



Animal Minds and Ethics

Fall 2022

New College of Florida - CRN 85134 - PHIL 2475

Prof. Nicolas Delon

Tues & Thurs, 10:30-11:50, ACE 218

Contact: ndelon@ncf.edu

Office/drop-in hours (ACE 303): Thurs 1-3pm or ndelon.youcanbook.me/ (book appointment)

Course description

How do other animals experience the world? What is a mind, which animals have minds, and how can we learn about them? These questions are theoretically important but also guide our practical interactions with other animals. This course has two aims. First, it aims to provide an introduction to two philosophical fields: the philosophy of animal minds and animal ethics. We'll discuss the empirical and conceptual underpinnings and the implications of behavior, consciousness, anthropomorphism, well-being, agency, moral status, and rights. Second, the course will explore the relations between animal minds and behavior, animal welfare, and animal ethics, as well as the ethics of animal science and research. Your dog may feel anxiety and chimps have impressive tool-building skills, but what exactly follows from that? Learning about animals is fun, but what, if any, are the ethical boundaries we should follow in studying them?

Attributes and requirements fulfilled: CYC Breadth - Humanities, CYC Ethical Reasoning, CYC Inquiry & Analysis, CYC Information Literacy, Animal Wellbeing and Conservation, Environmental Studies, Health, Culture, and Societies, Humanities LAC, Humanities, Philosophy (Value Theory)

Learning outcomes: 1) overview of the basics of animal cognition and the philosophy of animal minds; 2) critical tools to address ethical arguments regarding our relationships to other animals; 3) understanding of the complex relations between animal cognition and ethics; 4) ability to speak and write clearly about these issues. Rigor, clarity, open-mindedness and critical self-reflection will be key. The course involves a mixture of short lectures, discussion, and group activities.

Readings

No required textbook. All readings will be available on Canvas. Do not hesitate to seek guidance before looking for further reading. **Recommended (at the library):**

- K. Andrews, *The Animal Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition* (Routledge, 2015)
- K. Andrews & J. Beck, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Animal Minds* (Routledge, 2017)
- L. Gruen, *Ethics and Animals* (Cambridge, 2011)

Course Evaluation

Please refer to Canvas for deadlines and announcements. You are expected to complete all assignments unless they are marked as optional. Most of the assignments should be submitted to Canvas. Don't wait until the last minute to submit in case you face technical issues, and always save and back up your drafts. Don't write in Canvas first; draft, save, and back up on your own device and ideally cloud-based storage, then copy to Canvas. Check your email daily and Canvas frequently. I will communicate with you via your New College Gmail account and Canvas announcements, so make sure it is up and running and that you receive notifications for new Canvas announcements.

For reading and writing purposes, Jim Pryor (NYU) offers valuable guidance on his website.

- Philosophical terms and methods (<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html>)
- Reading philosophy (<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html>)
- Writing a philosophy paper (<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>)

One of the goals of this class is to develop **Information literacy** about the study of animal cognition, comparative psychology, human-animal relationships, and their ethical implications. Information literacy is the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand.

Another goal is to learn about and cultivate **ethical reasoning**. Ethical reasoning concerns ethical concepts (good/bad, just/unjust, right/wrong, value, obligation) as they are deployed in theories, arguments, and choices. Ethical reasoning straddles theory and practice and helps students apply their intellectual skills to matters of moral significance and appreciate a plurality of values. The purpose of ethical reasoning is to develop an intellectual toolkit to think and reason about ethical issues in context and across contexts, to illuminate unquestioned practices from an ethical perspective. Rather than teaching how to act ethically, we aim to think about ethical issues (critically, considering various perspectives and arguments) and integrate abstract theories, case studies, and perhaps look at ways of living ethically.

Finally, this class will foster the skills of **inquiry and analysis**. *Inquiry* is a systematic process of exploring issues, objects or works through the collection and analysis of evidence that results in informed conclusions or judgments. *Analysis* is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.

You will develop these CYC skills through a series of readings, discussions, and assignments. Activities will include balanced, constructive class discussions, essay questions, reading responses, and essays.

Evaluation criteria: a balance of structure, rigor and clarity; a solid command of references and course-related materials; critical thinking; originality. Most specifically, and in relation to CYC skills:

- Clear writing and effective and competent oral communication
- Clearly laid out arguments and evidence
- A demonstrated effort to unpack and explicate assumptions
- The consideration of objections and of multiple theories and values
- The application of such theories and their implications to the case at hand
- Contributing respectfully and constructively to discussions and group meetings
- Timely completion of assigned tasks

Tests are graded on a numerical basis. Papers and presentations are graded on a qualitative (SAT) scale.

Assignments

3 short quizzes (multiple-choice questions) (5% each)

1 midterm (take-home, essay questions) (15%). (Cancelled due to Hurricane Ian)

Quizzes will help you assess your command of course materials (central concepts, theories, and facts), which are essential for doing well on other assignments and for applying the course materials to real-world problems. You will receive detailed instructions for the exam, which will test your reasoning and analytical skills rather than your command of content. You will be asked to apply ethical theories, arguments, and, if possible, facts, to a new case study (real or fictional) to illuminate the ethical issues at hand and offer possible approaches.

Tests cover all materials up to test day. SAT \geq 60% avg.

Commentaries (20%): There will be at least five commentaries, i.e. short assignments, to be submitted the evening before the class for which they are due. Missing two or more may be grounds for an unsatisfactory evaluation. Students are encouraged to adopt and defend positions at odds with their personal opinions. When disagreeing, they will specify which part of an argument they are objecting to.

Response papers (20%) Two 1,000-word essays (10 pts each), due one week after the date they are assigned. Points deductions for each day late. Each essay will be in response to a question designed to assess your critical understanding of the material and ability to apply concepts from the class to selected case studies.

Final Paper (30%): 2,000 words, due the Friday of the last week of classes. In your paper, you will identify a particular real-world issue and relate it to key concepts and debates covered in class. You may draw on your previous essays but you must find, read, and cite at least four scholarly academic articles, chapters and/or books not read in class to provide conceptual or empirical support for your analysis. All papers must include at least a thesis, a roadmap, separate sections, coherent arguments for their main thesis and at least one objection to it, a reply to the objection, and a bibliography. Essential midway checkpoints: 1) approval of topic (one paragraph); 2) detailed outline or first draft and peer-review (15 pts); 3) final draft (15 pts). My assessment will take account of all stages of the writing process. You are not required but very strongly encouraged to visit the WRC for assistance in the drafting process and to ask a librarian for help finding resources.

Participation

I will assess your demonstrated capacity to engage with arguments, verify assertions, research facts, unpack implicit assumptions, critically examine your positions, and work with the class with mutual respect, concern and dedication. Most importantly, we're all here to learn what can make our lives better, so be an active participant and help others achieve this goal. Missing classes mechanically affects your participation, and therefore your evaluation. That said, there may always be good reasons to miss a class, in which case your performance will not be negatively affected. It's understandable that some of you are shyer than others, and less willing to speak their mind in class. You should not. There is no such thing as a silly question (unless it's clearly answered in the syllabus), a view not worth sharing because it's not popular, or an authorized point of view that students should take. Please feel welcome to express yourself as long as you do so respectfully, in good faith, and following course policies.

Policies

Laptop use is strongly discouraged. Cell phones must be silenced and stowed away. Electronic devices cause serious distractions for yourself and others and are normally not needed for class meetings, except, again, if they are necessary for note taking. Handouts will be provided regularly, and slides made available after class. You will need a computer or smartphone for some class activities. I will notify you in advance in such cases.

Lateness/Extensions: Out of fairness to other students and out of concern for my schedule, plan ahead and advise early if you anticipate that you will be unable to complete an assignment in time. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances **and** if requested with a minimum of a week's notice. As a rule, do not

count on extensions as they will only be granted on a case-by-case basis. “Technical issues” will not normally be accepted as excuses (again, plan ahead).

Attendance is mandatory. Missing more than three classes without permission will normally result in an UNSAT and any unjustified absence will affect your evaluation. I will keep track of absences. Please email me **before missing class whenever possible (or ASAP after class)**. You are solely responsible for catching up with missed materials and pertinent information. Please seek help from me or your classmates and never hesitate to ask questions, consult resource centers (writing resource center, library, quantitative reasoning). Really, needing help is expected and there are no silly questions. Silly is not asking questions when you need.

Disability services and accommodation: I am committed to providing an inclusive and effective learning environment for all students regardless of ability status. I will do my best to provide alternatives for materials and tests when applicable. Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the office of Student Disability Services (SDS) to arrange appropriate accommodations (<https://www.ncf.edu/disability-services-ncf>, HCL3, (941) 487-4496, disabilityservices@ncf.edu). To ensure that I can work with Student Disability Services to provide the resources that you need, please alert me of your accommodation eligibility as early as possible and request testing accommodation in writing at least 10 days before scheduled date of the exam listed on the syllabus. If obtaining accommodations from the SDS is itself challenging for you, let me know so I can help you. To increase accessibility, especially in the event of students having to stay home for illness or COVID-19 symptoms, I will attempt to record class meetings (audio of lecture and discussion; video of whiteboard). I will maintain records for at least the entire academic year. I will not use the recordings for purposes not related to teaching. Students reserve the right to access the recordings.

Academic honesty: Students are expected to be familiar with the college's [academic dishonesty policy](#). Any violation of this policy, including plagiarism and cheating, may result in academic sanctions, up to and including, dismissal.

Religious observance: Please alert me as soon as possible if an assignment is due at a day or time when you are prohibited from participating by your religious beliefs. I will gladly accommodate any missed day for religious reasons.

Title IX: New College of Florida is committed to equal access to education pursuant to Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. The law protects all individuals on our campus from gender-based discrimination or exclusion or instances of sexual misconduct. All full-time faculty, full-time staff, and resident advisors are Responsible Employees required to report any known instances of sexual misconduct or gender discrimination to the Title IX Coordinator. Please contact our Title IX coordinator (titleix@ncf.edu) or visit the [website](#) for more information. Sexual assault awareness is important for our community to be vibrant and to have free exchange of ideas in a safe environment. The Victim Advocate number is (941) 504-8599; with 24-hour availability for assistance with crime, sexual assault, and partner violence. Sexual Assault does not discriminate between age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or race. It is important to have a clear understanding of what sexual assault is and is not, as well as the resources available for sexual assault prevention and survivor support. More information is at www.ncf.edu/sexual-assault-awareness.

Equity, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity: New College’s commitment to academic excellence can only be realized in a learning environment that is inclusive, characterized by openness to diverse perspectives, and marked by mutual respect. Anything short of this aspiration is inconsistent with our commitment. Equal access, and the opportunity to participate fully in all of our programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, political ideology, national origin, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, is essential to that commitment and will be the standard to which we expect all members of our learning community to adhere.

HB 233 (“Viewpoint Diversity” bill): Students may record classroom lectures without a requirement for prior notice and without the faculty member’s consent, with specific limitations on where and how those recordings

can be use. In particular, “a recorded lecture may not be published without the consent of the lecturer,” and it may be employed only “for a student’s own personal educational use”, “in connection with a complaint to the public institution of higher education where the recording was made”, and/or “as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding”. Recorded lectures used for other purposes may allow the faculty member to seek “damages plus court costs and reasonable attorney fees, with the total recovery not to exceed \$200,000.” A class lecture does not include student presentations, academic exercises involving student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), or private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the instructor during a class session.

Provisional Schedule

Week # Dates	Topics	Assignments	Readings
Unit 1: Historical Background			
1 Aug 30/ Sep 1	Introduction: Welcome to class!		Sorabji, Attitudes to animals Descartes, letters (189-91, 215-6); <i>Discourse on the Method</i> , part V (22-23)
	Animals in philosophy and science	Commentary #1: counterexamples to Descartes	Darwin, selections
2-3 Sep 6-15	The problem of other minds Evolution, comparative psychology, and ethology	Commentary #2: define cognition	Andrews, <i>The Animal Mind</i> , ch. 2 Andrews, <i>How to study animals minds</i> , ch. 1
	Other apes, fieldwork, and names	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 1 • Assignment of response paper 1 	Leakey’s angels (Goodall, Fossey, Galdikas) Selections, <i>The Great Ape Project</i>
Unit 2: animal minds			
4 Sept 20/22	Consciousness	Response paper 1 due	Nagel, What is it like to be a bat? Andrews, <i>How to study animal minds</i> , ch. 2 Tye, Do fish have feelings? Klein & Barron, Insects have the capacity for subjective experience
5 Sept 27/29	Memory, learning, mind reading		Andrews, Chimpanzee mind reading: don’t stop believing
	Communication and language		Cheney & Seyfarth, <i>Baboon metaphysics</i> , ch. 10-11
6 Oct 4/6	Agency, morality, culture	Quiz 2	Rowlands, The kindness of beasts Andrews & Monsó, Animal moral psychologies Fitzpatrick & Andrews, Animal culture and animal welfare

7 Oct 11/13	Animal welfare		Bruckner, Philosophy and animal welfare science Browning, The natural behavior debate
8 Oct 17-23	Fall break		
Unit 3: Ethics			
9 Oct 25	The ethics of animal studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commentary 	Jamieson & Bekoff, Ethics and the study of animal cognition Andrews & Monsó, Rats are us
9-10 Oct 27- Nov 1	The moral status of animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commentary: do you agree that speciesism is just a prejudice? 	Singer, All animals are equal Midgley, The mixed community Cohen, The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research
No class Thursday 11/3 (Advising day)			
11 Nov 8	Rights and personhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response paper 2 due 11/6 • Commentary 	Regan, The Case for Animal Rights Andrews et al., <i>Chimpanzee Rights</i> , ch. 1
11 Nov 10	Care and relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final paper topic due 	Diamond, Eating Meat and Eating People Gruen, Entangled empathy
12 Nov 15-17	Eating animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 3 	Singer, Taking Life: Animals Fischer, Arguments for consuming animal products Hare, Why I am only a Demi-Vegetarian OPT: Marino & Allen, The psychology of cows; Marino, Thinking chickens; Mendl et al., Pig cognition
13 Nov 22	Captivity and conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term paper draft due 	Jamieson, Against Zoos OPT: Gruen, chapters 5 and 6
14 Nov 29- Dec 1	Wild, domesticated, and liminal animals	Peer review due	Donaldson & Kymlicka, <i>Zoopolis</i> , ch. 3-5
15 Dec 6/8	Animals and the future	Final paper due Paper presentations	Sebo, Moral circle explosion