



Department of Philosophy & Religion

Syllabus:

Special Topics in Philosophy:

ANIMAL MINDS (PHI 390)

CRN 23069

MWF 10:10-11:00

Wallace 334

3 Credit Hours

Spring 2013

Instructor: **Matthew Pianto**

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Office Hours: MWF 11:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

Or by appointment on Tues & Thurs

I. Course Description

René Descartes is notorious for claiming that animals are mindless machines. Many people believe just the opposite—that animals have rich cognitive and emotional lives. How can such disagreement be adjudicated? By what methods can we come to have knowledge of the minds of other animals, or determine which animals are “minded” and which are not? What exactly are we asking when we wonder whether other animals are conscious? What are the criteria for attributing concepts, beliefs, reason, emotion, language, or even morality to other animals? To what extent can science provide answers to these questions, and to what extent are they philosophical? Students will read works by philosophers, cognitive ethologists, psychologists, and animal trainers who address these issues.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Articulate various philosophical positions about the nature of animal minds and our knowledge of animal minds
2. Identify and discuss the philosophical aspects of debates about attributions of cognitive and emotional states to animals
3. Identify and evaluate the philosophical assumptions and arguments in debates about animal consciousness and animal communication and language studies
4. Articulate and evaluate views about the relationship between animal capacities and behavior and human morality, and to discuss similarities and differences between human moral agency and animal agency
5. Use course material and outside reading in developing their own views about the nature of animal minds, and to present their ideas in written and oral formats.

III. Required Texts

- Frans de Waal, *Primates and Philosophers*, ed. Stephen Macedo and Josiah Ober (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006)
- B.A. Dixon, *Animals, Emotion, & Morality* (New York: Prometheus, 2008)
- All other readings for this course will be made available as PDF files on the course Blackboard page

IV. Course Requirements (and points) (% of Final Grade)

1. Short Responses (12 required @ 5 points each = 60 points) (15%): Once a week, in response to a scheduled reading of your choosing, you should submit an approximately 150-300 word reflection on the reading *prior to our discussing it in class*. Each response is worth 5 points, and you may submit up to 14 responses (one per week), but are expected to complete at least 12 for full credit. You may also submit additional responses to cancel out previous responses that received poor marks.
2. Mid-Term Take-Home Essay/Exam (80 points) (20%): Due Wednesday, March 6, 2013. The mid-term take-home exam will consist of short answer questions and/or an essay. The exam will be made available no later than Friday, March 1, 2013.

3. *Paper Proposal, Literature Report, and Draft/Meeting* (40 points) (10%): This cluster of assignments will prepare you to write your final paper (see below). We will begin working on the final paper project after Spring Break. Students will submit an initial proposal (5 points) in late March/early April, then complete a Literature Report (15 points) on some in-class and/or outside reading related to the paper project in mid-April. Students will then submit a working draft and meet with the instructor (20 points) in late April.
4. *Presentation* (20 points) (5%): During the last week of classes, students will give 5-10 minute presentations based on their final paper project.
5. *Final Paper, 7-8 pages* (100 points) (25%): A final revision of the paper will be due on Monday, May 6, 2013, by 4:00 p.m. Students should also re-submit previous (marked) work related to the paper.
6. *Final Take-Home Essay/Exam* (80 points) (20%): Similar in format to the mid-term take-home exam. Will be due Friday, May 10, 2013, by 10:00 a.m. (the end of the scheduled final exam period for this class).
7. *Miscellaneous Assignments* (20 points) (5%): This may include in-class activities, additional small outside assignments, dreadful reading quizzes, etc.

NOTE: Failure to complete any major assignment (Mid-Term Exam, Final Exam, or Final Paper) or a majority of the required short responses will result in automatic failure of the course.

V. Student Evaluation & Grade Reporting

The final grade for this class will be based out of 400 points as a 100%. The grading scale is:

| Letter Grade | Percentage Range | Points |
|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| A | 90% or higher | 360 or more |
| B | 80%-89.99% | 320-359 |
| C | 70%-79.99% | 280-319 |
| D | 60%-69.99% | 240-279 |
| F | 59.99% or below | 239 or less |

Grades will be periodically updated on Blackboard. Some feedback will be provided on all weekly assignments and essays. At any point in the class, students concerned about their progress should contact the instructor.

Mid-term grades will be reported via EKUDirect, and will be submitted by Sunday, March 10, 2013.

VI. Attendance

Regular attendance and participation are expected. Poor attendance (i.e. habitual unexcused absences) may result in a 10% reduction of your final grade. Exemplary attendance/participation may result in an upward adjustment of your final grade (not to exceed 2%).

VII. Late Work Policy

Work that is late without excuse and/or prior agreement with the instructor will be assessed a 10% penalty per day late (including weekends for work that can be e-mailed). It is each student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor in a timely fashion in order to make alternative arrangements when work cannot be submitted on time, and to provide appropriate documentation for excused absences upon request. Students may not submit late Short Responses, in bulk, at the end of the semester for credit.

VIII. EKU Academic Integrity Policy

Students are advised that EKU's Academic Integrity Policy will strictly be enforced in this course. The Academic Integrity policy is available at <http://studentrights.eku.edu/academic-integrity-policy>. Questions regarding the policy may be directed to the Office of Academic Integrity. (You can also ask the instructor.)

In this course, the default sanction for any confirmed case of academic dishonesty is that the student will receive an F for the course. In all cases, violations of the Academic Integrity policy will be reported.

IX. Classroom Conduct

Students are expected to act professionally and respectfully toward the instructor, students, and any classroom guests at all times. This includes **turning off and stowing electronic gadgets during class** (with the exception of devices used to take notes or display electronic versions of readings), paying attention, being punctual, and obtaining permission before recording class activities. Repeated failures to adhere to these standards of conduct may result in grade sanctions and other unhappy consequences (including the reporting of serious misconduct to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities).

X. ECU Disability Statement

If you are registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, **please obtain your accommodation letters from the OSID** and present them to the course instructor to discuss any academic accommodations you need. If you believe you need accommodation and are not registered with the OSID, please contact the Office in the Student Services Building Room 361 by email at disserv@eku.edu or by telephone at (859) 622-2933 V/TDD. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in an alternative format.

XI. Withdrawal Policies & Dates

The last day you can withdraw from this course *without being charged a \$150 fee* is Sunday, February 10, 2013. After that, you can withdraw up to Friday, March 22, 2013, but will have to obtain the instructor's signature on a withdrawal form and will incur a \$150 withdrawal fee (\$50 per credit hour). This is official University policy.

XII. E-mail Policy

An official ECU e-mail is established for each registered student, each faculty member, and each staff member. *All university communications sent via e-mail will be sent to this ECU e-mail address.*

PHI 390: Animal Minds (Spring 2013)

Course Schedule:

Readings below are listed on the day they will be discussed in class. Students should do the reading for each meeting prior to class. All readings will be posted as PDF files on Blackboard (listed in the order in which they will be read and discussed), except for the readings in de Waal's *Primates and Philosophers* and B.A. Dixon's *Animals, Emotion, & Morality*. Those books should be available for purchase at the EKU Bookstore (and elsewhere). This schedule is tentative and subject to revision.

You are expected either to print online readings or download them to an eReader, iPad, etc. and to bring readings to class so that we can look at the texts as we discuss them.

Animal Minds: History—Skeptical, Evolutionary, and “Commonsense” Perspectives

Mon., Jan. 14: Introduction

Wed., Jan. 16: Selection from René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*

Fri., Jan. 18: Selections by David Hume on animal reasoning

Mon., Jan. 21: **NO CLASS: MLK, Jr., HOLIDAY**

Wed., Jan 23: Norman Malcolm, “Thoughtless Brutes”

Fri., Jan 25: Donald Davidson, “Rational Animals”

Mon., Jan. 28: Roger Crisp, “Evolution and Psychological Unity”

Recommended: Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, Chapters 3 & 4

Wed., Jan. 30: Dale Jamieson, “Science, Knowledge, and Animal Minds”

Fri., Feb. 1: (finish discussion of readings above)

Animal Consciousness, Cognition, & Sense of Self & Other

Mon., Feb. 4: Colin Allen, “Animal Consciousness” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consciousness-animal/>

Thomas Nagel, “What is it Like to be a Bat?” (selections)

Wed., Feb. 6: Daniel Dennett, “Animal Consciousness: What Matters and Why”

Fri., Feb. 8: Kathleen Akins, “A Bat Without Qualities?”

Mon., Feb. 11: Griffin and Speck, “New Evidence of Animal Consciousness”

Wed., Feb. 13: John Dupré, “The Mental Lives of Nonhuman Animals”

Fri., Feb. 15: (finish discussion of readings above)

Mon., Feb. 18: Kristin Andrews, “Beyond Anthropomorphism”

Recommended: Kristin Andrews, “Animal Cognition,” in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cognition-animal/>

Wed., Feb. 20: David DeGrazia, “Self-Awareness in Animals”

Fri., Feb. 22: Daniel Povinelli, “Behind the Ape’s Appearance: Escaping Anthropocentrism in the Study of Other Minds”

Animal Emotion

Mon., Feb. 25: Marian Stamp Dawkins, “Animal Minds and Animal Emotions”

Wed., Feb. 27: Robert C. Roberts, “The Sophistication of Non-Human Emotions”

Fri., Mar. 1: (finish discussion)

Language/Communication

- Mon., Mar. 4: Clive Wynne, *Do Animals Think?* Chapter 5: Talk to Me
Roger Fouts et al, "Chimpanzee Signing: Darwinian Realities and Cartesian Delusions"
Wed., Mar. 6: watch *Project Nim* in class
MID-TERM EXAM DUE (3/6/13)
Fri., Mar. 8: finish *Project Nim*

MARCH 11 – MARCH 15: SPRING BREAK

- Mon., Mar. 18: John Dupré, "Conversations with Apes: Reflections on the Scientific Study of Language"
Wed., Mar. 20: Vicki Hearne, "A Walk with Washoe: How Far Can We Go?"
Fri., Mar. 22: TBA (EKU is hosting an Animal Studies conference from Mar. 21-Mar. 23)

Animals and Moral Agency

- Mon., Mar. 25: Frans de Waal, "Morally Evolved," in *Primates and Philosophers*, 3-58
Wed., Mar. 27: finish de Waal, "Morally Evolved" and read "Appendix A: Anthropomorphism and Anthropodenial," 59-67
Fri., Mar. 29: Response to de Waal by Robert Wright (83-97)
Recommended: Philip Kitcher's response (120-139) in *Primates and Philosophers*
- Mon., Apr. 1: Christine Korsgaard's response to de Waal in *Primates and Philosophers*, 98-119
Wed., Apr. 3: de Waal's reply, in *Primates and Philosophers*, 161-181
Fri., Apr. 5: Marc Bekoff, "Wild Justice, Cooperation, and Fair Play" (possibly move to 4/8 & make Shapiro recommended)
- Mon., Apr. 8: Paul Shapiro, "Moral Agency in Other Animals"
Wed., Apr. 10: Vicki Hearne, "How to Say 'Fetch!'"
Fri., Apr. 12: TBA
- Mon., Apr. 15: B.A. Dixon, *Animals, Emotion, & Morality*
Wed., Apr. 1: B.A. Dixon, *Animals, Emotion, & Morality*
Fri., Apr. 19: B.A. Dixon, *Animals, Emotion, & Morality*
- Mon., Apr. 22: B.A. Dixon, *Animals, Emotion, & Morality*
Wed., Apr. 24: B.A. Dixon, *Animals, Emotion, & Morality*
Mark Rowlands on Dixon (excerpts from *Can Animals Be Moral?*)
Fri., Apr. 26: Rowlands (tbd)
- Mon., Apr. 29: Student Presentations
Wed., May 1: Student Presentations
Fri., May 3: Student Presentations

Final Paper Due Monday, May 6, 4:00 p.m. (in folder with original proposal, draft, etc.)

Take-Home Final Due Friday, May 10, 10:00 a.m. (end of scheduled final exam period)