NYU Animal Studies M.A. Program
Mondays 2:00-4:30
194 Mercer St., Room 301

Instructor: Dr. Elan Abrell
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Office Hours: Mondays 12:00-2:00 or by appointment, 248 Mercer St

Course Description
Using biotechnological innovations to produce plant-based and cell-cultured meat and other animal products without the use of animals, the burgeoning cellular agriculture industry has the long-term potential to entirely remove animals from the industrial food system, leading to a radical transformation of agriculture with especially far reaching consequences for animal laborers. Although this could ameliorate the negative impacts of animal agriculture on animal welfare and the environment, it also raises important questions about the social, political-economic, and ontological implications of a post-animal agriculture food system. This course will draw on ethnographies, legal and food policy debates, and historical and media analyses to examine how different systems of value intersect in shaping the possible futures of both food production and interspecies relations in a variety of contexts. Students will explore questions such as: How could these innovations transform understandings of food categories like meat and dairy? How might consumer practices shift in response to such food products? What are the social and political economic implications of a post-animal agriculture food system, and how will they transform our relations with animals currently used for agriculture?

Course Policies
Required Reading
You do not need to purchase any required readings for this class as they will be made available as PDF’s or web links on Classes.

Absences, Late Assignments, and Participation
Because this course requires participation, attendance is mandatory and you are expected to be in class on time and prepared. Unexcused absences will affect your participation grade. If you have obligations that will prevent you from attending class, please communicate this to the instructor prior to your absence. Late assignments are automatically deducted a portion of a letter grade per day (an A becomes an A-, a B- a C+, and so forth). Extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances and should be requested in advance. If you find you that you are either having problems with the material or that other circumstances are affecting your class performance, please speak with the instructor as early as possible.
Electronic Equipment
You are permitted to use your laptops, tablets, or handheld computers in class, but only for purposes that are directly relevant to what is going on in class. This means texting your friends is not permitted, but Googling the names of the number of animals killed for food each year is. Please do not violate this policy. You may think that no one will notice if you IM your friends from your computer in the back of class, but people will notice, especially me. So if you do use electronic equipment, please do so in a way that is not distracting to your fellow classmates or to your instructor. If your device use causes a distraction, you will be asked to turn off or put away your device.

Alternative Learning Accommodations
Your experience in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of New York University to provide equal educational opportunity and participation for students with disabilities. If you would like to request academic accommodation due to alternative learning styles/needs, please contact the Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor New York, NY 10003-6675
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/csd

If you have already established accommodations, you are welcome to communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

Preferred Gender Pronouns
This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Immigration Status
As an educator, I fully support the rights of undocumented students to an education and to live free from the fear of deportation. If you have any concerns in that regard, feel free to discuss them with me, and I will respect your wishes concerning confidentiality.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Cheating (adapted from the website of the College of Arts & Science, https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html):
Academic integrity means that the work you submit is original. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious — for example, presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written); writing a sentence
or paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea(s) without a reference to the source of the idea(s); or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance). Receiving or giving help on a take-home paper, examination, or quiz is also cheating, unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects).

Class Participation
The course will function as a seminar in which we will spend most of the class time discussing the reading topics as a group. Through our discussions we will identify and explore the issues raised in the readings. Because the seminar format treats learning as a collaborative process in which we all participate equally, it is essential that students come to class prepared and actively participate in class discussions.

Class Conduct
This course covers a number of issues about which some people may hold strong feelings. Part of the goal of the class is to enable students to learn from each other and communicate their thoughts on contemporary issues in articulate and compelling ways. While everyone is entitled to their thoughts and encouraged to share them, please do so in a constructive way. Treat everyone in the classroom with respect, regardless of whether you disagree with their opinions.

Grading
Your grades will be determined as follows:

- **Papers (50%)**: You will write either two 2,000-word papers or one 4,000-word paper and submit them on Classes. Each paper should explore an issue related to the course. The papers can more deeply explore issues covered in class or related issues that we were not able to cover. They should engage with multiple course readings and discussions as well as outside sources. If you write one paper, your paper is due at the end of the day on May 11 (but I want you to inform me of your topic by March 23). If you write two papers, paper 1 is due at the end of the day on March 23 and paper 2 is due at the end of the day on May 11. Please meet with me to discuss potential topics. Also, if you choose to do two papers, and would like to use a more creative format for one of them (film, creative writing, photo series, etc.), please discuss this option with me as well.

- **Weekly Reading Responses (20%)**: Prior to each session, you will submit a short response paper (~300 words) that briefly discusses your reaction to the readings. This assignment is due no later than 1:30 pm on the day of class and will be graded Pass/Fail. You should also have access to your response in class so you can draw on it during the discussion that day.

- **Discussion Leaders (10%)**: For each class, students will be responsible for leading our discussion about the topics addressed in the readings. Leaders should come to class prepared with **several discussion questions** for the class based on
issues raised by the readings that they found interesting or provocative. Students are expected to coordinate with partners outside of class.

• **Attendance and Participation (20%)**: Because this class follows a seminar format, I expect regular attendance and thoughtful participation from all students. My assessment of the quality of your performance on these items will account for 20% of your grade in this class.

Course Schedule
Readings on the syllabus are subject to change, but students will be advised of any changes in advance. The reading assignments listed under each day must be completed by the beginning of class that day.

**Week 1: Introductions**
**Monday, January 27**

**Week 2: Existential Threats?**
**Monday, February 3**
- Harwatt, Ripple, Chaudhary, Betts, and Hayek, “Scientists Call for Renewed Paris Pledges to Transform Agriculture”
- McKibben, “Hello from the Year 2050: We Avoided the Worst of Climate Change – But Everything is Different”

**Week 3: Meat 2.0**
**Monday, February 10**

**Week 4: Presidents Day – No Class**
**Monday, February 17**

**Week 5: Ending Animal Agricultural – Guest speaker Delcianna Winders, Lewis and Clark Animal Law Clinic**
**Monday, February 24**
- *Farm Sanctuary v. Perdue* (filed complaint)

**Week 6: Ethics of Cultivated Meat**
**Monday, March 2**
- Sebo, “The Ethics and Politics and Plant-Based and Cultured Meat”
- Elder, “Cultured Meat: A New Story for the Future of Food”

**Week 7: Challenges of Building a New Food System – Guest Speaker Isha Datar from New Harvest**
**Monday, March 9**
• Reading TBA

Week 8: Spring Break – No Class

Monday, March 16

Week 9: Animal Ag and Pandemics

Monday, March 23

*Paper 1 is due on Classes (if you chose to write only one paper, than the topic is due)*

- Wallace, “Connecting the Coronavirus to Agriculture”
- Robbins, “The Ecology of Disease”
- Gellatley, “Eating Animals Will Be the Death of Us”
- Davis, “COVID-19: The Monster is at the Door”
- Sorvino, “Impossible Foods Raises $500 Million And Braces For Volatility From Coronavirus”
- Solis, “Coronavirus Is the Perfect Disaster for ‘Disaster Capitalism’”
- Specht, “Modernizing Meat Production Will Help Us Avoid Pandemics”
- Singer and Cavalieri, “The Two Dark Sides of COVID-19”

Week 10: Is a Vegan Future Possible? – Guest speaker Martin Rowe

Monday, March 30

- Rowe, “Beyond the Impossible: The Futures of Plant-based and Cellular Meat and Dairy”

Week 11: Cultivated Seafood – Michael Selden, Finless Foods

Monday, April 6

- “Finless Foods discuss cell-based seafood – Michael Selden at the New Food Conference 2019,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMkgpXmMiaA

Week 12: Food Tech Justice – Guest Speaker Garrett Broad, Fordham University

Monday, April 13

- Broad, “Plant-based and Cell-based Animal Product Alternatives: An Assessment and Agenda for Food Tech Justice”
- Broad, “After the White House Garden: Food Justice in the Age of Trump”
- Broad, “Making Meat, Better: The Metaphors of Plant- Based and Cell-Based Meat Innovation”

Week 13: Capitalism and the Future of Meat – Guest Speaker Jan Dutkiewicz, Johns Hopkins University

Monday, April 20

• Dutkiewicz, “Socialize Lab Meat”
• York, “Why Petroleum Did Not Save the Whales”

Week 14: Consumer Acceptance
Monday, April 27
• Van Loo and Lusk, “Consumer Preferences for Farm-Raised Meat, Lab-Grown Meat, and Plant-Based Meat Alternatives: Does Information or Brand Matter?”

Week 15: Industry Opposition and Regulatory Challenges
Monday, May 4
• Johnson, “Conflict Over Cell-Based Meat: Who Should Coordinate Agencies in U.S. Biotechnology Regulation?”

Week 16: Creative Carnivory – Guest Speaker Benjamin Wurgaft, Wesleyan University
Monday, May 11
*Paper #2 due on Classes
• Selection from In Vitro Cookbook
• Selection from Wurgaft, Meat Planet: Artificial Flesh and the Future of Food