Stony Brook University
The Graduate School

Doctoral Defense Announcement

Abstract

Immanent Ecologies: Power, Ethics, and Persistence

By

Oli Stephano

My project addresses ecological harm as an ethical problem of the relation between human endeavors to persevere in our being and the persistence and resilience of planetary life itself. Staunching ecological destruction, I argue, requires situating human striving within sustaining ecological relationships. I develop this claim through Spinoza’s ethical framework, where all beings strive to persevere in their existence and ethics emerges as the practice of cultivating relations conducive to this striving, or conatus. Interpreting the conatus as fundamentally interdependent, I show that humanity’s self-interest is incompatible with ecological degradation. Finally, I propose an immanent ecological ethics that bases its normative claims in how ecosystemic bodies affect one another’s conative flourishing, and demonstrate how this supports the ethical task of aligning human striving with ecological coexistence.

Date: November 17, 2016
Time: 4:45 PM
Place: Stony Brook Manhattan

Program: Philosophy
Dissertation Advisor: Edward S. Casey

*This defense will take place at SBU Manhattan. Members of the Stony Brook University community who attend this defense should submit their LIRR ticket receipts to Prof. Edward Casey (c/o Dept. of Philosophy, 213 Harriman Hall) for reimbursement.*