



Photo: JoAnne McArthur

Ethics and Animals¹

Fall 2015

ANST-UA 400.001

Description

This course is an introduction to the ethics of our relationships to nonhuman animals, from historical and contemporary standpoints. We will examine the ways animals have been denied and granted moral status in philosophical traditions and in practice, the significance of the human/animal difference, and what “speciesism” means. We will then survey the main philosophical theories arguing about the treatment of animals, and we will cover various practical issues surrounding our use of, or concern for, animals. We will address the morality of raising and killing animals for food, animal experimentation, keeping animals in captivity for entertainment or science, keeping them as pets, managing urban wildlife, reducing suffering in the wild, wildlife conservation, etc. We will ask whether animals should have legal rights, and which are the best strategies to protect them.

There are no prior requirements in philosophy, animal studies, ethics, or any other field, except for a genuine willingness to confront with a variety of views, concepts, arguments, and hot topics. Given the controversial nature of the subject, student participation, based on careful argumentation and respectful appreciation of different views, is strongly encouraged; no specific view will be favored.

Practical Information

Time: Tues. 5:00-7:30pm

Place: Global Center for Academic and Spiritual Life, #269

Instructor: Nicolas Delon

Email: nicolas.delon@nyu.edu

Office: 285 Mercer st, #1006

Office hours: T & W 9-11:30am (reserve slot: goo.gl/0tl38l), or by appointment

Grader: Sharisse Kanet, professorkanet@gmail.com, office hours by appointment

¹ This syllabus is subject to change. Please refer to the most up-to-date version available on NYU Classes.

Grading (assignments must be submitted online on NYU Classes)

Grading criteria: Structure, organization and coherence (25%), comprehension of references used and course-related materials (25%), critical skills (25%), writing/clarity (25%)

- **Tests** (40%): 2 quizzes (multiple-choice questions) (**10/6** & **11/3**, 10% each) and 1 exam (essay questions, **11/17**) (20%). Tests cover all course materials up until test day. No exam during finals period.
- **Paper** (30%): A 10-page (min 8, max 15) take-home paper. **Due 12/9, 9am**. You can choose your own topic (please consult with me first), but I will also suggest prompts. A **preliminary outline** is due **11/24**. (Peer-assessment submission due **10/26**; reviews due **11/2**).
- **Summaries** (15%): Weekly readings are mandatory for all. **By 10am on class day** students must post a short analytical summary of the day's readings and question or comment. I will call on students at the beginning of each session, so be prepared! There will be 10 summaries, graded out of 10.
- **Attendance and participation** (15%): Attendance is mandatory (you must request permission and/or bring a timely notice if you miss more than one class); active class participation is strongly encouraged. As in papers, you will be assessed on the basis of your demonstrated capacity to engage with arguments, verify assertions, research facts, unpack implicit assumptions, and critically examine your own views. **Online discussion** on NYU Classes also counts towards participation.
- **Extra credit**: Students can earn extra credits (details TBC) by writing a short critical review (about 5 pages) of Timothy Pachirat, *Every Twelve Seconds* or Hal Herzog, *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat*, and/or by writing a one-page report about of the advertised Animal Studies Initiative events (Oct. 9 and 29). Please email me if you're interested. Submission deadline: **11/6** (report), **12/8** (review).

Policies

- **Laptops** allowed only for note taking. They will be banned for everyone if they cause any distraction. **Cell phones** must be on silent and left in your bag. If you need **special accommodations**, please let me know.
- **Plagiarism** and other forms of academic dishonesty will be checked for electronically and may result in failure for the class and referral to an academic dean. They include: copying fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else's work as your own; or copying verbatim from any source. See NYU CAS policy on Academic Integrity: <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity>.
- **Late Papers/Extensions**: Out of fairness to other students, extensions can only be given in exceptional circumstances AND if requested at least a week in advance. Without extension or past the extended deadline, late papers will lose 10 grade points (/100) per day.

Readings

In addition to mandatory weekly readings, the following book is **required** for the class. It is available at **NYU's bookstore and online through NYU libraries**: Lori Gruen, *Ethics and Animals*, Cambridge, 2009

Useful resources:

- Susan Armstrong & Richard G. Botzler (eds.), *The Animal Ethics Reader*, 2d edition, Routledge, 2008
- Tom L. Beauchamp & R. G. Frey (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*, Oxford, 2011
- Marc Bekoff (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare*, 2 vol., Greenwood, 2009
- Margo DeMello, *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies*, Columbia, 2012
- Sue Donaldson & Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights*, Oxford, 2011
- Peter Singer and Jim Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat*, Rodale, 2006
- Cass. Sunstein & Martha Nussbaum (eds.), *Animal Rights: Current Debates & New Directions*, Oxford, 2004

Schedule

Aside from Gruen's chapters, all texts can be accessed on NYU Classes in the Resources. Titles refer to selections as available in the folder unless a page range is specified. Optional readings are also available.

1. Introduction / history of a question

- Descartes, letters (89-91, 215-216); *Discourse on the Method*, part V (22-23)
- Darwin, excerpts from *The Descent of Man*
- Robert Lurz, "The philosophy of animal minds: an introduction"

2. The moral standing of animals and speciesism

- Gruen, chapter 1, p. 1-33 and chapter 2, p. 44-75
- Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*
- Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, Ch. 1

3. Against the moral standing of animals

- R.G. Frey, "Rights, interests, desires, and beliefs"
- Carl Cohen, "The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research"
- J. B. Callicott, "Animal liberation: a triangular affair"

4. Utilitarianism

- Peter Singer, "Taking Lives: Animals"
- R.M. Hare, "Why I am only a Demi-Vegetarian"

5. Rights

- Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (2004 preface)
- Gary Francione, "Animals—Property or Persons?"
- Steven Wise, "The capacity of nonhuman animals for legal personhood and legal rights"

6. Contractualism

- Peter Carruthers, "Against the moral standing of animals"
- Mark Rowlands, "Contractarianism and Animals"

7. Animals as Food (I)

- Lori Gruen, chapter 3
- Jonathan Safran Foer, *Eating Animals* (selections)
- Timothy Pachirat, "Politics of Sight"

8. Animals as Food (II)

- Michael Pollan, "The ethics of eating animals"
- James McWilliams, "The omnivore's contradiction"
- Hal Herzog, "What's the difference..."

9. Relations and context (I)

- Cora Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People"
- Marti Kheel, "Vegetarianism and Ecofeminism"

10. Relations and context (II)

- Donaldson & Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, chapter 3
- C. Palmer, "The moral significance of the distinction between domesticated and wild animals"

11. Animal Experimentation

- Gruen, chapter 4
- Singer, *Animal Liberation*, Ch. 2
- Rowan, "Debating the value of animal research"

12. Domesticated Animals, Companions, Citizens

- Gary Varner, "Pets, Companion Animals, and Domesticated Partnerships"
- Donaldson & Kymlicka, *Zoopolis*, chapter 5
- Hal Herzog, "Biology, culture, ..."

13. Animals in Captivity, Animals in the Wild

- Lori Gruen, chapters 5 and 6
- Dale Jamieson, "Against Zoos"

14. Protecting/Defending Animals

- Gary Francione & Robert Garner, *The Animal Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation* (selections)
- Lori Gruen, chapter 7
- Martha Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion and Humanity': Justice for Nonhuman Animals"
- Wolfson & Sullivan, "Foxes in the henhouse"