

## Ethics and Animals (Fall 2016)

### COURSE 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 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.

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### READINGS

Most course readings are available as PDFs on NYU Classes.

The following book is **required** for the class: Lori Gruen, *Ethics and Animals*, Cambridge, 2009  
You can find it **online through NYU’s Ebrary system**.

### 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 Donalson & 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

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Aside from the chapters from Gruen (2009), all required reading can be accessed on NYU Classes in the Resources.

Date	Topic	Readings
T 9/6	<b>Introduction / history of a question</b>	<p>Darwin, excerpts from <i>The Descent of Man</i></p> <p>Robert Lurz, “The philosophy of animal minds: an introduction” (pp. 1—11)</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i> Jim Pryor’s guides to philosophical terms and methods, reading philosophy, and writing a philosophy paper, available here: <a href="http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html">http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/vocab/index.html</a>,</p> <p><a href="http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html">http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/reading.html</a>,</p> <p><a href="http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html">http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html</a></p>
T 9/13	<b>Speciesism and the moral standing of animals</b>	<p>Gruen, chapter 1, pp. 1—25 and chapter 2, p. 44—59 (ffp), pp. 64—65</p> <p>Bentham, <a href="#">An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation</a> (footnote 122)</p> <p>Peter Singer, “All animals are equal”</p>
T 9/20	<b>Guest presentation: Rachel Atcheson on modern industrial animal agriculture</b>	<p>J. B. Callicott, “Animal liberation: a triangular affair”</p> <p>TBD</p>
T 9/27	<b>Utilitarianism</b>	<p>Gruen, ch. 1, pp. 29—33</p> <p>Rachels, “The Utilitarian Approach”</p> <p>R.M. Hare, “Why I am only a Demi-Vegetarian” (up to section 6 on p. 241)</p>
T 10/4	<b>Rights</b>	<p>Tom Regan, <i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> (2004 preface)</p> <p>R.G. Frey, “Rights, interests, desires, and beliefs”</p> <p>Carl Cohen, “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research”</p>

		Animals”
		Mark Rowlands, “Contractarianism and Animals”
<b>T 10/18</b>	<b>Animals as Food (I) First Exam</b>	Lori Gruen, chapter 3 Jonathan Safran Foer, <i>Eating Animals</i> (selection)  Michael Pollan, “The ethics of eating animals”  In Class: <a href="#">Joel Salatin's take on farming</a>
<b>T 10/25</b>	<b>Animals as Food (II)</b>	James McWilliams, “The omnivore’s contradiction”  Hal Herzog, “What’s the difference...”
<b>T 11/1</b>	<b>Animals as property</b>	McMahan, “Eating Animals the Nice Way” Gary Francione, “Animals—Property or Persons?”  Jason Wyckoff, “Toward justice for animals”  Steven Wise, “The capacity of nonhuman animals for legal personhood and legal rights”
<b>T 11/8</b>	<b>Relations and context</b>	Gruen, ch. 2, pp. 55—72  Anderson, E. 2004. “Animal Rights and the Values of Nonhuman Life” In Sunstein and Nussbaum (eds.). <i>Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions</i> . Oxford.
<b>T 11/15</b>	<b>Animal Experimentation</b>	Marti Kheel, “Vegetarianism and Ecofeminism” Gruen, chapter 4  Singer, <i>Animal Liberation</i> , Ch. 2
<b>T 11/22</b>	<b>Domesticated Animals, Companions, Citizens  Second Exam</b>	Rowan, “Debating the value of animal research” C. Palmer, “The moral significance of the distinction between domesticated and wild animals”  <a href="#">The Guardian: Man v. Rat: Could the Long War Soon be Over?</a>  Gary Varner, “Pets, Companion Animals, and Domesticated Partnerships”  Hal Herzog, “Biology, culture, ...”

**Captivity, Animals  
in the Wild**

Jamieson, D. 2003. "Against Zoos"

Lori Guren, chapter 6, pp. 179—184

Jeff McMahan, [The Meat Eaters-NYT  
Opinionator](#)

**T 12/6**

**The Value of  
Species, How  
Should We  
Protect/Defend  
Animals**

Gruen, ch 6, pp. 163—169

Russow, L. 1981. "Why Do Species Matter?"  
*Environmental Ethics*, 3, 101--112.

[Biotech Firm 3-D Prints Rhino Horn](#)

Final Day of Classes

Gary Francione & Robert Garner, *The Animal  
Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation* (selections)

**Paper Due**

Lori Gruen, chapter 7

**T 12/13**

**No class:** Classes  
meet according to a  
Monday schedule