

Arthur Obst
Curriculum vitae
University Center for Human Values • Princeton University
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Pronouns: he/him

EMPLOYMENT

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, Princeton, NJ
University Center for Human Values
High Meadows Environmental Institute
Postdoctoral Research Associate, 2023-24

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, Seattle, WA

PhD, Philosophy, 2023

Dissertation: *Wilderness for Wildness: Saving the Wild in a Post-Natural World*

Abstract: Wilderness, some claim, has become a relic of an 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 underlying ethos 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, 2017

Capstone Paper: The Green Mountains are Walking: Zen and Environmental Ethics

RESEARCH

AOS: Climate Justice, Environmental Philosophy, Social and Political Philosophy, Applied Ethics
AOC: Normative Ethics/Ethical Theory, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Technology, Feminist Philosophy

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Predocctoral Instructor, Friday Harbor Laboratories (Spring 2023)
Predocctoral Instructor, Department of Philosophy (Summer 2020, 2021, 2022)
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy (2017-2023)

HONORS & AWARDS¹

<i>Departmental Teaching Award</i>	Winter 2023
<i>Graduate Student Conference Presentation Award</i>	2018, 2022, 2023
<i>Melvin Rader Fellowship for Innovative Philosophical Projects</i>	Summer 2022
<i>Graduate School Presidential Dissertation Fellowship</i>	Fall 2021
<i>Summa Cum Laude, Drake University</i>	Spring 2017

PUBLICATIONS

Obst, A.R. (2024) Practical Moral Reasoning in the Climate Crisis: A Personal Guide. *Moral Philosophy & Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/mopp-2023-0076>

Obst, A.R. (2023) Flying from History, Too Close to the Sun: The Anxious, Jubilant Futurism of Contemporary ‘Age of Man’ Environmentalism. *Environmental Ethics* 45(4): 337-357. 10.5840/enviroethics202383065

Obst, A.R. (2023). Let’s Rewild Philosophy. *Public Philosophy Journal* 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.59522/EJEK9163>

Obst, A.R. (2023). Responsibility for Climate Harms. In Pellegrino, G. & Di Paola, M. (Eds.) *The Handbook of the Philosophy of Climate Change*. Springer: 561-586. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-07002-0_49

Obst, A.R., & C.C. Dout. (2023). Individual Responsibility and the Ethics of Hoping for a More Just Climate Future. *Environmental Values* 32(3): 315-335. 10.3197/096327122x16569260361823

Obst, A.R., & S.M. Gardiner. (2022). *Dialogues on Climate Justice*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003123408>

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Obst, A.R. (In Preparation). What Would Aldo Leopold Think About Geoengineering?

Obst, A.R. (In Preparation). The Riddle of the Wolf River: Lesson from a Waterway Rewilding.

Obst, A.R. & De Vroey, L. (In Preparation). Rewilding Europe and Rewilding North America: Rival Approaches?

Obst, A.R. & Gardiner, S.M. (In Preparation). Revisiting the Tollgate Principles for the Governance of Geoengineering.

Obst, A.R. & Gardiner, S.M. (In Preparation). Is Climate Stability a Global Public Good?

¹ Awards are associated with the University of Washington, unless otherwise noted.

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

- October 2023. Co-organizer. *Science, etc. Explanation, Theory, and Communication*. University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.
- October 2023. Presenter of “Flying from History, Too Close to the Sun: The Anxious, Jubilant Futurism of Contemporary ‘Age of Man’ Environmentalism.” *Cultural and Historical Awareness Program*, Porterville College, California. (Invited.)
- July 2023. Presenter of “Rewilding Europe and Rewilding North America: Rival Approaches?” with Linde De Vroey. *Philosophy in the Wild*. Poe Paddy State Park, Pennsylvania.
- July 2023. Presenter of “The Riddle of the Wild Wolf: What’s So Wild About One of America’s First Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Why Should We Care?” *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE)* and *The Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences (AESS) Conference: Reclaiming the Commons*. Portland, Oregon.
- June 2023. Presenter of “What would Aldo Leopold think about Geoengineering?” *International Society for Environmental Ethics 20th Annual Meeting*. Allenspark, Colorado.
- June 2023. Co-Presenter of “Rewilding Europe and Rewilding North America: Rival approaches?” with Linde De Vroey. *Pathways 2023*. Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. *
- April 2023. Presenter of “Purity, Puritanism, and Wilderness Preservation: Revisiting the received wilderness idea.” *History of Philosophy Society Annual Meeting*. University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, Tennessee. *
- March 2023. Co-presenter of “Individual responsibility and the ethics of hoping for a more just climate future” with Cody C. Dout. *Ben Rabinowitz Environmental Ethics Workshop*. University of Washington, Seattle, WA
- February 2023. Presenter of “What would Aldo Leopold think about Geoengineering?” *UW Philosophy Work-In-Progress Talk*. University of Washington, Seattle, WA.
- 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. Co-organizer. *Philosophy of Race: Engaged Philosophy After Trump*. University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.
- April 2021. Co-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 due to covid.)
- 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.” *3^d 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.

COURSES TAUGHT

Primary Instructor (University of Washington)

<i>Science Writing for Diverse Audiences</i> (at Friday Harbor Laboratories)	Spring 2023
<i>Environmental Ethics</i>	Summer 2022
<i>Contemporary Moral Problems</i>	Summer 2021 & 2022

Teaching Assistant (University of Washington)

<i>Environmental Ethics</i> (Stephen Gardiner)	Winter 2018, 2021, 2022 & 2023
<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (Paul Franco)	Spring 2019 & 2022
<i>Contemporary Moral Problems</i> (Michael Blake)	Winter 2018 & Fall 2020
<i>Issues of Global Justice</i> (William Talbott)	Spring 2021
<i>Practical Reasoning</i> (Conor Mayo-Wilson)	Winter 2020
<i>Perspectives on Science, Reason & Reality</i> (Benjamin Feintzeig)	Spring 2018
<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (Colin Marshall)	Fall 2017

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND MENTORSHIP²

Book Review Editor, <i>Environmental Ethics</i>	2024-present
Organizer, <i>Philosophy in the Wild</i>	2023-present
Referee for <i>Environmental Ethics</i>	2022, 2023
Graduate Student Representative	2022-2023
First-Year Graduate Student Mentor	2019-2023
Colloquium Committee	2017-2023
Referee for <i>Environmental Studies and Sciences</i>	2022
Teaching Innovation Committee	2018-2020
Representative, UW Graduate and Professional Student Senate	2017-2018

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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

² Service and mentorship associated with the University of Washington, unless otherwise noted.

The Phi Beta Kappa Society	2017-present
American Philosophical Association	2016-present
Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society	2015-present

OUTREACH & PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

Interviewee, <u>'10 Minutes with Tipton: Dr. Arthur Obst'</u>	October 2023
Organizer and Panelist, <u>Rewilding Northshore... and Beyond?</u>	June 2023
Feature, <u>'A Philosopher Goes Wild,' Perspectives</u>	February 2023
Guest, <u>Common Cause for Sustainability Podcast</u>	September 2022
Moderator, <u>Our Relationship with Nature: A Student Interfaith Panel</u>	February 2022
Lecturer (Philosophy), Chateau Retirement Community	2018-2020

SELECT COURSEWORK

Course	Instructor
Seminar on Climate Justice	Stephen Gardiner
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
The Project of Moral Theory (Audit)	Elizabeth Harman and Gideon Rosen
Seminar on Feminist Philosophy	Sara Goering
Seminar on Iris Marion Young	Carina Fourie
Epistemology	William Talbott
Seminar on Philosophy of Probability	Benjamin Feintzeig
Induction and Probability	Conor Mayo-Wilson

REFERENCES

Stephen Gardiner Professor Department of Philosophy University of Washington smgard@uw.edu	Michael Blake Professor Department of Philosophy Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs University of Washington miblake@uw.edu
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Sara Goering Professor & Department Chair 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
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Dale Jamieson Professor Department of Environmental Studies Department of Philosophy	Melissa Lane Class of 1943 Professor of Politics Director University Center for Human Values
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New York University
dale.jamieson@nyu.edu

Princeton University
mslane@princeton.edu