Description

Effective animal advocates attempt to use evidence and reason to do the most good possible in animal advocacy. In this course we examine this approach to animal advocacy from theoretical as well as practical perspectives. First, what does it mean to do the most good possible, and how do effective animal advocates attempt to pursue this aim? Second, what are the main theoretical objections to effective animal advocacy? For example, does it involve too much cluelessness, demandingness, or implausibility? Third, what are the main practical objections to effective animal advocacy? For example, does it focus too much on direct, short-term, individual change and not enough on indirect, long-term, structural change? Along the way we will consider broader moral and political questions related to effective animal advocacy.

General Information

- Time: W 5–7:30
- Place: Bldg: 12WV Room: L111
- Email: jeffsebo@nyu.edu
- Office hours: T 12-2pm (online)
- Course website: jeffsebo.net/teaching/
Readings

The required books for this class are: Gary Francione & Robert Garner, *The Animal Rights Debate* (ARD), Julia Galef, *The Scout Mindset* (SM), William MacAskill, *Doing Good Better* (DGB). (SD). All readings not from the required books will be available on NYU classes or online, as noted below.

Grading

- **Paper** (35%): You will write a 3,000 word paper and submit it to effectiveanimaladvocacy@gmail.com. This paper should summarize and evaluate an argument related to effective animal advocacy, and it should engage with multiple course readings and discussions. You should clear your topic with me in advance. Your paper is due anytime during the semester.

- **Project** (35%): You will complete a self-directed creative project. It can be an activity, article, artwork, or anything else. In terms of effort, it should be comparable to the paper, and you should clear your idea with me advance. This project is due anytime during the semester. On the last day of class, everyone will give a short, informal presentation about their project.

- **Presentation** (10%): You will give a short (10-15 minute) presentation about a case study (past, present, or future) related to effective animal advocacy. Your presentation should include a description of the case study, as well as an analysis of the case study that draws from course materials. We will coordinate the schedule and topics via Doodle.

- **Weekly Writing** (10%): Prior to each session, you will send an email to effectiveanimaladvocacy@gmail.com with the subject heading Last Name Date (e.g. Smith 9/16) and a question or comment about each reading. This assignment is due by 4:30pm on the day of class and will be graded Pass/Fail.

- **Participation** (10%): I expect thoughtful participation from all students. You can participate by contributing to discussions, emailing articles to the class, or doing anything else that adds to the class.

Policies

- **Late Papers/Extensions/Incompletes**: Late weekly writing assignments will be accepted for half credit up until the start of class. Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If you want to request either, please do so in advance.

- **Academic Dishonesty**: Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to an academic dean. Plagiarism includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else’s work as your own; or copying verbatim from any source. You are subject to the GSAS guidelines on plagiarism: https://gsas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/gsas/about-gsas/policies-and-procedures/gsas-statement-on-academic-integrity.html.

- **Academic Accommodations**: Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980. They are located at: 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor New York, NY 10003-6675 Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114 Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/csd
Schedule

- **9/8 - Introduction**
  - Mary Midgley, “Getting animals into focus”
  - Peter Singer, “Famine, affluence, and morality”

- **9/15 - Applied rationality**
  - Julia Galef, “The case for scout mindset” (SM)
  - Julia Galef, “Changing your mind” (SM)
  - Julia Galef, “Rethinking identity” (SM)
  - Kristie Dotson, “A cautionary tale: on limiting epistemic oppression”

- **9/22 - Effective altruism**
  - William MacAskill, “How many people benefit, and by how much?” (DGB)
  - William MacAskill, “Is this area neglected?” (DGB)
  - William MacAskill, “What are the chances of success, and how good would success be?” (DGB)
  - Ajeya Cotra, “On worldview diversification and how big the future could be” (online)

- **9/29 - Effective animal advocacy**
  - Lewis Bollard, “Ending factory farming as soon as possible” (online)
  - Persis Eskander, “Animals in the wild often suffer a great deal” (online)
  - Jason Schukraft, “Invertebrate welfare cause profile” (online)
  - Saulius Šimčikas, “Effective animal advocacy resources” (online)

- **10/6 - The EAA movement**
  - Garrett Broad, “Effective animal advocacy”
  - David Moss, “EA Survey 2020” (online)
  - Emily Gaarder, “Women and the animal rights movement”
  - Sunaura Taylor, “All animals are equal (but some are more equal than others)”

- **10/13 - Theoretical issues**
  - Nakul Krishna, “Add your own egg” (online)
  - Amia Srinivasan, “Stop the robot apocalypse” (online)
  - Iason Gabriel, “Effective altruism and its critics”
  - Jeff MacMahan, “Philosophical critiques of effective altruism”

- **10/20 - Practical issues**
  - Jerry Muller, “The tyranny of metrics”
  - Andrea Smith, “The revolution will not be funded”
  - Alice Crary, “Against ‘effective altruism’” (online)
  - Jeff Sebo, “Effective animal advocacy”

- **10/27 - Animal welfare and rights**
  - Sahar Akhtar, “Animal pain and welfare”
  - Robert Garner, “A defense of broad animal protectionism,” pp. 82-113 (ARD)
  - Tyler John & Jeff Sebo, “Consequentialism and nonhuman animals”
• 11/3 - Social and institutional change
  - Tobias Leenaert, “How do we motivate for change?”
  - Lauren Gazzola, “What does the animal rights movement mean?” (online)
  - Jacob Peacock, “Measuring change in diet for animal advocacy” (online)
  - Leah Garces, “A lesson in turning adversaries into allies” (online)

• 11/10 - Legal and political change
  - David Wolfson & Mariann Sullivan, “Foxes in the hen house”
  - Steven Wise, “Animal rights, one step at a time”
  - Kimberly Smith, “Reform”
  - Sue Donaldson & Will Kymlicka, “Zoopolis”

• 11/17 - Technological and economic change
  - Wilton Mui, “Five different ways to look at plant-based and cell-based meats” (online)
  - Garrett Broad, “Markets and the future of meat”
  - Rebekah Sinclair, “The sexual politics of meatless meat”
  - Carol Adams, “Ethical spectacles and seitan-making”

• 11/24 - The limits of animal advocacy
  - Jennifer Jacquet, “Is shame necessary?”
  - Erica Chenoweth & Maria Stephan, “The success of nonviolent resistance campaigns”
  - Christopher Schlottmann & Jeff Sebo, “The ethics of illegal animal activism”
  - Barry Lam, “Uncivil disobedience” (online)

• 12/1 - The future of animal advocacy
  - Aph Ko, “Creating a new conceptual architecture”
  - David Gunkel, “Robot rights”
  - Tyler John, “Panspecies longtermism”
  - Gary David O’Brien, “Directed panspermia, wild animal suffering, and the ethics of world creation”

• 12/8 - Conclusion
  No readings