



## **Animal Minds\***

### **ANST-UA 410 - Spring 2017**

How do animals experience the world, and how is their experience similar to and different from ours? We need to be able to answer this question for many practical and theoretical purposes, but there seem to be serious limits, both scientific and philosophical, to our ability to answer it. What is a mind? Which animals have minds? How can we learn about them? What kinds of emotions and thoughts do nonhuman animals have? Is language required for thought? Who is self-conscious? Can animals have culture and moral agency? The course is an introduction to the philosophy of animal minds, and also draws from natural and social sciences. Some materials and notions will be challenging, but the preamble to the course will make them accessible to all. The learning curve is steep and rewarding. There are no prerequisites in philosophy, psychology, biology or animal studies for this class.

**Time:** MW 12:30 - 1:45PM **Place:** 12 Waverly Pl., L-113

**Instructor:** Nicolas Delon

**Email:** [nd746@nyu.edu](mailto:nd746@nyu.edu)

**Office:** 285 Mercer, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, #1006

**Office hours:** book a slot here [goo.gl/0tI38I](http://goo.gl/0tI38I), or email to make an appointment

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\* **IMPORTANT:** this syllabus is subject to change without notice before the start semester. You will be notified of further updates during the semester. Please check for updated versions on NYU Classes.

## Readings

No book to purchase; readings will be posted on NYU Classes. These are useful resources you may pick as your main reference in addition to the required readings listed in the schedule.

- Bekoff, M. Allen, C., Burghardt, G. (eds), *The Cognitive Animal: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives on Animal Cognition*, 2002
- Andrews, K., *The Animal Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition*, 2014
- Frans de Waal's recent *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* (Norton 2016) is also a great, very accessible read. Strongly recommended.

## Grading

The course is meant to foster careful reading and analysis of both empirical and philosophical subjects, drawing from the resources, concepts and methods of many disciplines. 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. These skills can only be achieved with your collaboration, including active participation and timely submission of assignments. The grading criteria are: structure, organization and coherence; grasp and use of references and course materials; critical skills; clarity in writing.

- **Tests** (40%): 2 quizzes (multiple-choice questions) (20% total) and a take-home exam (short essay questions) (20%). Tests cover all course materials up until test day. No finals.
- **Collaborative project** (20%): group oral presentation and a personal 1,000 word description of your contribution. Projects will be assigned early in the semester. We will discuss the projects, requirements and presentations in class.

Small groups (3-4 max) will give a 15-20 minute presentation investigating and discussing (the accuracy, importance, and impact of) a recent debate or finding or aspect of animal cognition not covered in detail in class. Groups will meet mid-course in class and will present their project to the rest of the class; feedback is encouraged. Mid-course meeting(s) will not be graded but are mandatory. Criteria of assessment mirror those for papers with oral presentation substituted for writing. Creative, innovative, multimedia formats are encouraged.

- **Paper** (20%): one 2,000-word take-home paper on a topic of your choice, either not discussed in class or that you would like to explore further or from a different perspective.

A preliminary outline is due (**TBD**). Your grade will depend in part on your ability to incorporate feedback. I will gladly answer methodological questions (either briefly by email or more substantially during office hours). Students can choose their own topic but need to consult with me and have it approved early on, or they can choose one of the suggested prompts. All students will be required to peer-review two anonymous classmates' outlines online.

*Recommended:* Jim Pryor's guides to philosophical terms and methods, reading philosophy, and writing a philosophy paper, available here:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html>

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>  
<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Criteria of assessment:

Structure, organization, coherence (25%).

Grasp of references and course materials: how you locate and report theses, arguments and concepts used in the texts (25%).

Critical skills and originality: grasp of criticisms made by others and ability to formulate personal criticisms based on valid arguments and accurate facts (25%).

Writing: grammar, spelling, clarity, terminological accuracy (25%).

- **Responses (10%):** each student will closely analyze the readings scheduled for one class and post a 1-page outline/comment on NYU Classes at least 24h before class; other students are required to post brief responses online (not graded).
- **Attendance and participation (10%):** Missing more than one class without permission will negatively impact your grade (*email me in advance and bring a note to class*). You must arrive on time, consult with me promptly to make up for missed assignments, and you are solely responsible for catching up with missed materials and information. **Active participation** is critical (weekly discussion on course website and class participation). Class activities (debates, policy-making, advocacy, journalism simulations) will be organized. Students will be assessed according to their demonstrated capacity to engage with arguments, verify assertions, research facts, unpack implicit assumptions, and critically examine their own positions. Students must come prepared with their copies of the weekly readings and textbook, personal notes and questions.
- **Extra credit (details TBA)** – a 1,000 word book review of Peter Godfrey-Smith, *Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness*, OR Jonathan Balcombe, *What a Fish Knows*, OR Michael Tye, *Tense Been and Shell-Shocked Crabs: Are Animals Conscious?*

Grading scale: Your final letter grades will be computed according to the following scale. Grades that fall exactly on the upper threshold are awarded the higher grade:

94-100 A	73<77 C
90<94 A-	70<73 C-
87<90 B+	67<70 D+
83<87 B	63<67 D
80<83 B-	60<63 D-
77<80 C+	0 <60 F

## Policies

- **Laptops** use is tolerated *exclusively* for note taking. Please disable your internet connection during class time. 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 regarding attendance and assignments**, I am happy to assist you, but please let me know *in advance*.
- **Disability Disclosure Statement**

*Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at [212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980).*

*NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities*

*726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10003-6675*

*Telephone: [212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980) - Voice/TTY Fax: [212-995-4114](tel:212-995-4114) - Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>*

- **Plagiarism** and other forms of academic dishonesty will be checked for 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 are only granted in exceptional circumstances **and** if requested **at least a week in advance**. Otherwise late papers will lose 10 grade points (/100) per day.

## Provisional weekly schedule

PDFs in NYU Classes Resources or follow links

One lecture number normally corresponds to two weekly meetings

### 1. The problem of other minds (MW 1/23-25)

- “Animals think, therefore...” [see link on NYU classes]
- Lurz, introduction to *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*

### 2. Anthropomorphism, ethology (MW 1/30-2/1)

- Allen & Bekoff, *Species of Mind*, ch. 2
- Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, ch. 2
- Bekoff & Horowitz, “Naturalizing anthropomorphism”

### 3. Thinking: beliefs and reason (MW 2/6-8)

- Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, chapter 4
- Bermúdez, Preface to *Thinking Without Words*

### 4. Consciousness (MW 2/13-15) - QUIZ 1 (Wed)

- Nagel, “What is it like to be a bat?”
- Dennett, “Animal consciousness: What matters and why”

**2/20 no class (Presidents' Day)**

### 5. Feelings and Emotions (WM 2/22-27)

- Bekoff, “Animal emotions”
- Panksepp, “Do animals have affective lives?”
- LeDoux, “Feelings”

### 6. Reading minds (WM 3/1-6)

- Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, chapter 6
- Cheney & Seyfarth, [Baboon Metaphysics](#), ch. 8 (ch. 9 optional) [online NYU]

### 7. EXAM DUE; movie and discussion (W 3/8)

**3/13-19 Spring recess**

### 8. Communication (MW 3/20-22)

- Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, chapter 5
- Cheney & Seyfarth, [Baboon Metaphysics](#), ch. 10 (ch. 11 optional) [online NYU]

**9. Cats and dogs (M 3/27) - QUIZ 2 (Mon)**

- Hecht & Horowitz, "Introduction to dog behavior"
- Marshall-Pescini et al. "Social eavesdropping"

*W 3/39 class canceled*

**10. Aquatic minds (MW 4/3-5) – PAPER DUE (Mon)**

- Brown, "Fish intelligence, sentience and ethics"
- Magee & Elwood, "Shock avoidance..."
- Optional: Balcombe; Braithwaite; Foster Wallace; Sneddon

**11. Convergent evolution (MW 4/10-12)**

- Godfrey-Smith, "Cephalopods and the evolution of the mind"
- Marino, "Convergence of complex cognitive abilities..."

**12. Sociality, culture, morality (MW 4/17-19)**

- Whiten et al., "Cultures in chimpanzees"
- Andrews & Gruen, "Empathy in other apes"
- Pierce & Bekoff, "Wild Justice Redux"

**13. Group projects workshop (M 4/24)**

**14. Animal minds and ethics (WM 4/26-5/1)**

- Jamieson & Bekoff, "Ethics and the study of animal cognition"
- Jones, 'Science, sentience, animal welfare'

**15. Group presentations (WM 5/3-8)**