Preparation.
- Obst, A.R. Purity, Puritanism, and Wilderness Preservation. In Preparation.
- Obst, A.R. The riddle of the Wolf River: A waterway rewilding. In Preparation.
- Obst, A.R. Climate engineering and the intractability of arrogance. In Preparation.
- Obst, A.R. Is climate stability a Global Public Good? In Preparation with Stephen Gardiner.
- Obst, A.R. Moral transformation and aesthetic appreciation in wild nature. In Preparation with Stephanie Schuster.
- Obst, A.R. Wilderness and intellectual humility. Under Review, *Public Philosophy Journal*.
- Obst, A.R. Why you should admit why you shouldn't emit (or contribute to other new harms). Under Review, *Ethics & the Environment*.

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

- July 2022. Presenter of "Flying from history, too close to the sun: The anxious, jubilant futurism of contemporary 'age of man' environmentalism." *International Society for Environmental Ethics 19th Annual Summer Meeting*. Seili Island, Finland.
- June 2022. Presenter of "Wilderness and the question of intellectual humility." *Philosophy in the Wild Workshop*. Ridley Creek State Park, Media, Pennsylvania.
- July 2021. Presenter of "Wilderness for wildness." Inaugural *Philosophy in the Wild Workshop*. Poe Paddy State Park, Woodward, Pennsylvania.
- May 2021. Organizer. *Philosophy of Race: Engaged Philosophy After Trump*. University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.
- April 2021. Organizer and Participant. *Dialogues on Climate Justice Manuscript Workshop*. University of Washington: Seattle.
- September 2020. Presenter of "Individual responsibility and the ethics of hoping for a more just climate future." *Manchester Center for Political Theory (MANCEPT) Workshop on Individual Responsibility and Climate Change*. University of Manchester.
- April 2020. Presenter of "Climate despair and the moral imperative to act in hope." *International Society for Environmental Ethics Group Session*. 2020 Pacific Meeting of the American Philosophical Association. San Francisco, California. (Cancelled.)

February 2020. Presenter of “Admitting reasons against emitting: From moral reasons to moral obligations against joyguzzling.” *Ben Rabinowitz Symposium on Environmental Ethics on Climate Justice and Responsibility*. University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

August 2019. Presenter of “Admitting reasons against emitting.” *Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress*. University of Colorado. Boulder, Colorado (poster presentation).

April 2019. Presenter of “Admitting reasons against emitting.” *3rd Annual Spring Symposium*. Program on Climate Change. University of Washington. Seattle, Washington.

November 2018. Presenter of “The ethics of Geoengineering.” *Climate Change Networking Event*. UW Collaboration Consortium. University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

September 2018. Invited attendee of *Conference on Geoengineering, Justice and Legitimacy*. University of Reading.

September 2018. Invited attendee of “Discussion meeting of the *Report on the International Governance of Solar Radiation Management*.” Reading, Berkshire.

December 2015. Presenter of “A quest for meaning: Religious adaptation in the face of death.” *The Comparison Project*. Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Primary Instructor (University of Washington)

<i>Environmental Ethics</i>	Summer 2022
<i>Contemporary Moral Problems</i>	Summer 2021
<i>Contemporary Moral Problems</i>	Summer 2020

Teaching Assistant (University of Washington)

<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (Paul Franco)	Spring 2022
<i>Environmental Ethics</i> (Stephen Gardiner)	Winter 2022
<i>Issues of Global Justice</i> (William Talbott)	Spring 2021
<i>Environmental Ethics</i> (Stephen Gardiner)	Winter 2021
<i>Contemporary Moral Problems</i> (Michael Blake)	Fall 2020
<i>Practical Reasoning</i> (Conor Mayo-Wilson)	Spring 2020
<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (Paul Franco)	Spring 2019
<i>Contemporary Moral Problems</i> (Michael Blake)	Winter 2018
<i>Perspectives on Science, Reason, and Reality</i> (Benjamin Feintzeig)	Fall 2018
<i>Environmental Ethics</i> (Stephen Gardiner)	Winter 2018
<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (Colin Marshall)	Fall 2017

SELECT COURSEWORK

Course	Faculty
Seminar on Philosophy of Probability:	Benjamin Feintzeig
Seminar on Iris Marion Young:	Carina Fourie
Seminar on Climate Justice:	Stephen Gardiner
Induction and Probability:	Conor Mayo-Wilson
Seminar on Geoengineering:	Stephen Gardiner and Thomas Ackermann
Climate Ethics:	Lauren Hartzell-Nichols
Carbon and Global Climate:	Curtis Deutsch
Climate Change Law:	Rodney Brown and Craig Gannett

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Graduate Student Representative	2022-present
Referee for <i>Environmental Ethics</i>	2022-present
First-Year Graduate Student Mentor	2019-present
Teaching Innovation Committee, UW Department of Philosophy	2018-present
Colloquia Committee, UW Department of Philosophy	2017-present
Representative, UW Graduate and Professional Student Senate	2017-2018

OUTREACH & PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

Invited Guest, <i>Common Cause for Sustainability Podcast</i>	September 2022
Moderator, <i>Our Relationships with Nature: A Student Interfaith Panel</i>	February 2022
Lecturer, Chateau Retirement Community	2018-2019

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Philosophers for Sustainability	2022-present
The Wilderness Society	2022-present
American Association for the Advancement of Science	2021-present
Ecological Landscape Alliance	2021-present
International Society for Environmental Ethics	2019-present
United Auto Workers Local 4121	2017-present
The Phi Beta Kappa Society	2017-present
American Philosophical Association	2016-present
Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society	2015-present

REFERENCES

Stephen Gardiner Professor Department of Philosophy University of Washington smgard@uw.edu	Michael Blake Professor Department of Philosophy University of Washington miblake@uw.edu
Sara Goering Professor Department of Philosophy University of Washington sgoering@uw.edu	Peter Kahn Professor Department of Psychology School of Environmental and Forest Sciences University of Washington pkahn@uw.edu