

Animal Studies M.A. Program  
Department of Environmental Studies  
Graduate School of Arts & Science  
New York University

**Student Handbook**  
*Last Revised January 2023*

**1. Introduction**

This handbook is designed to provide Animal Studies MA Students with information about degree requirements and departmental policies and procedures. Please note that this handbook is subject to change, and that GSAS and University rules and regulations supersede this handbook.

**2. Contact Information**

The Animal Studies MA Program is located on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor at 285 Mercer Street.

*MA Program Director*

Jeff Sebo  
(212) 998-3544  
jeffsebo@nyu.edu  
285 Mercer Street 1004

*Academic Administrator*

Alex Bollington  
(212) 992-6561  
arb653@nyu.edu  
285 Mercer Street 811

**3. Description**

Animal Studies is a rapidly developing interdisciplinary field that draws from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences to examine what nonhuman animals are like, how human and nonhuman animals relate to each other, and the aesthetic, moral, social, political, economic, and ecological significance of these relations.

NYU Animal Studies, active since 2010 and housed in the Department of Environmental Studies, is a central gathering place for people interested in these issues. Our students work with leading scholars in Animal Studies, Environmental Studies, and related fields; participate in intensive seminars, workshops, and conferences; and engage in a wide range of theoretical, practical, and creative pursuits upon graduation.

The NYU Animal Studies MA Program empowers students to 1) examine the key debates that define the field of Animal Studies, 2) perform original research that contributes to these debates, and 3) understand the connections across animal issues, environmental issues, and social issues.

This program is designed for anyone interested in a rigorous, systematic, multi-disciplinary education about non-human animals. In addition, undergraduate students who are already enrolled at NYU can pursue a discounted graduate education through an NYU BA/MA Program.

## 4. Requirements

The NYU Animal Studies MA Program requires 32 points of coursework and a thesis project. This program is interdisciplinary, so students can work in a wide range of fields and media.

### *Course Requirements*

Students complete 3 required courses (12 points total) as well as 20 elective points (so, 5 elective courses if 4 points each, or more courses if fewer points each).

The required courses are:

- Animals, Culture, and Society (ANST-GA 1000)
- Animals, Philosophy, and Science (ANST-GA 2000)
- Animal Studies Capstone Seminar (ANST-GA 3000)

The electives will vary based on instructor and student interest. In addition to taking electives within our program, students can take up to 12 graduate-level points outside of our program with permission from the MA Program Director and, where necessary, the course instructor.

All graduate seminars in the Animal Studies MA Program are 4 points. We do our best to schedule courses to meet once per week in the evening to accommodate working students. Please note that graduate seminars outside of our program might have different point values and schedules.

### *Project Requirements*

Students must complete an MA project as part of the Animal Studies MA Program. This project can be a literature review, research paper, policy proposal, or artistic project that explores central themes in Animal Studies in a rigorous way.

The MA project should demonstrate that a student has a sufficient command of the information and arguments pertaining to the chosen topic, as well as the ability to undertake, complete, and present independent work in a form suitable to the rules and conventions of their chosen project.

The MA project can overlap with seminar work that the student completes before or during work on the project. If the student takes this approach, then the MA project must be sufficiently distinct and expanded, in terms of scope and depth, from the seminar work.

A literature review in any field should be ~10,000 words and should substantively engage with at least 20 primary texts. A research paper in the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences should be the standard length and format for work in that field, as determined by the project advisor.

If a student completes a project that is *not* a literature review or research paper, then the student should also complete a short supplementary essay (~3,000 words) that discusses the background research that they did for the project, with appropriate citations.

Each student should be the sole creator of their MA project. The project can be part of broader collaborative work, and the student can consult with others while completing it, but the student should be solely responsible for the material submitted as the MA project.

Each student will have two official faculty advisors as they work on their project: the project advisor, who serves as the primary advisor, and the Capstone instructor, who serves as the secondary advisor. Students are very welcome to consult with other faculty members as well.

The required Capstone Seminar is a professional development seminar that provides students with the necessary support and structure to work on their MA projects. Students do not need to complete their MA project during the Capstone Seminar, but they are expected to complete a draft of at least part of the project, equivalent to at least ~5,000 words, as their final assignment.

Each MA project will also be supervised by a relevant faculty member. Students should secure a project advisor either before or, typically, during the Capstone Seminar. This process involves consulting with potential advisors and then asking them, in order of preference, to play this role. Students should then develop their project in consultation with their project advisor.

Students are welcome to approach any faculty member in the Department of Environmental Studies about the possibility of serving as their project advisor. With the approval of the MA Director, students may also approach professors outside of this Department, as long as these professors are NYU faculty members with expertise that may exceed that of Department members.

When a student asks a faculty member to serve as their project advisor and the faculty member agrees, the student must submit a form to the MA Director with information about their project advisor, project idea, project goals, and expected timeline for completing the project. If, then, any of these elements changes substantially, the student must update and resubmit this form.

The final MA project must be approved by the project advisor. If the first submission of the project does not pass, the student may revise and resubmit the following semester. If the second submission of the project does not pass, the student may revise and resubmit one more time. Failure to pass on the third submission of the project may result in termination from the program.

Final project submission should be no later than May 10 for spring graduation, September 10 for summer graduation, and January 10 for fall graduation. In some cases, this deadline may also need to be earlier, depending on project advisor availability. Students should arrange a final project submission deadline with their project advisor at least two months in advance.

## **5. Advisement and Registration**

### *Academic Advisement*

The Department of Environmental Studies mandates that every MA student have an academic advisor. The MA Program Director will assign an advisor prior to the start of the MA program. Each student should meet with their academic advisor every semester to discuss and agree on a course of study.

Note that the academic advisor and the project advisor can be, and often will be, different faculty members. The academic advisor provides general academic support during the MA, and the project advisor supervises the MA project.

### *Course Registration*

Students must consult with their academic advisor prior to registering for courses each semester. The academic advisor will then clear students to enroll for courses within our program and/or help students seek permission to enroll in courses outside of our program.

Registration for courses is done via Albert. Students should consult the University Registrar's "Registration Calendar" for registration dates. Students cannot register for more than 12 points via Albert. Registration for more than 12 points is done through the Academic Administrator.

Students are responsible for knowing the information on the University Registrar's "Registration Calendar", including deadlines for adding, dropping, and withdrawing from courses.

### *Independent Study*

Students may register for an Independent Study course with the permission of the MA Program Director. An independent study can be 1, 2, 3, or 4 points. Before registering for the course, the student must have a faculty sponsor and an agreed-upon description of the research that will be done in the course and the work that will be submitted for evaluation. The student should then submit the "Application for Independent Study" form to the Academic Administrator.

### *Internship*

Students may register for an Internship course with the permission of the MA Program Director. An internship can be 2 or 4 points. Before registering for the course, the student must have an internship site and learning contract that they create in consultation with the internship site and MA Program Director. The student should then submit the "Application for Independent Study" form to the Academic Administrator.

### *Courses in Other Departments*

As noted above, MA students may take up to 12 graduate-level points outside of the Animal Studies MA Program with permission from the MA Program Director and, where necessary, the course instructor. Please note that some NYU schools follow different registration procedures and calendars than GSAS. Courses outside of our program may also have varying point values.

### *Ph.D. Courses*

MA students may register for courses listed as "PhD/MA" on the MA course schedule with permission from the Animal Studies MA Program Director. They may also register for courses listed as "PhD/MA with permission" with permission from the Animal Studies MA Program Director and course instructor. Students should consult with their academic advisor to make sure that they have the appropriate background for the course.

### *Additional Points*

Students may not exceed the 32 required points without the permission of the MA Program Director.

### *Withdrawal from a Course*

Withdrawal from a course must be done in the first 2 weeks of the semester to avoid having a W on their record. Students may also withdraw in weeks 3 through 9, but will then have a W on their record. Students may not withdraw after week 9. Any tuition refund will be in accordance with the refund schedule published by the Bursar's Office.

### *Retaking Courses*

A student may not retake a course in which they received a grade other than F.

## **6. Enrollment**

MA students must maintain continuous enrollment in the program from matriculation until graduation. Students must enroll in the program each fall and spring until the degree is granted.

### *Maintenance of Matriculation*

Students who have completed their MA coursework must maintain continuous enrollment until receiving their degree. MA students maintain matriculation by registering for MAINT-GA 4747.001. Payment of matriculation fees entitles students to consult with faculty members, participate in University activities, and use the libraries and other University facilities. Students must also maintain matriculation through the semester in which they receive the degree.

A student who has not attempted enough points for the degree may enroll in Maintenance of Matriculation only with approval of the MA Program Director and the Office of Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs. These semesters count toward the time to degree limit.

### *Readmission*

Any student who has not enrolled for two or more consecutive semesters, excluding summer, is considered to have withdrawn from the University and must apply for readmission to GSAS. Requests for readmission are submitted through the MA Program Director and must be approved by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. All lapsed semesters count towards the 5-year time to degree limit.

### *Full-Time Equivalency*

Full-time students must be enrolled in at least 12 points of coursework in any fall or spring semester. Full-time students registering for less than 12 points in a given semester may request full-time equivalency with the permission of the MA Program Director. To qualify for full-time equivalency, a student must be working on research, an internship, and/or coursework totaling 40 hours per week for the duration of the fall or spring semester or entirety of the summer.

Full-time students will be granted full-time equivalency in their final semester if they need less than 12 points to complete the requirements of the program. International students on an F-1 visa must be enrolled full-time or have full-time equivalency.

Full-time equivalency must be entered no later than the end of the third week of the semester. The maximum time allowed for full-time status and equivalence for Master's students is 3 years.

Part-time students do not need full-time equivalency.

### *Leave of Absence*

A student in good standing who is obliged to withdraw temporarily for national service, serious illness, compelling personal reasons, such as a serious family or legal crisis, or parental leave related to childbirth and newborn care may request a leave of absence. (Please note that we allow for parental accommodation for students as well.)

A student who wishes to obtain a leave of absence must submit a written request explaining the circumstances of their request to the MA Program Director. The student should include supporting documentation when applicable such as a doctor's note or evidence of military service. If the Department approves the request, the Department will send a Leave of Absence Request Form along with supporting documents to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. The student must also submit a leave of absence request through Albert. The final decision is made by GSAS. The student should not withdraw from the term on Albert until instructed to do so by the Department. International students must contact the Office of Global Services upon receiving a leave of absence.

A leave of absence can be approved for up to 1 year, except in cases of compulsive military service, in which case the leave would be for the duration of the service. A leave of absence does not count toward time to degree. A student on an official leave of absence does not enroll, does not accrue fees, is not eligible for full- or half-time equivalency, may not use University resources, and may not enroll in any other University for the purpose of transferring points towards their NYU degree.

### *Conferral of Degrees*

MA degrees are conferred in September (summer term), January (fall term), and May (spring term) of each year. GSAS convocation and University commencement ceremonies take place in May. Please note that participating in commencement ceremonies is not the same as earning a degree.

## **7. Transfer Points**

Admitted students can transfer up to 9 graduate level points from an accredited institution. Points are transferred point for point (e.g., a 3-point course at another institution is only granted 3 points at NYU). Eligible courses must have a grade of B or better, must be relevant to Animal Studies, and must not have counted towards a degree that has already been awarded (whether an undergraduate or graduate degree). Transferred courses cannot be substituted for required courses. Transfer of points for courses older than ten years is not allowed.

Requests to transfer points earned prior to matriculation in the MA program must be made within the first year of enrollment. All requests must be accompanied by an official transcript, and translation if necessary, from the institution where the points were earned. If the request is for graduate points earned while the student was enrolled in an undergraduate program, the transcript must explicitly state that the points were not used toward the undergraduate degree or be accompanied by a letter from the undergraduate institution stating that the points were not used toward the undergraduate degree.

International transfer points are awarded in accordance with the current guidelines regarding equivalency as determined by Graduate Enrollment Services.

Students may transfer points for courses taken at another institution while matriculated at NYU as long as the MA Program Director gives written approval for these courses to be transferred before the student enrolls in those courses. Such approval is given only in extenuating circumstances.

Students enrolled in the BA/MA program and internal transfer students may exceed the 9-point limit with the approval of the MA Program Director and within the guidelines stated above. Please note that points earned during the BA part of a BA/MA are not considered transfer points.

The NYU Office of the Registrar has final authority to approve point transfers. The MA Program Director approves the transfer only in terms of the content matter or the course. The Department will notify the student of the outcome of the request.

## **8. Plagiarism and Misconduct**

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are unacceptable and will be addressed accordingly. Plagiarism involves taking credit for someone else's work, intentionally or otherwise. Among other things, plagiarism includes taking a phrase, sentence, or passage from another writer's work without using quotation marks, as well as taking another's ideas without referencing the source of the idea.

In cases of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct, the disciplinary process is initiated at the Departmental level. If a student engages in any form of academic misconduct, the faculty member with knowledge of the facts shall file a complaint with the MA Program Director and the Department Chair. The MA Program Director will provide notice of the filing of the complaint to the student within two working days of receipt of the complaint. The MA Program Director will meet with the student, describe the complaint, and offer the student an opportunity to respond. The MA Program Director will inform the student of their right to accept or reject a Departmental resolution and, after hearing all relevant information, will describe the terms upon which the Department is willing to resolve the matter. If the student agrees in writing to the terms of the Departmental resolution, then a binding consensual resolution shall exist between GSAS and the student. Otherwise, the Department will forward the complaint to the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs for referral to the FAS Committee on Discipline.

Please refer to the GSAS Policies and Procedures Manual for further information.

*Other Forms of Misconduct*

In cases of other forms of misconduct, as discussed in the GSAS Policies and Procedures Manual, the Department will file a complaint with the GSAS Assistant Director of Student Affairs.

### *Grievance Procedure*

Students who wish to file a grievance may do so in writing with the MA Program Director. If the grievance is not resolved, the matter will be referred in writing to the Department Chair. Grievances not resolved at the Departmental level are adjudicated either within GSAS or at the University level. Please refer to the GSAS Policies and Procedures Manual for grievance rules.

## **9. Standards of Academic Standing**

### *In Good Standing*

To remain in good standing, students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in course work for the MA degree and maintain a completion rate of 2/3 of points attempted at NYU. Courses with grades of I, N, W, and F are not considered successfully completed.

### *Time to Degree*

GSAS mandates specific time limits in which students must complete their degrees. An MA degree must be completed within 5 calendar years of the date of first enrollment in the MA program.

Full-time students should complete 6-12 points per semester, and part-time students should complete 1-12 points per semester. Students can also complete up to 16 points in a given semester with permission from the MA Program Director.

Please note that international students are required to maintain full-time status and can apply for part-time status only in exceptional situations, as outlined at this website:

<http://www.nyu.edu/students/student-information-and-resources/student-visa-and-immigration/current-students/visa-and-academic-changes/register-part-time.html>

We expect that a typical full-time student will complete the program within about 3 semesters, and that a typical part-time student will complete the program within about 6 semesters, but this expectation is not a requirement.

### *Academic Probation*

Students who have not maintained a grade point average of 3.0 or better, who have not met a satisfactory completion rate, or who are not within their time to degree will be placed on academic probation. The Department will provide written notification of probationary status to the student. The notification will include the specific steps that must be taken to correct the circumstances of the probation and the timeline for doing so. A student on academic probation who does not satisfy the stated terms for returning to good standing may be formally terminated from the MA program. Students may appeal academic probation or termination by the process outlined in section 7 of the GSAS Policies and Procedures Manual.

### *Incomplete Grades*



An incomplete grade (I) reverts to an F grade one year from the beginning of the semester in which the course was taken. Students are responsible for submitting work for a course in which an incomplete grade was received to the course instructor with ample time for the work to be graded and a grade posted.

Students in the Animal Studies MA Program may not have more than two incomplete grades on their transcript at any one time. A student cannot graduate with an “I” on their record.

At the request of the MA Program Director and with approval of the course instructor, the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic Standing and Student Affairs will consider extending an incomplete grade. The student must complete the “Request for Approval of Extension of Incomplete Grade” form and submit it to the Academic Administrator before the end of one year from the beginning of the semester in which the course was taken.

## 10. Directory of Important NYU Offices

Graduate School of Arts & Sciences  
<http://gsas.nyu.edu/page/gradHome>

GSAS Policies and Procedures Manual  
<http://gsas.nyu.edu/about-gsas/policies-and-procedures/policies-and-procedures-manual-and-forms.html>

GSAS Graduate Enrollment Services  
One-half Fifth Avenue  
(212) 998-8050  
[gsas.admissions@nyu.edu](mailto:gsas.admissions@nyu.edu)

GSAS Office of Student and Academic Affairs  
6 Washington Square North, 2nd Floor  
(212) 998- 8060  
Academic Affairs: [gsas.academicaffairs@nyu.edu](mailto:gsas.academicaffairs@nyu.edu)  
Student Affairs: [gsas.studentaffairs@nyu.edu](mailto:gsas.studentaffairs@nyu.edu)

GSAS Office of the Master’s College  
One-half Fifth Avenue  
(212) 992- 7960  
[gsas.masterscollege@nyu.edu](mailto:gsas.masterscollege@nyu.edu)  
<http://gsas.nyu.edu/page/grad.masterscollege>

Office of Global Services (OGS)  
561 LaGuardia Place  
(212) 998- 4720  
<https://www.nyu.edu/about/leadership-university-administration/office-of-the-president/office-of-the-provost/university-life/office-of-studentaffairs/office-of-global-services.html>

Office of the University Registrar

25 West 4th Street  
(212) 998-4800  
<http://www.nyu.edu/registrar/>

Office of the Bursar  
25 West 4th Street  
(212) 998-2806  
<http://www.nyu.edu/bursar/>

Office of Financial Aid  
25 West 4th Street  
(212) 998-4444  
[financial.aid@nyu.edu](mailto:financial.aid@nyu.edu)  
<http://www.nyu.edu/admissions/financial-aid-and-scholarships.html>

Student Health Center  
726 Broadway, 3rd and 4th Floors (212) 443-1000  
[health.center@nyu.edu](mailto:health.center@nyu.edu)  
<http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/student-health-center.html>

Wasserman Center for Career Development  
133 East 13th Street, 2nd Floor  
(212) 998-4730  
[career.development@nyu.edu](mailto:career.development@nyu.edu)  
<http://www.nyu.edu/life/resources-and-services/career-development.html>