Write a 9-10 page research paper, drawing not only from our course readings and discussions, but also from at least 2 articles, not assigned in the course, which you find for yourself doing external research. Both of the articles must come from peer-reviewed, academic journals, and neither may be a book-review or a short “reply to” another theorist. One of the articles must come from a peer-reviewed philosophy journal. The other may come from an academic journal from a different discipline. Note: DO NOT start working on this project until we have discussed it further. You must write this paper on your own; you may not co-author it with other students. In preparation for completing this paper, you will also submit a bibliography, providing a list of your sources, and provide a brief (1-page) description of how the sources’ topics and arguments relate to each other.

Please note: Those of you who choose this option will be meeting with Librarian Bruce Jensen twice during the semester, during regularly scheduled classes, to learn how to use library resources to complete this project. You will have assistance, and be able to ask questions about how to proceed with it. You will have some time to work on this assignment during those sessions, themselves. So please don’t worry if this seems challenging, right now!

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Your paper must defend a central claim – feel free to choose any – that is relevant to Environmental Philosophy. You should have a thesis paragraph, early on, providing this claim. To defend the claim, you should not simply repeat arguments and interpretations that have been discussed in class, that you found online, or that you read in the external articles you found for this assignment. You must provide arguments that are original to you.

For this assignment, you must complete the following four steps:

(1) You must select at least one argument we explicitly discussed during class. You must express that argument in your own words. You should not quote me or the relevant author, or be too close to our wording. You should be clear about each of its distinct premises and conclusion. You must explain how this argument relates to your paper’s central claim, and you must explain why you agree or disagree with its premises. (Don’t focus on whether you agree with its conclusion; instead, focus on why you do or don’t agree with its premises.) This section should be at least 2 full pages long, and it may be longer if you like.

(2) You must read and reflect on at least 2 articles, not assigned in the course, in your own external research. Both of the articles must come from peer-reviewed, academic journals, and neither may be a book-review or a short “reply to” another theorist. One of the articles must come from a peer-reviewed philosophy journal. Both papers should relate to the central claim which you wish to defend in your paper. You should select at least one argument that these papers present, which we have not explicitly discussed in the course. You must be clear about the valid structure of the argument, what its distinct
premises are, and why they demand the argument’s conclusion. You must explain how this argument relates to your central claim, and why you agree or disagree with its premises. You may focus on one external article more than you do the other, but you should discuss each external article for at least 1-page each, and this section should be at least 3 pages, overall. It may be longer if you like.

(3) You must develop your own, original argument(s) in defense of the central claim you wish to defend. You must be clear about what your premises are, and why they demand your conclusion. What is the structure of your argument(s)? What are the premises? What is the conclusion? Why do you think that your premises are true? You must defend each of your distinct premises against potential opponents. This section should be at least 2 pages, overall. It may be longer if you like.

(4) You must provide a 1-page complete bibliography, listing your sources both from the course and from your external research. I have no personal preference about style (MLA, Chicago, etc.). But please pick one academically accepted style for your bibliography, and stick with it consistently. If you have questions about how to do this, please consult with Bruce Jensen, with whom you will be meeting twice during the semester.