

## What does Education for Sustainability have to do with Philosophy?

Philosophy is the most ancient of academic disciplines, yet the uncertainties of modern living make the traditional philosophical challenges even more pressing in the 21st century.

([http://www.southampton.ac.uk/philosophy/undergraduate/courses/v500\\_ba\\_philosophy.page?](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/philosophy/undergraduate/courses/v500_ba_philosophy.page?))

Philosophy helps us to understand the world – our place in it, our framework for decision-making and engaging with it. Topic areas of relevance to sustainability already in the Philosophy curriculum include:

- **Ethics:** foundations for moral judgements; ethical questions from the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as distribution of wealth, abortion, euthanasia; how should we respond to the threat of climate change to present and future generations?
- **Understanding reality:** the mind and its relationship to the body, God, the environment, society.
- **Understanding other cultures:** the role of the philosophy in expanding understanding of other cultures, beliefs, experiences and foster human empathy; reconnecting humankind and nature.
- **Aesthetics:** our experiences of art and nature, and the importance that these have.
- **Happiness and wellbeing:** what does it mean for life to go well? What is the role of achievement, friendship, learning, joy in wellbeing? Is happiness and wellbeing a suitable goal for nations as well as individuals?
- **Human beliefs and values:** understanding these in order to sustain societies, natural resources, human heritage and culture.
- **Human emotions and behaviours:** understanding how humans relate to each other, as individuals, in society; understanding the impact of decisions and whether certain actions are permissible

**Key skills for philosophers which sustainability teaching cultivates:** interdisciplinarity; informed decision-making; ethics in research; synthesis of different opinions, theory and data; oral and written communication; self-management; time-management; critical thinking.

**Find out more:** Contact Julia Kendal ([j.kendal@soton.ac.uk](mailto:j.kendal@soton.ac.uk)) for more information including case studies on teaching sustainability in this area.