

ANIMAL ETHICS

PROFESSOR: Dr. Blake Hereth

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OFFICE: Dugan 200L

CLASS MEETINGS: MWF 1-2pm

STUDENT HOURS: MWF 10-11am and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Most people think animals matter in the moral scheme of things. They think it's wrong, for example, to kick a dog for fun. But beyond that, disagreements abound. How *much* do animals matter, and *why* do they matter at all? Do animals matter enough that it's wrong to hunt, kill, eat, or keep them captive? (And if so, are pets our 'captives'?) Should animals be granted political rights, such as the right to democratic representation? And what do world religions like Islam and Buddhism tell us about the ethical place and use of animals? This course explores these and related questions about animal ethics.

COURSE GOALS:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Describe major theories of animal status including deontological and Kantian theories, capabilities theories, and utilitarian theories
- Speak intelligently about the major issues, figures, and arguments in animal ethics
- Understand the role that interactive empathy plays in human moral deliberations
- Develop critical reading and writing skills through academic journaling and the two-stage construction of an original argumentative paper

ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- **Social Responsibility and Ethics (SRE):** This course meets the Core Curriculum Social Responsibility and Ethics Essential Learning Outcome; it provides students the opportunity to reason about right and wrong conduct, to assess moral beliefs and practices, and to apply that knowledge to make a positive difference in the community and the world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Participation (15%):** All students are expected to read the material thoroughly, show up to class, and actively discuss the material.
- **Empathy Project (20%):** Students will be divided into small groups to develop their Empathy Project. The idea for the project is to experiment with our capacity for empathy via the following method: Each group will pick an animal they find ugly or scary (but not *too* scary!) and then interact extensively with that animal in a variety of

- settings (e.g., on a public walk, during feeding time, while the animal sleeps, etc.). Afterwards, students will evaluate whether, how, and why their empathy for their chosen animal changed over time.
- **Korsgaard Journal (20%)**: Each student will keep a journal on Christine Korsgaard's *Fellow Creatures*. For each chapter, students will write a journal entry of 250 words that (1) summarizes the chapter's contents and (2) analyzes a key argument or claim made in that chapter. The journal is due at the end of Week 10.
 - **Draft Paper (15%)**: Each student should write a 3,000-word draft paper (exclusive of notes and bibliography) where they make an original, creative argument on a relevant course topic. (See the Blackboard rubric for further details.) The Draft Paper is due midway through the course.
 - **Final Paper (30%)**: Each student should write a 4,000-word paper (exclusive of notes and bibliography) in which they revise their Draft Paper in light of my feedback. The idea is to polish, and add to, the Draft Paper. The Final Paper is due during our scheduled Final Exam time.

GRADING SCALE:

I use a standard grading scale for this course:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89.99%
- C = 70-79.99%
- D = 60-69.99%
- F = 59.99 or below

TEXTBOOK(S):

Required:

- Lori Gruen, *Ethics and Animal: An Introduction* (Second Edition: Cambridge University Press, 2021)
- Christine M. Korsgaard, *Fellow Creatures: Our Obligations to the Other Animals* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2018)

READING SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1: DO ANIMALS MATTER?

Readings:

- Syllabus
- Sahar Akhtar, "Animal Pain and Welfare: Can Pain Sometimes Be Worse for Them Than for Us?" (Blackboard)
- Carol J. Adams, "Caring About Suffering: A Feminist Exploration" (Blackboard)
- Gruen, Chapter 1

WEEK 2: THEORIES OF ANIMAL STATUS

Readings:

- Capabilities Theory: Martha Nussbaum, "The Capabilities Approach and Animal Entitlements" (Blackboard)
- Rights Theory: Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights" (Blackboard)

- Utilitarian Theory: Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal” (Blackboard)

WEEK 3: THEORIES OF ANIMAL STATUS (CONT.)

Readings:

- Care Theory: Josephine Donovan, “Attention to Suffering: Sympathy as a Basis for Ethical Treatment of Animals” (Blackboard)
- Contractarian/Contractualist Theory: Mark Rowlands, “Contractarianism and Animal Rights” (Blackboard)
- Virtue Theory: Rosalind Hursthouse, “Virtue Ethics and and Treatment of Animals” (Blackboard)
- Kantian Theory: Korsgaard, Chapters 2 & 8

WEEK 4: DO ANIMALS MATTER LESS?

Readings:

- Scott Hill & Michael Bertrand, “Why Do We Believe Humans Matter More Than Other Animals?” (Blackboard)
- Deborah Slicer, “Your Daughter or Your Dog? A Feminist Assessment of the Animal Research Issue” (Blackboard)
- Gruen, Chapter 2
- Korsgaard, Chapters 2-4

WEEK 5: EATING ANIMALS

Readings:

- Alastair Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, and People: Eating Meat and Marginal Cases” (Blackboard)
- Timothy Hsiao, “In Defense of Eating Meat” (Blackboard)
- Gruen, Chapter 3
- Korsgaard, Chapter 5

WEEK 6: FAUX MEAT

Readings:

- Bob Fischer & Burkay Ozturk, “Facsimiles of Flesh” (Blackboard)
- G. Owen Schaefer & Julian Savulescu, “The Ethics of Producing In Vitro Meat” (Blackboard)
- Josh Milburn, “Chewing Over In Vitro Meat: Animal Ethics, Cannibalism, and Social Progress” (Blackboard)

WEEK 7: ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION

Readings:

- Tom Regan, “Empty Cages: Animal Rights and Vivisection” (Blackboard)
- Julia Tanner, “Rowlands, Rawlsian Justice, and Animal Experimentation” (Blackboard)
- Gruen, Chapter 4

WEEK 8: ZOOS & CAPTIVITY

Readings:

- Dale Jamieson, “Against Zoos” (Blackboard)
- Lisa Rivera, “Coercion and Captivity” (Blackboard)
- Hilary Bok, “Keeping Pets” (Blackboard)
- Gruen, Chapter 5

WEEK 9: WILD ANIMALS

Readings:

- Beka Jalagania, “Wild Animals and Duties of Assistance” (Blackboard)
- Rainer Ebert & Tibor R. Machan, “Innocent Threats and the Moral Problem of Carnivorous Animals” (Blackboard)
- Gruen, Chapter 6
- Korsgaard, Chapter 11

WEEK 10: POLITICAL RIGHTS

Readings:

- Sue Donaldson & Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights*, Chapter 3 (Blackboard)
- Alasdair Cochrane, *Should Animals Have Political Rights?*, Chapter 6 (Blackboard)
- Linda Barclay, “Cognitive Impairment and the Right to Vote: A Strategic Approach” (Blackboard)

WEEK 11: ACTIVISM

Readings:

- Blake Hereth, “Animal Rights Pacifism” (Blackboard)
- Bob Fischer & Alyse Spiehler, “Animal Agriculture, Wet Markets, and COVID-19: A Case Study in Indirect Activism” (Blackboard)
- Gruen, Chapter 7
- Korsgaard, Chapter 12

WEEK 12: ANIMALS & RELIGION

Readings:

- Islam: Brethren of Purity, selections from *The Case of the Animals Versus Man Before the King of the Finn* (Blackboard)
- Buddhism: Bronwyn Finnigan, “Buddhism and Animal Ethics” (Blackboard)
- Christianity/Judaism: Faith Glavey Pawl, “Exploring Theological Zoology: Might Non-Human Animals Be Spiritual (but Not Religious)?” (Blackboard)

WEEK 13: ANIMAL MORALITY

Readings:

- Jeff Sebo, “Agency and Moral Status” (Blackboard)
- Dorna Behdadi, “A Practice-Focused Case for Animal Moral Agency” (Blackboard)
- Susana Monsó, Judith Benz-Schwarzburg, & Annika Bremhorst, “Animal Morality: What It Means and Why It Matters” (Blackboard)

WEEK 14: FINALS WEEK