

**PHI 390 | SPECIAL TOPICS IN PHILOSOPHY: THE PHILOSOPHERS & THE ANIMALS**  
Fall 2010, CRN: 15365 Section 001 (TR 12:30-1:45), Wallace 334

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*Fall Office Hours:*  
Mon, 1:30-2:30; Tues, 11:00-12:00; Wed, 1:30-2:30; Thurs, 11:00-12:00;  
or by appointment

**I. Course Description:**

In this course, we will think about animals and about the ways in which significant philosophers (in the/our Western tradition) have thought about animals. We will explore the ways in which views about what animals are—and how they are different from or similar to human beings—inform views about whether (or how much) the lives of animals have moral significance. Often, we will notice that “animals” is an overly broad concept which covers up significant differences between various animals—as well as important similarities between humans and animals—and that this can lead to oversimplification both in arguments for and against the moral significance of animals. We will consider what the role of philosophical argument is in attempting to convince others to see animals as morally significant, or in questioning (and/or seeking to change) common practices involving animals. We will think about what all of this means for our various relationships with, and ways of treating and using, animals.

**II. Course Goals (i.e. Student Learning Outcomes):**

By the end of the class, students should be able to:

1. Understand and explain the views of significant historical and contemporary Western philosophers on the nature and moral status of animals
2. Critically apply their understanding of these views to questions about the justifiability of common uses and treatments of animals, and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of various philosophical frameworks
3. Critically discuss various ways in which the distinction between humans and animals is both philosophically significant and problematic
4. Critically discuss differing views on the significance of philosophical argument (in contrast with other forms of persuasion) in attempts to bring moral attention to animals
5. Integrate, compare, and contrast the ideas and theories of figures studied in this course with their own views about animals

**III. Texts:**

- Andrew Linzey and Paul Barry Clarke (eds.), *Animal Rights: A Historical Anthology*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)
- J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999)
- Stanley Cavell, Cora Diamond, John McDowell, Ian Hacking, and Cary Wolfe, *Philosophy and Animal Life*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008)
- Paola Cavalieri, *The Death of the Animal*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)
- Several articles and excerpts will be made available either on Blackboard (under Course Documents) or distributed in class or by e-mail

#### **IV. Course Requirements (and % of final grade):**

##### A. Weekly Assignments (30%):

Weekly assignments will generally be 1-2 page response papers, sometimes open topic (on the readings we're currently dealing with), sometimes with more specific instructions.

##### B. Mid-Term Take-Home Exam (20%):

This will be an exam over the first unit, and will be due right after Fall Break (October 11-12). Students will have to answer 1 or 2 essay questions, possibly some short answer questions, and will probably have some choices.

##### C. Paper on a Coetzee-related topic (20%):

This will be a 6-8 page paper dealing with a significant issue from the second unit dealing with Coetzee and responses to Coetzee. Several topics will be suggested and students will be able to develop their own topics. Students will at least have to submit a prospectus (proposal, outline) of their project, if not a draft, prior to submitting the final paper. Further instructions will be provided around the start of November.

##### D. A Final Take-Home Exam (25%):

This exam will be similar to the mid-term exam, and will draw mainly from the last two units of the course. It will also include some kind of comprehensive or "all things considered" essay question.

##### E. Extracurricular Event or Reading (5%):

Each student is expected to do one of the following. I would prefer that everyone who can do option (i):

- (i) Attend a lecture, film screening, or other animal-related event which promises to be philosophically thought-provoking, and then to write a 1 ½-2 page critical review of the event.
- (ii) Write a 1 ½-2 page critical review of an academically respectable article or film which is not part of the assigned or recommended readings.

#### **V. Evaluation and Student Progress**

All submitted work will receive some form of written feedback (by ink or e-mail). I strive to return all work submitted on time within a week.

The following grading scale will be used:

A = 100-90; B = 89.9-80; C = 79.9-70; D = 69.9-60; F = 59.9 or below.

Essay exams will be graded on a point scale with points earned reflecting the appropriate letter grade. (E.g. 8.5/10 would be a mid-B.) The paper will be given a letter grade, with the same principle applied. (E.g. an "A" paper is roughly a 95%.)

Mid-term grades will be reported by October 17, 2010.

I will not use Blackboard to record grades in this class, but I am always happy to give students who ask a grade update. If you're worried, ask.

#### **VI. Attendance**

The pace of this class and the difficulty of some of the readings make attendance hugely important. I will keep attendance, and anyone with 4 or more unexcused absences will automatically fail the course. See Section VIII below for information about providing documentation (and a fair warning about not making bogus excuses).

#### **VII. Late Work**

I will accept late work as long as it is not *unduly* late. (I.e. I will not accept a heap of assignments turned in on the last day of class.) I do, however, reserve the right to give reduced credit for late work. The best policy is to stay in touch with me; a fair deal can usually be struck, especially if you contact me promptly.

### **VIII. Documentation of Absences:**

Excused absences include those for University-related business, genuine emergencies, and illness. (Genuine emergencies include family illness (of dependents), family death, and accidents.) Hangovers, romantic breakups, and sleepiness are not excusing reasons (unless these conditions are so severe they require medical or psychiatric attention, in which case you will have a doctor's note).

It is the student's responsibility to provide hard copy documentation that establishes that an absence is excused. Documentation may include a doctor's note, funeral program, court summons, or other documentation which can be assessed for authenticity. If a student provides no documentation, the absence will be marked unexcused. Documentation must be provided in a timely fashion. You may bring it to my office or bring it to class.

**IMPORTANT:** Any student suspected of giving false documentation of an absence or giving other falsified information will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities and/or the Office of Academic Integrity (see above). Confirmed cases of falsified information may result in an *F for the course*. Falsified information includes e-mail and verbal communications, so don't make excuses that aren't true.

(I am perfectly aware that bad and unexpected things happen, and I will treat all of you with the utmost sympathy and respect as long as you are upfront and responsible in your communications with me.)

### **IX. Classroom Conduct:**

In my 100-level courses, I have a pedantic "three strikes" policy about various obnoxious and disrespectful behaviors. I won't repeat that here. But for goodness' sake, put your phones (and other stuff) away, be attentive, and show respect for everyone in the classroom. If there are any recurrent conduct issues, I reserve the right to fail a student for the course, for refusing to abide by the expectations set forth in the syllabus.

### **X. Academic Integrity Policy:**

Students are advised that ECU's Academic Integrity policy will strictly be enforced in this course. The Academic Integrity policy is available at [www.academicintegrity.ecu.edu](http://www.academicintegrity.ecu.edu). Questions regarding the policy may be directed to the Office of Academic Integrity.

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, the violation of the Academic Integrity policy will be reported.

### **XI. 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@ecu.edu](mailto:disserv@ecu.edu) or by telephone at (859) 622-2933 V/TDD. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in an alternative format.

### **XII. Withdrawing**

ECU has a new policy and process for withdrawing from individual courses. The last day students can withdraw from a course is October 29, 2010. Any student wanting to withdraw must get permission from the instructor, and the appropriate form must be signed by the instructor. If you are concerned at any time about your progress in this course, please don't hesitate to contact me so that we can discuss and assess your situation.

### **XIII. Meeting With Me:**

If at any time during the semester you have questions or concerns about the class, please don't hesitate to contact me; note my office hours above. E-mail is generally a better way to get in touch than phone.

**CLASS SCHEDULE: PHI 390: The Philosophers & the Animals (Fall 2010)**

Readings are listed for the day (or week, in a few cases) they will be discussed in class. *You should do the reading prior to class.* Readings are listed for each day or week in the approximate order in which they should be read. This schedule is tentative and subject to revision.

Abbreviations: AR = *Animal Rights*, LA = *The Lives of Animals*, PA = *Philosophy and Animal Life*, DA = *The Death of the Animal*, BB/HO = On Blackboard (under the “Course Documents” tab) or will be handed out

1. A Brief Survey of Classic and Contemporary Philosophical Thought on Animals

- T, 8.24: Introduction, Genesis  
R, 8.26: finish discussion of Genesis, connect to:  
Aristotle, AR, pp. 6-7, 56-58, 101-102  
Aquinas, AR, pp. 7-12, 60-63, 102-105
- T, 8.31: Descartes, AR, pp. 14-17  
Hobbes, AR, pp. 17-21  
Locke, AR, pp. 21-25  
Berkeley, AR, pp. 25-26  
Hume, AR, pp. 27-29
- R, 9.2: Rousseau, AR, pp. 32-34  
Herder, AR, pp. 34-36  
Schopenhauer, AR, pp. 37-39  
Hegel, AR, pp. 39-42  
Marx, AR, pp. 42-44  
Nietzsche, AR, pp. 44-46  
Midgley, AR, pp. 47-50
- T, 9.7: Thomas Nagel, “What is it like to be a Bat?” BB/HO  
Colin Allen, “Animal Consciousness,” BB/HO (skip section 4 on theories of consciousness)
- R, 9.9: Franz Kafka, “A Report to an Academy,” BB/HO  
Vicki Hearne, “A Walk with Washoe: How Far Can We Go?” BB/HO
- T, 9.14- Hobbes, AR, p. 67  
R, 9.16: Kant, AR, pp. 78-79  
Fichte, AR, pp. 79-84  
Montaigne, AR, pp. 64-65, 105-112  
Pope, AR, pp. 72-76  
Kropotkin, AR, pp. 88-90  
Russell, AR, pp. 91-92  
Horkheimer, AR, pp. 92-95  
Coward, AR, pp. 95-98
- T, 9.21: Pufendorf, AR, pp. 116-119  
Kant, AR, pp. 126-127  
Rawls, AR, pp. 154-156  
Hume, AR, pp. 121-123  
Primatt, AR, pp. 124-125

- R, 9.23: Bentham, AR, pp. 135-137  
Mill, AR, pp. 138-140  
Singer, AR, pp. 162-167
- T, 9.28: Regan, AR, pp. 176-186  
Schweitzer, AR, pp. 152-154
- R, 9.30: Cora Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People," BB/HO
- T, 10.5: Rush Rhees, excerpts from *Moral Questions*, Chs. 17 & 19, BB/HO
- R, 10.7: Vicki Hearne, "How to Say 'Fetch!'" BB/HO

**10.11-10.12: NO CLASS FALL BREAK**

2. Reading and Responding to The Lives of Animals

- R, 10.14: J.M. Coetzee, "The Philosophers and the Animals," *LA*, pp. 15-45
- T, 10.19: Coetzee, "The Poets and the Animals," *LA*, pp. 47-69
- R, 10.21: Read the Introduction (Gutmann) and Reflections (Garber, Singer, Doniger, and Smuts) in *LA*  
Recommended: Stephen Mulhall, *The Wounded Animal*, Chapters 3 & 4, *BB*
- T, 10.26: (continue discussing commentary on *LA*)
- R, 10.28: Cora Diamond, "The Difficulty of Philosophy and the Difficulty of Reality," *PA*, pp. 43-89
- T, 11.2- Stanley Cavell, "Companionable Thinking," *PA*, pp. 91-126
- R, 11.4: John McDowell, "Comment on Stanley Cavell's 'Companionable Thinking'," *PA*, pp. 127-138  
Ian Hacking, "Deflections," *PA*, pp. 139-172  
Recommended: Mulhall, *The Wounded Animal*, Chapter 5, *BB*
- T, 11.9: Raimond Gaita, excerpts from *The Philosopher's Dog*, pp. 55-66, 87-97, *BB*
- R, 11.11: Gaita, excerpt from *The Philosopher's Dog*, pp. 203-220, *BB*

3. A Prelude to Thanksgiving: Eating Animals

- T, 11.16: Michael Pollan, "An Animal's Place," (from *The Omnivore's Dilemma*), *BB*  
Listen to *Philosophy Bites* interview with Jeff McMahon on Vegetarianism, *BB*
- R, 11.18: Jonathan Safran Foer, excerpt from *Eating Animals*, *BB*
- T, 11.23: Thoreau, "Higher Laws," from *Walden* (*BB*)

**11.24-11.26: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

4. Reading and Responding to The Death of The Animal

- T, 11.30: Cavalieri, "The Death of the Animal," pp. 1-41
- R, 1.2.2: finish Cavalieri, start discussing Roundtable, Section I, pp. 45-86
- T, 12.7: continue discussing Roundtable, read Section II, pp. 89-138
- R, 12.9: finish *The Death of the Animal*