What is animal happiness? And more to the point, in these times of immense suffering, is happiness an irrelevant luxury or is it a concept that can help us navigate modern challenges? After considering the rationales for studying happiness, this course will use theoretical and empirical texts to explore the diverse (and at times conflicting) ways that happiness has been investigated in animals. Students will lead in-class discussions of scientific papers on topics including animal play, agency, close relationships, and curiosity. By seeking practical applications for promoting animal happiness, students will also learn to work with abstract concepts such as phenomenology and the scientific replicability.
**Required texts:**

A selection of chapters and articles and other media will be posted on NYU Classes.

**Grading Overview:**

Throughout the course you will:

a) Lead one discussion on the foundation readings (20%; 1 hour)

b) Lead one journal club (20%; 1 hour), which also typically includes selecting the scientific article: it should be relevant, important, and published in the last 3 years

c) After each of the discussions that you lead, you will create a synthesis-extension paper based on the class discussion and the reading we have done thus far in the course (20% for each synthesis-extension paper; 4,000 words each; due 2 weeks after you lead the discussion)

d) The remainder of your grade will be based on your active class participation including and in particular, a reflection mini-presentation on the last day of the course (20%; 10-minute presentation).

**Schedule:**

**S1 (09-Sep, Monday): Introductions (selected media)**

*Selected Media:*

- Robin Wall Kimmerer interview on *On Being*. (2016)
- Caroline A. Jones interview on *Edge.org* (date unknown by me)
- *The Atlantic* article on megafauna extinction (2018).

**S2 (16-Sep, Monday): Beyond Animal Welfare and Logistics (readings + schedule preferences)**

*Readings:*


*Schedule Preferences:*

- Select 2 potential presentation dates for each of the following: (a) leading the “foundation readings” discussion and (b) leading “journal club” (which also involves choosing the reading)

**S3 (23-Sep, Monday): The Language of Animal Behavior Science (readings)**

*Foundation Readings:*
  o Electronic version available through NYULibraries. Read beginning through Chapter 3 (to page 122). You can skim Chapters 1 & 2.

**Journal Club:**

**S4 (30-Sep, Monday): Trans-species communication (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)**

**Foundation Readings:**

**Journal Club:**

**S5 (07-Oct, Monday): Studying Animals (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)**

**Foundation Readings:**
  o Electronic version available through NYULibraries. Read beginning through Chapter 3 (to page 93). You can skim Chapters 2.

**Journal Club:**
• TBD

**S6 (15-Oct, *Tuesday): Global Interconnectedness (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)**

**Foundation Readings:**
Journal Club:
- TBD

S7 (21-Oct, Monday): Modern Science (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)
Foundation Readings:
  o Electronic version available through NYULibraries. Read through Part I (to page 79). You can skim Chapters 2.
- Something very brief on Bayesian Statistics

Journal Club:
- TBD

S8 (28-Oct, Monday): Phenomenology Part I (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)
Foundation Readings:
  o Electronic version available through NYULibraries. Read through Introduction (to page 12) AND Chapter 6: Phenomenology and the Study of Animal Behavior (begins on page 75).

Journal Club:
- TBD

S9 (04-Nov, Monday): Phenomenology Part II (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)
Foundation Readings:

Journal Club:
- TBD

S10 (11-Nov, Monday): Ethnography of Ethologist and Animals (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)
Foundation Readings:

Journal Club:
- TBD

S11 (18-Nov, Monday): Animal Traditions (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)
**Foundation Readings:**
  - Electronic version available through NYULibraries. Read beginning through Chapter 3 (to page 104).

S12 (25-Nov, Monday): Sharing the Planet (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)
**Foundation Readings:**
- Dhee et al. (2019) “The leopard that learnt from the cat and other narratives of carnivore–human coexistence in northern India.” *People and Nature*.

Journal Club:
- TBD

S13 (02-Dec, Monday): Plants (readings + lead discussion/journal club?)
**Foundation Readings:**
  - Electronic version available through NYULibraries. Read beginning through Chapter 6 (to page 30).
Journal Club:
- Something by Monica Gagliano

S14 (09-Dec, Monday): Final Reflections (final reflection presentations)

Final Reflection:
- 10-minute presentation on how Animal Happiness is relevant to what you think you might do for your thesis.

Journal Club Search Term Options:

Positive Emotion, Play, Curiosity, Neophilia, Culture, Close Relationships, Friendship, Contrafreeloading, Personality, Human-Animal Relations/Connections, Trust, Creativity, Autonomy, Self-control, Agency, Helping, Grief, Boredom, Intrinsic Motivation, Prairie-dog language (Con Slobodchikoff)

Basic Expectations:

Attendance and politeness—including punctuality, attention, and engagement—are vital!

Absences & Late Assignments: If something comes up and you are unable to attend class and/or need to turn in assignments late—that is, you hand in an assignment after the class in which it was due—first, let me know as soon as possible! I strongly encourage you to do whatever you can to make sure that you keep on-top of your work and are present during class. If there are extenuating circumstances, please bring in documentation otherwise your grade will be docked one unit (e.g., A to A-) per day late and/or for every class missed. At my discretion, in exceptional cases, you may be allowed to complete a bonus assignment to make-up lost points.

Plagiarism: often 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 CAS’s guidelines on plagiarism: https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html

Disability disclosure statement: academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

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