Description

This course will examine the morality of our treatment of nonhuman animals. We will start with a survey of moral theory. Do animals have moral status? Do we have a right to harm or kill some animals in order to benefit or save others? We will consider these questions from a variety of moral perspectives, including utilitarianism, rights theory, contractualism, feminism, and contextualism. We will then apply these ideas to different kinds of animal use. For example, what is the morality of our treatment of animals in food, research, entertainment, captivity, and the wild? Finally, we will explore the connections between human rights and animal rights; the legal, economic, and psychological barriers in the way of reform; and the ethics of activism and advocacy.

General Information

- Time: T 5:00–7:30
- Place: GCASL 279
- Instructor: Jeff Sebo
- Email: jeffsebo@gmail.com
- Office: 285 Mercer, #902
- Office hours: T 1:00–2:00 or by appointment
- Teaching Assistant: Ben Phillips
- Email: ben.s.phillips@gmail.com
- Office: 285 Mercer, 10th floor conference room
- Office hours: Th 12:30–1:30 or by appointment
- Course website: jeffsebo.net/teaching/
Readings

The required books for this class are:

- Lori Gruen, *Ethics and Animals*
- Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*
- Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*

You can find these books at Bluestockings (172 Allen Street between Stanton and Rivington) as well as online. The following books will also be useful, but are not required:

- Tom Beauchamp and R. G. Frey, *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*
- Rod Preece and Lorna Chamberlain, *Animal Welfare and Human Values*
- Cass Sunstein and Martha Nussbaum, *Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions*

All readings not from the required books will be posted on blackboard.

Grading

Your grades will be determined as follows:

- **Exams** (75%): Each student will complete three take-home exams explaining and evaluating the views and arguments discussed in lecture. The first exam will be due on 10/6, the second will be due on 11/10, and the third will be due on 12/15. Each exam will be about 8 pages long and will count for 25% of your final grade.

- **Daily Questions** (15%): At least one hour prior to each lecture, each student will send Jeff and Ben an email with (1) a one-sentence description of one of the main claims from that day’s reading and (2) a question or comment about this claim. These will be graded Pass/Fail.

- **Attendance and Participation** (10%): We expect regular attendance and thoughtful participation from all students. Our assessment of the quality of your performance on these items will account for 10% of your grade.

Policies

- Laptops/Cell Phones: Laptops are allowed, but only for taking notes. Cell phones must be on silent.

- Special Accommodations: If you need special accommodations, please let me know so that I can properly assist you.

- Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the NYU College of Arts and Science policy on Academic Integrity for more information.

- Late Papers/Extensions/Incompletes: Late papers will be accepted, but will lose 1/3 letter grade for each day late. Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to request either, please do it well before the due date.
Schedule

• 9/3 - Introduction
  David DeGrazia, “What animals are like”
  David DeGrazia, “The harms of suffering, confinement, and death”

• 9/10 - Utilitarianism
  Jeremy Bentham, “Of the principle of utility”
  Peter Singer, “All animals are equal,” “Killing humans and killing animals”

• 9/17 - Rights Theory
  Immanuel Kant, “Groundwork for the metaphysics of morals”
  Christine Korsgaard, “Fellow creatures”; Tom Regan, “Human and animal rights”

• 9/24 - Contractualism
  T.M. Scanlon, “The structure of contractualism”
  Peter Carruthers, “Contractualism and animals”

• 10/1 - Contextualism
  Josephine Donovan, “Attention to suffering: sympathy as a basis for ethical treatment of animals”
  Clare Palmer, “The moral significance of the distinction between domesticated and wild animals”

• 10/8 - Animals as Property
  Peter Singer, “Down on the factory farm”
  David Wolfson and Mariann Sullivan, “Foxes in the hen house: animals, agribusiness, and the law”

• 10/22 - Animals as Food
  Lori Gruen, “Eating animals”
  Tom Regan, “Why vegetarianism is obligatory”; N.Y. Times Finalists, “In defense of eating meat”

• 10/29 - Animals in Research
  Lori Gruen, “Experimenting on animals”
  Tom Regan, “Against the use of animals in science”; Baruch Brody, “Defending animal research”

• 11/5 - Animals in Entertainment
  Rod Preece and Lorna Chamberlain, “Animals in entertainment”

• 11/12 - Pets and Companion Animals
  David DeGrazia, “The ethics of confining animals: from farms to zoos to human homes”
  Gary Francione, “Pets”; Rod Preece and Lorna Chamberlain, “Companion animals”

• 11/19 - Wild and Liminal Animals
  Lori Gruen, “Animals in the wild”
  Gary Varner, “Environmental ethics, hunting, and the place of animals”

• 11/26 - Animal Rights and Human Rights
  Carol Adams, “The sexual politics of meat,” “Masked violence, muted voices”
  Marjorie Spiegel, “The dreaded comparison”; Karen Davis, “Only one holocaust?”

• 12/3 - Oppression and Repression
  Bob Torres, “Property, violence, and the roots of oppression”
  Zipporah Weisberg, “Animal repression”

• 12/10 - Activism and Advocacy
  Lori Gruen, “Animal protection”
  Norm Phelps, “Direct action,” “Things fall apart,” “But the center takes hold”