

Course Outline Animal Ethics

Course Description:

In this course, students will survey several core issues in animal ethics. Animal ethics is an area of moral philosophy concerned with moral questions related to animals. This includes moral questions like “Do animals have moral standing?”, “What moral obligations, if any, do we have to animals?”, “Should we eat animals?”. To begin addressing these questions, the first section of this course will familiarize students with philosophical methodology, provide an examination of animal minds, and address the moral relevance of pain and death for animals. The second section of this course will examine several contemporary moral theories and what those theories mean for our treatment of animals. In the third section of this course, we will survey several applied ethics issues concerning our treatment of animals, including eating animals, using animals in biomedical experiments, and keeping companion animals. The last section of this course will conclude with an examination of animals as moral agents and their connection to political philosophy and law.

Course Texts:

I am aware of the financial impediments posed by acquiring materials for class. To remove this potential barrier to your academic success, all readings are free-to-use and made available electronically.

Course Reading Schedule:

Day 1: Introduction

Day 2: Reading and Writing Philosophy; University Resources

Reading: 1,000 Word Philosophy, “How to Read Philosophy”

Reading: Harvard Writing Center, “How to Write the Philosophy Paper”

Day 3: Minds

Reading: Thomas Nagel, “What is it like to be a Bat?”

Reading: Peter Godfrey-Smith, “The Mind of an Octopus”

Day 4: Minds

Reading: Jeff Sebo, “The Moral Problem of Other Minds”

Day 5: Pain and Death

Reading: Elizabeth Harman, “The Moral Significance of Animal Pain and Death”

Day 6: Pain and Death

Reading: Jeff McMahan, “The Comparative Badness for Animals of Suffering and Death”

Day 7: Animals and Utilitarianism

Reading: Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal”

Day 8: Animals and Rights

Reading: Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights”

Day 9: Animals and Virtue Ethics

Reading: Rosalind Hursthouse, “Applying Virtue Ethics to Our Treatment of Other Animals”

Day 10: Speciesism

Reading: Oscar Horta, “What is Speciesism?”

Day 11: Factory Farming

Reading: Alistair Norcross, “Puppies, Pigs, and People”

Day 12: Factory Farming

Reading: Timothy Hsiao, “Industrial Farming is Not Cruel to Animals”

Reading: Stephen Puryear, et al., “On a Failed Defense of Factory Farming”

Day 13: Humane Farming and Ethical Omnivorism

Reading: Jeff McMahan, “Eating Animals the Nice Way”

Day 14: Humane Farming and Ethical Omnivorism

Reading: Jeff Johnson, “Humanely Killed?”

Day 15: Vegetarianism

Reading: William Stephens, “Five Arguments for Vegetarianism”

Day 16: Vegetarianism

Reading: Donald Bruckner, “Strict Vegetarianism is Immoral”

Day 17: Veganism

Reading: Stijn Bruers, “The Core Argument for Veganism”

Day 18: Veganism

Reading: Robert Jones, “20 Anti-Vegan Arguments and Replies”

Day 19: Entomophagy

Reading: Bob Fischer, “Bugging the Strict Vegan”

Reading: John Hadley, “Does a Painless Death Harm an Invertebrate?”

Day 20: In Vitro Meat

Reading: Josh Milburn, “Chewing Over In Vitro Meat”

Day 21: Animal Experimentation

Reading: Carl Cohen, “The Case for the Use of Animals in Biomedical Research”

Day 22: Animal Experimentation

Reading: Christine Korsgaard, “The Use of Animals in Scientific Research”

Day 23: Zoos and Captivity

Reading: Dale Jamieson, “Against Zoos”

Day 24: Animal Companions

Reading: Cheryl Abbate, “The Animals in Our Living Rooms: Friends or Family?”

Day 25: Animal Companions

Reading: Josh Milburn, “The Pet Lover’s Paradox”

Day 26: Wild Animals and Intervention

Reading: Mikel Torres, “The Case for Intervention in Nature on Behalf of Animals”

Day 27: Wild Animals and Intervention

Reading: Clare Palmer, “What (If Anything) Do We Owe to Wild Animals?”

Day 28: Animal Morality

Reading: Paul Shapiro, “Moral Agency in Other Animals”

Reading: Nicolas Delon, “Letting Animals Off the Hook”

Day 29: Animals, Law, and Political Theory

Reading: Christine Korsgaard, “Kantian Ethics, Animals, and the Law”

Day 30: Animals, Law, and Political Theory

Reading: Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, “Animals in Political Theory”